

**'AN IMPACT OF CHAIN-FREE CORRALS ON
SUSTAINABLE ELEPHANT TOURISM'
(A RESEARCH BASED INTERNSHIP IN THARU
VILLAGE RESORT)**

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BSc. Forestry



**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF FORESTRY
HETAUDA CAMPUS
HETAUDA**

**REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELORS OF SCIENCE IN
FORESTRY**

APRIL, 2019

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Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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April, 2019

[without Page no]

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Citation:

Shrestha, S., 2019. “ *An Impact of Chain-Free Corral on Sustainable Elephant Tourism (A Research Based Internship in Tharu Village Resort)*” B.Sc. Forestry Report submitted to Tribhuvan University, Institute of Forestry, Hetauda, Nepal.

22nd April, 2019

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

The report attached hereto entitled '**AN IMPACT OF CHAIN-FREE CORRALS ON SUSTAINABLE ELEPHANT TOURISM**' (**A RESEARCH BASED INTERNSHIP**) submitted by **Sweta Shrestha** in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelors of Science in **Forestry** is hereby accepted.

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DECLARATION

I, Sweta Shrestha, hereby declare that this report entitled “AN IMPACT OF CHAIN-FREE CORRALS ON SUSTAINABLE ELEPHANT TOURISM (A RESEARCH BASED INTERNSHIP IN THARU VILLAGE RESORT)” is a thesis report based on primary work and all the sources of information used are duly acknowledged. This work has not been submitted to any other university for any academic award.

.....

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the outset, I consider it my pleasant duty to express my profound sense of gratitude to those who assisted me to finish my work.

First of all I am extremely grateful to the founder of Elephant Aid International, **Carol Buckley** for giving me the initial insights of term 'Chain-free corral for captive elephants'. If it was not her then I would not be at this level today.

Similarly, my sincere thanks are due to the founder of 'Association Moey' **Ms. Lena Quenard**, former manager of Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge, **Ms. Gaurie Malakar** and **Dr. Trish London** for introducing me to Tiger Tops and helping me to get in touch with the authorities.

Likewise, I am deeply indebted to the Managing Director of Tiger Tops Nepal; **Mr. Jack Edward** for supporting me for my research based internship at the elephant camp. To my field supervisor and manager of Tharu Village Resort, **Mr. Dhan Bahadur Chaudhary**, your contribution in providing me continuous supervision and encouragement is forever going to guide me in my wildlife tourism career path, thank you sir.

I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the important role of the operation officers, naturalists, elephant camp supervisor and all twenty mahouts for their frequent information sharing, guidance and creating a friendly environment and providing the full cooperation with my work.

Furthermore, distinguish appreciation also goes to the management of Institute for Forestry for accepting my research based internship as a part of the academic assessment to enable students gain insights of the aspiring work and research experience before graduating. Many thanks go to my advisor **Mr. Rajbabu Pahadi** for giving me continuous supervision creating ease on my work.

Once again I wish to thank all those whose kind help and co-operation enabled me to accomplish this assiduous task.

Sweta Shrestha

22/04/201

ABSTRACT

The study on **Sustainable Elephant Tourism** carried out from 20th of January to 15th of April 2019 in Tharu Village Resort, Kawasoti Nepal. The research was entitled “**An Impact of Chain-free Corral on Sustainable Elephant Tourism “(A Research Based Internship in Tharu Village Resort)**”. The Elephant camp of Tharu Village Resort assigned for the internship work and research purpose. This study aimed to find the impact of chain-free corral on sustainable elephant tourism and learn the work of changed tourism activities prevailed in Tharu Village Resort.

Various Participatory Rural Appraisal tools including focus group discussion, semi-structure questionnaire survey for national and international tourist and direct observation were carried out to collect the primary data. Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using MS Excel.

Discontinuing the traditional elephant safari, establishing chain-free corral for captive elephants and introducing changed elephant tourism activities had a profound effect on sustainability of tourism at Tharu Village Resort. From the research work it was found that there were seen tremendous changes in the behavior of captive elephants making them happier, healthier and more socialized among the herds. Even the elephant handlers noticed major changes in elephant where elephants now lacked any stereotypical behavior and foot diseases and arthritis. The only thing that bothered the handlers was the stubbornness of elephant which made it harder for them to control, but they assured it will resolve with continuous connection and affection.

Most of the International tourists selected Tharu Village Resort because of the improved system of chain-free corral and elephant activities despite the expenses. Chain-free corral has set popularity mainly on international tourist but likely is unpopular in Nepalese people; they are unaware about the existence of this practice and the new system of chain-free corrals for captive elephants. Hence it is important to create awareness among both national and international society about unchaining captive elephants and replacing elephant safari with other forms of elephant activities.

