

### **Justification for locating the Project in forest Area.**

The objective of establishing the Elephant Rescue and Rehabilitation Center at Kottoor is to provide near natural environment for elephants in captivity. The following categories of elephants would be admitted to the Centre:

1. Old elephants in the Elephant Camps of Kerala Forest Department
2. Captive elephants subjected to cruelty by private owners and seized by the Department for violating the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
3. Baby elephants getting stranded in forest areas or habitations in the forest fringes.
4. Elephants captured from Human-Elephant conflict areas.

The Project proposes to keep up to 50 elephants in the Centre at a time. For developing the housing facilities for elephants and for establishing facilities for office, hospital, staff etc, 57 hectares of forest area has been identified. The selection of the site in forest is justified as follows:

- As per the standard norms for recognition of Elephant Rehabilitation/Rescue Centers under section 42 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 issued by the Project Elephant division of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change Elephant Rehabilitation Centers should be located preferably near forest areas with access to water body /streams. The identified site at Kottoor is along forest fringe and is adjoining Neyyar Reservoir.
- The area is natural habitat of wild elephants. So the rehabilitated elephants will be living in their natural habitat.
- The area is contiguous to large tract of forests in ABP Range. This provides opportunity for the elephants to be taken for foraging in forest areas.
- Many of the rescued and rehabilitated elephants would become fit for releasing back to forests. A location with vast tract of forests in the background provides ample opportunity for this.
- It is nearly impossible to find out non-forest land ideal for setting up Elephant Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Kerala, where per capita land holding is

less than 0.12 hectare and the demand for land for human habitation is very high.

- The site at Kottoor has long history of having elephant camp. An Elephant Rehabilitation Centre is functioning in the area since 1997 and presently 18 elephants are kept in the Centre.
- Neyyar Reservoir provides round the year water availability in the Centre. Two ponds are proposed to be developed in perennial streams in the area.
- 12 tribal hamlets are situated in the adjoining forest areas. The project would provide ample employment opportunities to the tribes.
- Good network of roads exist up to the periphery of the proposed site which would facilitate transportation of elephants to the Centre. Existing coupe roads in the site can be developed in to internal roads without much felling of trees.



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