Key-words: *Tharu Village Resort, Chain-free corral, sustainable tourism.*

Abstract in Nepali

शोध सारशं

दीर्घकालीन हात्ती पर्यटनको यस अध्यन सन २०१९ जनवरी २० देखि अप्रिल १५ सम्म कावसोती नेपालको थारु भिलेज रिजोर्टमा गरिएको थियो। यस अनुसन्धान को नाम “एन इम्प्याक्ट अफ चेन-फ्री कोरल अन सस्टेनेबल इलिफेन्ट टुरिसम (अ रिसर्च बेस्ड इन्टर्नर्शिप इन थारु भिलेज रिजोर्ट)” हो। थारु भिलेजको इलिफेन्ट क्याम्प मेरो इन्टर्नर्शिप र अनुसन्धानको लागि तोकिएको थियो। चेन-फ्री कोरलले हात्ती पर्यटनलाई दीर्घकालीन बनाउन कस्तो प्रभाव परेको छ र त्यहा परिवर्तन गरिएको पर्यटकिय कार्य सिक्ने यस अध्यनको उद्देश्य रहेको थियो।

फोकस ग्रुप डिस्कसन, राष्ट्रिय र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय पर्यटकहरु माझ सेमि-स्ट्रक्चर केस्चन्नाइर सर्भे अनि डाइरेक्टअब्जर्भेसन जस्तो अनेक सहभागी ग्रामीण मूल्याङ्कन टुल, प्राइमेरी डाटा थुपार्न प्रयोग गरिएको थियो र सो डाटालाई माइक्रोसफ्ट एक्सेलमा क्वालिटेटिभ्ली र क्वाण्टिटेटिभ्ली बिश्लेषण गरियो।

पारम्परिक हात्ती सवारीलाई बन्द गरि बन्धक हात्तीहरुको निम्ती चेन-फ्री कोरलको स्थापना गरेर थारु भिलेजको दीर्घकालीनतामा अघात असर परेको छ। बन्दक हात्तीहरुलाई चेन-फ्री कोरलमा राखिएपछी उनीहरुको व्यवहारमा अत्यधिक परिवर्तन यस अनुसन्धान द्वारा देखा पर्यो। उनीहरु निकै खुशी, स्वस्थ र सामाजिक भैरहेका छन। अहिले हात्ती चालकेहरुले पनि उनीहरुको हात्तीमा आएको परिवर्तनहरु ध्यान गरेका थिए जहाँ हात्तीहरुमा अब कुनै पनि प्रकारको असामान्य व्यवहार र खुट्टाको रोग र गठिया देखा पर्न छोडिएको छ। हात्तीहरुको परिवर्तित व्यवहारले गर्दा चालकेहरुलाई हात्ती सम्हाल्न अलिक असहज भएको हुनाले नयाँ प्रणालीले त्यति सन्तुष्ट दिन नसकेको बताए तर समय सापेक्ष भए पछि चालकेहरुले आफ्नो हात्तीलाई निरन्तर स्नेह सम्बन्ध सङ्ग समाधान गर्ने आश्वासन दिए।

आगमन हुने अधिकांस अन्तराष्ट्रिय पर्यटकहरु केवल हात्ती पर्यटनको नयाँ प्रणालीको कारण थारु भिलेज रिजोर्ट छानेर आएका हुन। यो प्रबिधि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय पर्यटकमा लोकप्रिय बनेको देखिन्छ तर सम्भवतः नेपाली जनताहरुमा खासै लोकप्रिय देखिएन। तिनीहरु यस अभ्यासको अस्तित्व र बन्दक हात्तीहरुलाई शाङला मुक्त गर्नुपर्ने तथ्यबाट असचेत छन। तसर्थ, बन्दक हात्तीहरुलाई शाङला मुक्त गरि परम्परागत हात्ती सवारीलाई नयाँ हात्ती पर्यटक गतिविधि संघ परिवर्तन यो प्रणाली बारे दुबै राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समाजलाई जागरूक बनाउन आवश्यक छ।

मुख्य-सब्द : थारु भिलेज रिजोर्ट, चेन-फ्री कोरल, दीर्घकालीन पर्यटन।

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF REPORT

The internship was of three months of period which started from 20th of January to 15th of April 2019. A research on “Impact of chain-free corral on sustainable elephant tourism” was also conducted on that period of internship. The report was written at the end of the internship to the institute which forms part in the awarding of the degree certificate. Tharu Village Resort was established in 1980 as a company of sustainable travel and responsible wildlife tourism. Currently there are ten departments at the company (Management Department, Naturalist Department, Cook Department, Steward Department, Driving Department, Maintenance Department, Laundry Department, Security Department, Farm Department and Elephant Department) and each one of them has been projected to comprise of several divisions. I was assigned to the Elephant Department. The main duty was to assist the elephant camp supervisor and elephant handlers with daily elephant activities and carry out the research to fulfill the objectives by observing the behavior of the chain-free captive elephants and recording the tourist's perceptions via questionnaire survey. It included various tasks depending on the daily activities like elephant camp visit and kuchhi making, elephant walk in the buffer zone forest, elephant grass cutting and cleaning the elephant corral. However, the foremost area that I specialized was bonding with maximum guests and sharing the knowledge of elephants during the elephant walk activity. I was the first person ever to be given this opportunity ever since the company was established.

An internship is an extensive program through which an intern can learn the practical aspects of what is taught between the four walls of the University lecture halls. The internship help students to learn and understand what actually happen on the field of wildlife tourism as compared to what they have studied in the school. This is a report includes the objective of research and internship, the profile of the chosen organization of the intern, duties and schedules performed in the organization, the

contributions of the intern to the organization, observation of elephant behavior in chain-free corral, recording the tourist's perception regarding the improved vs. traditional elephant tourism system, various lessons learnt, challenges encountered, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

The main objective of this work was to study the impact of chain-free corrals on sustainable elephant tourism in Chitwan National Park.

Specific Objective

1. To study the occurrence or prevalence of normal or abnormal behavior of captive elephants upon release into a natural environment (chain-free corral).
2. To study the relationship between Tharu culture, elephant and its handler.
3. To study the perception of national and international tourist visiting Tharu Village Resort regarding the traditional and improved tourism system.
4. To study/compare between the existing traditional practice of handling elephant and the newly introduced chain free practice.

1.3 RATIONALE OF RESEARCH

Realizing the importance of elephant in captivity and integrating it with business to form a sustainable and responsible form of tourism, Tiger Tops Group of company started chain-free corral for captive elephant discontinuing the traditional elephant rides and introducing new elephant activities. Tharu Village Resort is the only private industry to successfully establish chain-free corral and discontinue elephant ride since 2015 (Tiger Tops, 2018). In order to evaluate the perception of tourists and the elephant handlers regarding the newly introduced chain-free practice and more over to find the impacts of this system in elephants and to learn the culture of new dimensional wildlife tourism industry, and to aware people about the whole chaining process of captive elephants, this research based internship was carried out at Tharu Village Resort.

1.4 PROFILE OF THE ORGANIZATION/ STUDY AREA

1.4.1 BACKGROUND

Tharu Village Resort was built in 1980 and has been operating ever since. The Lodge boundary occupy close to 12 hectares, which includes the land used to care for their animals and organic farm. Tharu Lodge strive to give their guest the most rewarding and unique elephant experience from a natural observant perspective for which they have established new operation Elephant Camp located on the premises of Tharu Village Resort. (Tiger Tops, 2018)

In 2015, Tharu Village Resort decided to stop all elephant-back safaris due to the stress it caused the herd on encountering dangerous wildlife in an unnatural way. In addition they decided to drastically improve the stabling conditions by building large, spacious corrals over 18 acres of their property for the herd to roam, socialize and relax which is termed as chain-free corrals (Tiger Tops, 2018). The total of 10 elephants are kept in 7 corrals in which four elephants live single whereas remaining six elephants live in three corrals forming their pairs according to their natural groupings. The corrals are run by the solar powered electric fence which restricts the elephant to the confined space and visitors to get in tact with the elephants in absence of the mahout.

1.4.2 MISSION

Tharu Village Lodge is equivalent to five star rating tourism business organizations which has a very sensitive mission to conserve the captive elephant's right and welfare, by turning itself to whole new dimension of tourism and business.

It aims to create and give their guest the most personal and meaningful experience with the elephants and allow them to connect with the elephants in a more profound but unobtrusive way, by spending time with elephants throughout the day getting to know their individual personalities, behavior and habits. (Tiger Tops, 2018)

1.4.2 Map of Study Area

Tharu Village Resort is located at Kawasoti 15 of Nawalparasi district. It lies adjacent to Amaltari buffer zone home stays near Gundrahi Dhakaha community forest of Chitwan National Park.

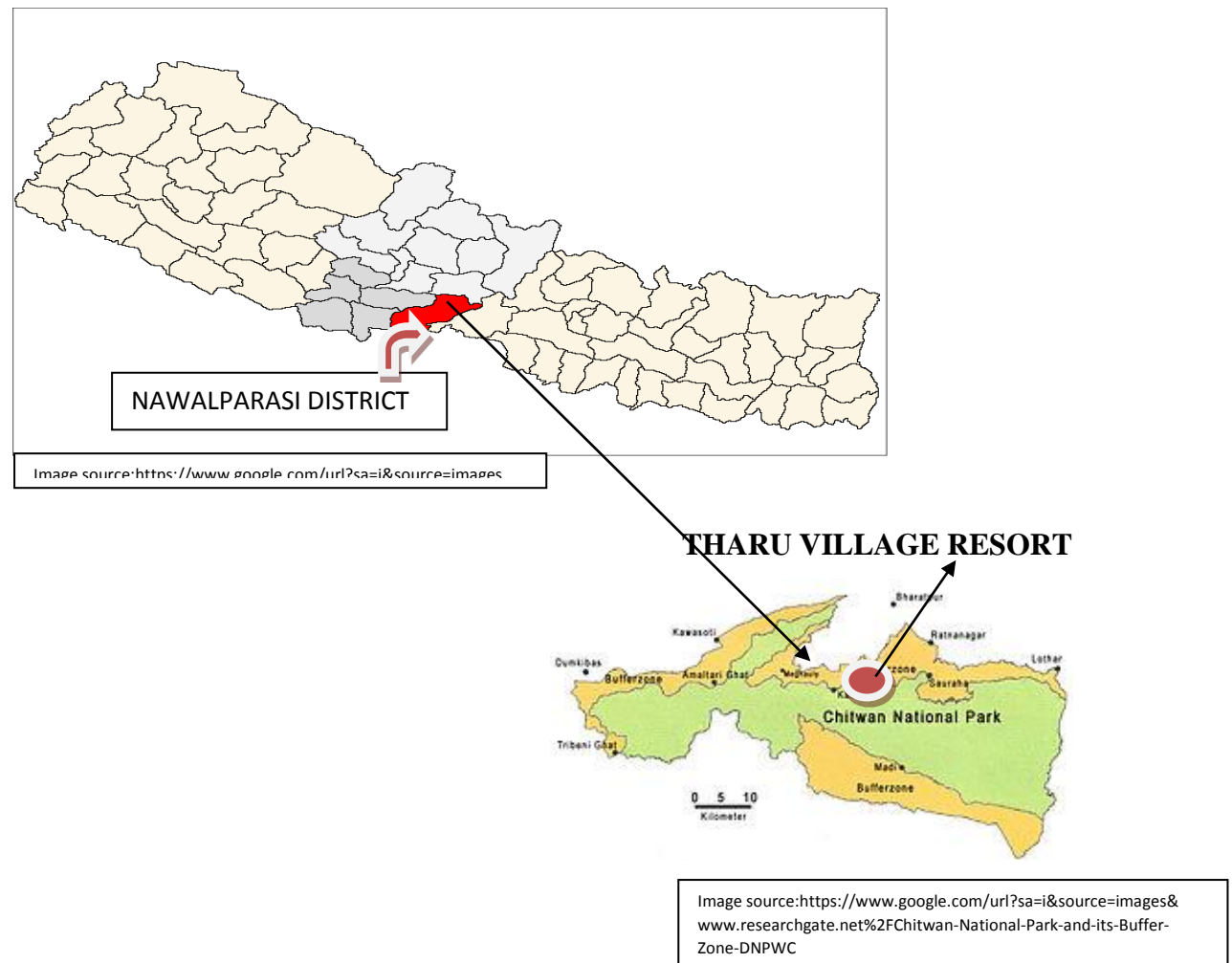


Figure 1 Map Showing Study Area, Tharu Village Resort.

1.4.3 OBJECTIVE

1. To provide the most rewarding and unique elephant experience from a natural observant perspective.
2. To let the elephants be elephants as much as possible by giving them the most natural existence possible in captivity.
3. To provide its guest with a deeper understanding of elephants; the elephants' impact on the eco-system; the mutual dependency between the elephants and the jungle; and guest's positive impact by choosing to be responsible tourist. (Tiger Tops, 2018)

1.4.4 ACTIVITIES

Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge provides following list of activities to the guests;

Elephant encounters; this includes couple of activities completely dedicated to the elephants of the camp. They are:

Grass cutting by the river (morning activity)

The guests follow the elephants to the grass-lands, where the mahouts cut and collect the grass for the elephants to eat lunch during the day. This activity helps to experience the natural movement of elephant through the grass grazing in the morning mist balance and notice the balance and synchronization between the elephant and mahout working together for each other. The guests may also learn the grass-cutting and binding techniques from the mahouts. This activity lasts for two hours.

Kuchhi making and mahout/elephant familiarization

The guests are allowed to spend their morning or afternoon time with the mahouts learning how to make kuchhi (elephant sandwiches), hanging around and enjoying the elephants do their things in the corrals or follow any activity the mahouts may have planned for that day. This activity lasts for one hour to one hour thirty minutes.

Elephant Jungle Walk

This is one of the very suitable activities to be so close with the elephants into the natural forest where the route is guided and protected by the elephants from encountering wildlife in the forests. This activity lasts for two hours to three hours depending upon the interest of guests.

Elephant River walks and swims

This activity allows the guest to follow the elephants to the Narayani River, where they go to cool down and to drink. This is summer time activity which usually lasts for two hours.

Other activities conducted by the lodge are:

Jeep safari,

River safari,

Bicycling,

Jungle walk,

Fisherman village visit,

Bird watching,

Organic farm tour/or school tour, and sunset walk.

2 FIELD OF EXPERIENCE

During the internship period, I was assigned at Elephant Department at elephant camp where I had to assist the mahout and naturalist during the elephant activities. At elephant camp I carried out my research using various methodologies.

2.1 DUTIES AND SCHEDULE

I was assigned to the following duties and responsibilities;

- Grass cutting by the river
- Elephant Camp Visit and Kuchhi making.
- Elephant Jungle Walk

Grass cutting by the river

This activity was scheduled at the morning time where the handlers ride the elephant towards the grass-land by the river bank to cut the grass and the guests follow the elephants assisted by the naturalists. I learnt the basic techniques of cutting and binding the grass mean while demonstrating to the guest and interacting with them about their new experience. I also got familiar with the types of elephant grasses and the mode of synchronization between mahout and their elephants.

Elephant Camp Visit and kuchhi making

Depending upon the guest's schedule, this activity usually carried out during the morning or afternoon time. At the beginning, I sat with the mahouts and guest learning to prepare kuchhi for the elephant and then later feed the elephant. Later I assisted the mahout with kuchhi making and helping the new guest to make it by themselves.

Elephant Jungle Walk

In the late afternoon, the guests follow the elephants along with one naturalist into the buffer zone jungle and go for a walk of 2-3 hours depending upon the interest of the guests. The naturalist shows and tells the guest about wildlife and vegetation while moving through the jungle, grassland, and wetland with the elephants. I got chance to share the knowledge of her forestry background to the guest while assisting them into the jungle.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION

2.2.1 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

2.2.1.1 ELEPHANT BEHAVIOR OBSERVATION

As per the objectives of the research, the data was collected directly from the field.

Total of 10 elephants were observed in various time tables and situations which were:

- I. Morning activity during grass cutting by the river
- II. late morning or early afternoon during elephant camp visit and kuchhi making
- III. late afternoon during the jungle walk
- IV. At day time when there were no guest and elephants were on their own.
- V. During elephant feeding and water drinking time

2.2.1.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

To study the relation between Tharu Culture, Mahouts and elephants, discussions were conducted with the key informants. These includes the elephant camp staffs i.e. Phanits, Pachuwa and mahouts. Session of interaction were carried out with the individual elephant handlers to collect the behavior data of their respective elephants when the elephants were used to chained three years ago. An array of conversation and verbal questions were asked with the mahout about their feelings towards their

elephants and about the new concept of chain-free corrals and the corrals have impacted the mahouts in both positive and negative way.

2.2.1.3 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Sets of questionnaires were developed to achieve the research objectives that are given in the Annex I. The questionnaire contained questions related to experience of international and national tourist regarding the traditional and improved elephant safari system and semi-structured questions especially focusing on the chain-free corral and sustainable tourism.

Other set contained the ranking level of satisfaction of the elephant handlers with the chain-free corral system prevailed at Tiger Tops Tharu lodge which were scaled form "not-all satisfied to very satisfy numbering 1 to 5 as an interval scale".

2.2.2 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

Secondary data were collected mainly by the online website of Elephant Aid International and Tiger Tops and Information booklet of Tharu Village Resort.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected during the field work were categorized. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected from various sources were processed and analyzed to provide defined objectives. The data were logically interpreted along with simple tables, charts and graphs. Mainly Microsoft Excel work sheet was used to analyze the information.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This Chapter presents a general overview of the research results and discussions on them. All relevant information which was important in assessing the objectives of the study is summarized in this chapter.

3.1 Innate Identity of Respondents

Innate identity of the respondents is illustrated in this chapter. Gender, age, and Nationality of the related different respondents' categories are discussed sequentially and presented in tabular forms as well as on different chart types.

3.1.1 Sex of Respondents

65% of respondents were male while 35% were female. The elephant handlers of Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge were males because no females were employed as the elephant handlers. The statuses of the respondents are arranged in the following table no.1.

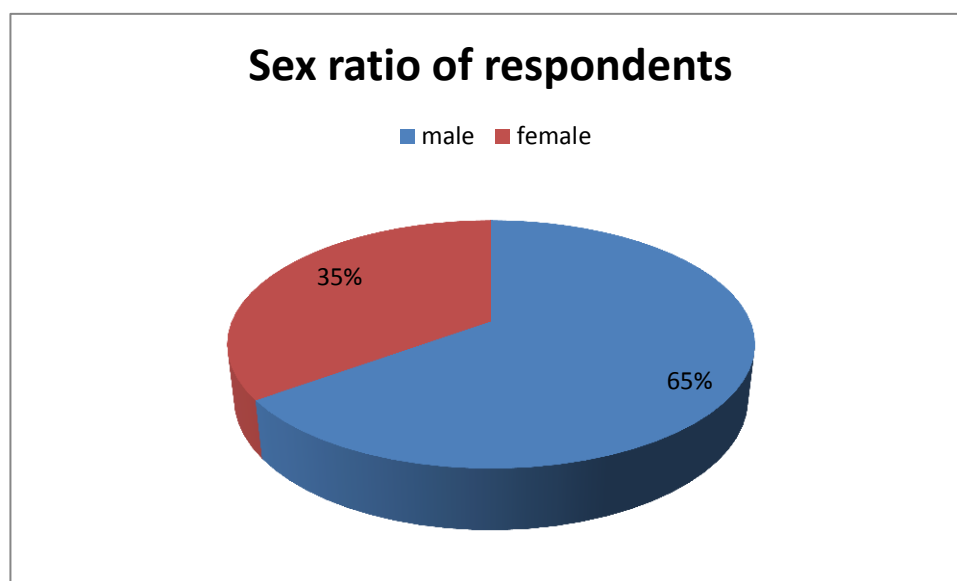
Table 1 Sex of respondents

| Category of respondents | Sex | No. of respondents |
|-------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Tourists | Male | 33 |
| | Female | 28 |
| Elephant handlers | Male | 20 |
| Total | | 81 |

(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

Sex of the total respondents is shown in the following figure 2.

Figure 2: Pie chart showing the sex ratio of respondents



(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

3.1.2 Age Category of the Respondents

The total numbers of national and international visitors were categorized according to the age class with an interval of ten and are shown in the table no.2.

Table 2: Age Class of the respondents.

| Age class (in years) | frequency(in number) |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 11- 20 | 8 |
| 21- 30 | 18 |
| 31-40 | 13 |
| 41-50 | 5 |
| 51-60 | 8 |
| 61-70 | 7 |
| 71-80 | 2 |
| Total | 61 |

(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

3.1.3 Nationality of the Respondents

The total numbers of visitors were categorized according to their nationality which is shown below in the table no.3.

Table 3: Nationality of the Respondents

| Nationality | Male | Female |
|-------------|------|--------|
| Nepalese | 12 | 5 |
| British | 8 | 9 |
| American | 4 | 9 |
| Canadian | 2 | 1 |
| Finnish | 1 | 1 |
| Italian | 1 | 1 |
| German | 2 | |
| French | 1 | 1 |
| Swiss | | 1 |
| Filipino | 1 | |
| Turkish | 1 | |
| Total | 33 | 28 |

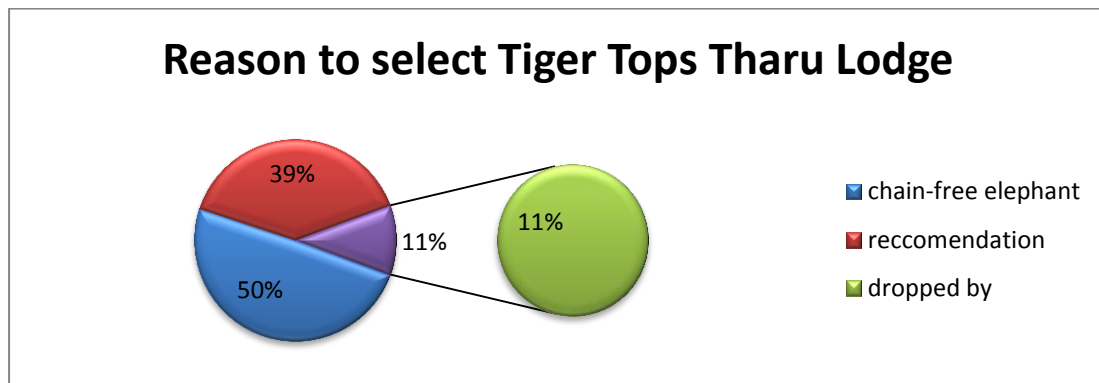
(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

3.2 Perception of Respondents

Two types of respondents were there who were highly impacted by the traditional elephant safari and improved elephant safari systems. They were the National and international tourists and the elephant handlers.

From the questionnaire survey carried out to the tourists, it was known that 49% (10 American, 9 British, 8 Nepalese, 1 Swiss, 1 French and 1 Turkish) of total visitors had selected Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge due to elephants in chain-free corrals, 39% (3 American, 8 British, 3 Canadian, 2 German, 2 Nepalese, 2 Finnish, 2 Italian and one each of Filipino, French) of total visitors had selected tiger tops as per the recommendation by their families, friends and travel sites while 11% (7 Nepalese) of total visitors had accidentally stopped by to see the elephants without prior knowledge of the chain-free corrals. The result is shown in figure 3.

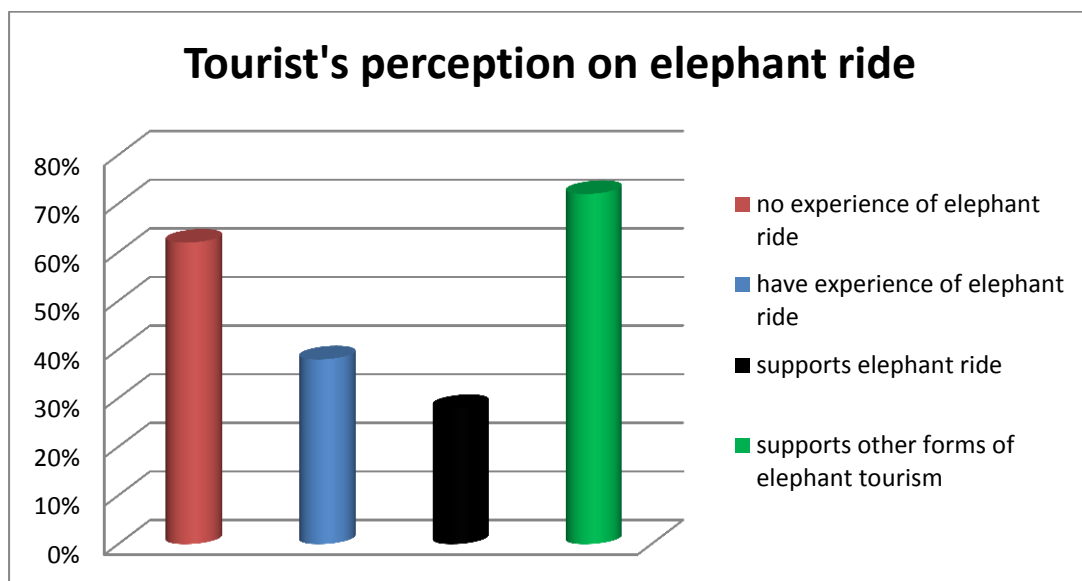
Figure 3: Pie Chart showing reasons to select Tiger Tops



(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

From the survey it was found out that 62% of total respondents do not had experience of elephant ride safari where as 38% had experience of elephant ride. It was seen that 28% of total respondents supports the elephant ride where as 72% of total respondents were totally against elephant ride and supports the changed elephant tourism system.

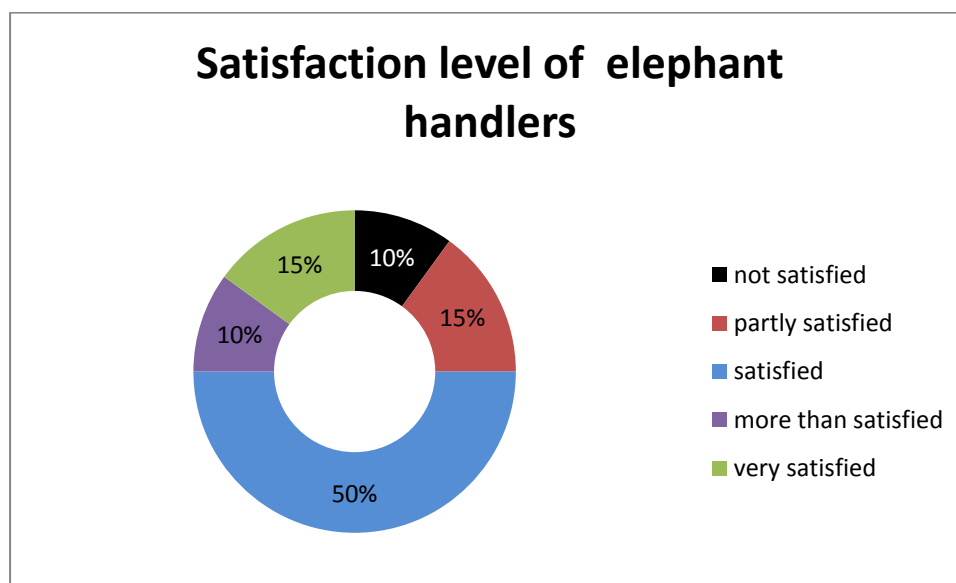
Figure 4: Bar Graph showing the tourist's perception on elephant ride



(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

After conducting the focus group discussion with the key respondents' i.e. all the elephant handlers and asking them to rank the level of satisfaction which was ranked from "not satisfied at all", "partly satisfied", "satisfied", "more than satisfied" and "very satisfied". The result is shown in the following figure 5.

Figure 5: Pie chart showing satisfaction level of respondents.



(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

At Elephant camp there are total of 10 elephants and altogether 20 elephant handlers. They were categorized according to their handling capacity. Their designations were viz. Phanit (first person handler), Pachuwa (second person handler) and Mahout (third person handler) who is also an all-rounder handle. Each elephants had two handlers. Most of them were teamed as Phanit and Mahout or Mahout and Pachuwa. Most of the handlers had the minimum of 10 years' experience of handling chained captive elephants. The chain-free system was whole new concept for the Lodge and the elephant handlers as well but it was noticed that the handlers were facing bit of difficulties handling the elephants after setting them at chain-free corrals, the elephants were trying to ignore the commands of their handlers as well due to which the handlers were facing difficulties in controlling without giving any physical punishment to the elephants.

3.6 Impacts of Chain-free corrals on Elephant Behavior

Visual observation to study the behavior of elephants at the different time table and activities carried out with the guests was done. Noting down the current observed behavior and comparing with the behavior of elephants when they used to be chained, I found differences. The behavior of now and then are generalized in the table no.4 below.

Table 4: Differences in behavior of elephants now and then.

| Behavior of elephants when they used to be chained | Behavior of elephants now when they are at chain-free corral |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gulab Kali, Dibya Kali, Raj Kali and Sona kali had the stereo typical behavior of nodding their head up and down, moving their body back and forth and continuously moving their both legs back and forth respectively. | These elephants does not show these type of behavior while few nods their head when they see the visitors in order to ask for food |
| They often possessed foot diseases and arthritis by standing on their own fecal wastes. | Their feet are free from any diseases, their nail gets trimmed once in every six months and their legs are healthy. |
| Handlers used the ankuses to beat the elephants in order to control and ask to detect wild animals in forest. | The handlers do not use any ankuses to punish elephants and there is no elephant ride system now. |
| Elephants used to stand alone on their shelter without getting socialized with other elephants. | Six out of ten elephants are paired with each other and have shown the playfulness nature creating strong bond. |
| Elephants did not get any chances to get closer with the visitors. | Elephants usually get attached with the visitors and show the possession of happiness by flapping their ears and licking the hands of visitors while getting fed by them. |
| They had less appetite due to the stress developed by the punishment and the chains. | They now get more nutritious foods with the mixture of kuchhi, varieties of green grasses, banana trunk and sugarcanes, etc. |
| They used to sniff other wild animals in the forest easily which means they were fearless. | Most of the elephants now get scared with dogs, cats and even the cattle from the village when they go out for the walk. |
| The elephants were easy to control by their handlers | They are getting stubborn and take time to listen to their handler's command. |
| They used to have their meal individually | Some of the paired elephants have grown the feeling of jealousy when they are fed by their handlers and try to steal from their companion. |

(Source: Field Survey, 2019)

Chapter-IV

4 Lesson Learnt and Challenges

4.1 Lesson Learnt

During the internship and research period, I have learnt the following lesson:

- Learn to make the food of elephant and grass cutting and binding techniques.
- Ability to learn various verbal command used by handlers to handle elephants.
- Recognized the particular vocals of few elephants and their meaning.
- Learn about the functioning of chain-free corrals.
- Understanding of Tharu Language and its culture.
- Improved verbal communication skill.
- Be friended with few elephants.
- Learn the culture of new dimensional eco-tourism lodge.

4.2 Challenges

Following were the challenges that I faced during the internship period:

- New lifestyle.
- Strict schedule.
- Encountered many tick bites.
- Skin irritation by the elephant grass.
- Fear of wild animal in the jungle during elephant walk.
- Hard time bonding with the elephants.

5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Elephants are the most intelligent, social and sentiment animal in whole animal kingdom. Dating back to history, most of the Asian elephants of Nepal and India are captivated and are chained and treating them crucially after gaining all kinds of physical and labor benefits from elephants. To fight for the right of elephants, Carol Buckley initiated the chain-free corral justifying it to be harmless and the best alternative to shelter them in captivity. Comparing the behavior of elephants when they were chained with the observed behavior when they are now at chain-free corral, the idea of establishing this new system at Tharu Village resort seemed to be worth it. People can actually feel the sentiment of happiness in the eyes of elephants when they are in their corrals free from sacking chains.

The elephant handlers were trying their utmost to adapt with the new system of chain-free and handling the elephants according to it. It depends upon the handlers on how they try to take control over their elephants and it too depends upon the elephant whether or not it accepts handlers. Despite the easiness to control elephant from traditional method, the handlers are being more aware about the welfare of the elephants and accepting the new improved system at Tharu Village resort.

The 3 months period of research based internship was productive and adventitious for my work and research experience. With the research I have found that the elephants are way much happier and healthier in their chain-free corral. Handlers noticed improvement in elephant's health because they were free from any kind of stress and stereotypical behaviors. Elephants seem to be very well attached with the tourists and even the tourists are very satisfied to be so close with the elephants rather than just riding on the back of elephant. The main reason for the international tourists to select Tharu Village Resort was because of chain-free elephants despite their expenses when compared to other eco lodges.

As per tourists, chain-free corral is the right way of providing the captive elephants their welfare rights that too discontinuing the elephant safari. Nepal has captive elephants used in tourism and this new system of chain-free corral can be the main attraction for both national and international tourist hence giving sustainability to the elephant tourism. Almost of the tourist suggested implementing chain-free corral in other eco lodges which will enhance the life expectancy of captive elephants and will directly aid to the sustainability of elephant tourism.

More over in terms of academic view, this system would create good platform for the students to research on elephants in chain-free corral without missing glimpse of elephant's activities. The result of my research shows that the chain-free system helped in enhancing the health of elephants, conserving the animal right and welfare and motivating Nepalese people to create the diverse and responsible form of tourism which will help in maintaining the sustainability.

Finally this research based internship period included providing real life experience and exposure, thus gaining first-hand exposure of working in the real world, granting the opportunity to learn more about my self-potentials and abilities, getting connected and developing professional network. I gained a lot of experience, especially in the studying the vocal and movement of elephants. Before starting the work, my ideas did not match the experiences I have gained during my internship.

6.2 Recommendation

After carrying out questionnaire survey, it was seen that international guests coming to lodge were highly recommended by the travel finders and by their friends and families which means it is quite famous among the western tourist whereas for internal tourists, this lodge has not set much popularity. Many Nepalese people are totally unaware about the existence of this place and the new system of chain-free corrals for captive elephants. Hence, I recommend to the management of Tiger Tops to advertise in Nepalese society as well.

This place has the highest number of captive elephant in chain-free corral which will create a great platform for scientific research of elephants in Nepal for researchers. As

per my vision of creating more tourism attraction, if possible, the operation can think of introducing another system of elephant activities where national and international can come as volunteers at elephant camp and learn about the daily movements and works for elephants.

Reference

De Vries in, L. 2016. *Born to be free*. [Online].

Tiger Tops, 2018. *Tharu Village Resort Information Booklet*

Buckley Carol, 2007: Elephant Aid International ,*Chain Free Means Pain Free* [Online].

Appendices

ANNEX I

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire used for the interview with the national and international tourists visiting Tharu Village Resort, Elephant camp.

Name: _____

Age: _____ **Sex:** F ☐ M ☐ Others ☐

Nationality: _____

1. Why did you choose Tiger Tops as your destination?

2. Have you ever experienced elephant safari (ride/walk/both)?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

• If yes

◆ When and Where?

◆ Did you enjoy the Elephant Safari (ride/walk/both)?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Do you favor Elephant Safari (ride/walk/both)?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Have you ever visited this place before?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

• If yes

◆ Are there any differences you get in between these two visits?

The following questions are about the chain-free system prevailed here at the Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge.

A chain-free corral is a space constructed using state-of-the-art solar-powered electric fencing, which is harmless to elephants and other wildlife, the corrals allow working elephants to live as natural a life as possible in captivity and eliminate the need for chains.

5. Have you ever heard of chain free corral before?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes

- ◆ Where did you hear this term for the first time?

6. Do you think elephants should be kept in Chain-free corrals?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes/no

- ◆ Why?

7. Are you familiar with the term sustainable tourism?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Do you think chain-free corrals are helping in sustainable elephant tourism?

➤ ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes/no

- ◆ How?

Any feedback!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

ANNEX II

Approval Letter from Tharu Village Resort for the internship.



ANNEX III

Approval Letter from field supervisor.

Regd. No. 59905/065/066
PAN: 303366344

 **Tharu Village Resort Pvt. Ltd.** 28th January, 2019



To,
The campus Chief,
Institute of forestry, Hetauda Campus
Hetauda, Makawanpur.

Subject:- Letter for supervision of intern student for her intern program

Respected sir,

Being manager of the Tharu Village Resort of The Tiger Tops Nepal, Kawasoti 15, Nawal Parasi, Nepal. I am having the responsibility to overall coordination, management and implementation of her proposed activities of internship. Accordingly as per the partial fulfillment of requirements of your campus curriculum, I duly accept to guide *Ms. Sweta Shrestha* for her intern program. After reviewing her curriculum vitae and her application, her energy, enthusiasm and dedication towards her work has fascinated me and has made me realize she needs a guidance to get her destination for which I can contribute effectively.

Therefore, I assure that I will be supervising *Ms. Sweta Shrestha* for 3 months while getting engaged in the study "*Impact of Chain-Free Corrals on Sustainable Elephant Tourism*" under The Tiger Tops Nepal.

Sincerely,
DB Chaudhary
Manager
Tharu Village Resort

P.O. Box: 242, Kathmandu, Nepal, Tel: +977 (01) 4411 225, Fax: +977 (01) 4428 088
Email: info@tigertops.com, URL: www.tigertops.com

PHOTO PLATE



Plate1: Tents at Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge Elephant Camp



Plate2: Sandra Kali receiving kuchhi from the guest.



Plate3: Elephant Handlers.



Plate4: Naturalist briefing about kuchhi making at elephant camp.



Plate5: Respondents of questionnaire survey.



Plate6: Interviewing elephant handlers.



Plate7: Feeding Sundar Kali



Plate8: Grass cutting with the guest.



Plate9: Elephant walk at Gundrahi Dhakaha Community Forest, Amaltari.



Plate10: *Rhinoceros unicornis* spotted during elephant walk.



Plate11: Enjoying Elephant walk at buffer zone



Plate12: GRO bonds with Chanchankali



Plate13: Mummy and baby rhino at buffer zone.