PARTNERSHIP

nership based on common values of democracy, rule of Llaw, and multilateralism. Over the years, their defence and security cooperation has strengthened to address global security challenges, including terrorism, cyber threats, maritime security, and defence technology collaboration. The India-EU Security Dialogue, established in 2006, has facilitated regular consultations on regional and global security issues. India and the EU have also enhanced cooperation through joint working groups on counterterrorism, cyber security, and hybrid threats. The India-EU Summit 2020 further emphasized the need for a robust security partnership, particularly in emerging domains. The EU recognizes India as a key partner in ensuring stability in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2021, the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific highlighted India's role in securing sea lanes, promoting maritime domain awareness, and countering piracy. Joint naval exercises, such as the EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue, strengthen cooperation in this area. The first-ever joint naval exercise between India and the EU took place in 2021, demonstrating their shared commitment to freedom of navigation and rule-based international order. India and the EU are exploring joint defence production and technology transfer. The EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework offers opportunities for Indian defence companies to collaborate with European counterparts in defence research and development. Additionally, India's push for self-reliance in defence (Aatmanirbhar Bharat) aligns with EU efforts to diversify its supply chains, opening avenues for joint ventures in the aerospace and defence sector. Both sides actively share intelligence and best practices in coun-

INDIA-EU DEFENCE Changing Mindsets: Making Ear & Hearing Care a Reality for All

earing health is vital to overall well-being, yet it is often overall According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 1.5 billion people worldwide experience hearing loss, with nearly 430 million requiring rehabilitation. Without timely intervention, these numbers are expected to rise, affecting communication, cognitive function, and quality of life. Despite the availability of hearing care solutions, many individuals do not seek help due to stigma, misinformation, or lack of access. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Jammu, the institution has been at the forefront of promoting hearing health and awareness. Dr. Gupta's commitment to accessible healthcare has paved the way for innovative and hearing care initiatives, ensuring that no one is left unheard. Supported by a dedicated team of experts, including Dr. Darwin Kaushal (Additional Professor), Dr. Amardeep Singh (Associate Professor), Dr. Pooja, Dr. Youshita (Senior Resident), Dr. Muskan (Junior Resident), Nityansh Saluja, Akshita Gupta, and Reyaz Ahmad (Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologist), AHMS Jammu has become a

beacon of hope for those struggling with

hearing challenges.

Let's focus on awareness, early intervention, and effective management for this World Hearing Day to ensure that hearing health becomes a priority for all.

The Importance of Newborn Hearing

Newborn hearing screening is a crucial first step in ensuring a child's healthy development. Hearing loss detected at birth allows for early intervention, preventing speech and language delays impacting learning and social interactions. Identifying hearing impairment early enables families and healthcare providers to implement necessary measures for better long-term out-

- ▶ Early identification of hearing loss is essential for speech, language, and cognitive
- ▶ Newborn hearing screening helps detect hearing impairment at birth, enabling timely interventions such as hearing aids or cochlear implants.
- ▶ Undiagnosed hearing loss in infants can lead to delayed speech, learning difficulties, and social challenges.
- ▶ Parents should ensure their newborn undergoes hearing screening to support optimal developmental progress

The Impact of Prolonged Hearing Loss Untreated hearing loss can lead to social isolation, depression, and cognitive decline, especially in the elderly.

- ▶ Research indicates a strong link between hearing loss and dementia, making early detection and management critical.
- ▶ Difficulty in communication can cause frustration, reduced work productivity, and strained personal relationships.
- ▶ Many older adults struggle with hearing loss without realizing its full impact on their mental and emotional health

Steps to Maintain Hearing Health

- ▶ Protect your ears from loud noise: Use ear protection in noisy environments and keep personal devices at safe volume levels. ▶ Schedule regular hearing check-ups:
- Early detection can prevent further deterioration and improve treatment outcomes.
- ▶ Practice proper ear hygiene: Avoid inserting cotton swabs or other objects into the ear canal.
- ▶ Address ear infections promptly: Seek medical attention instead of self-medicating to prevent complications.

The Role of Hearing Devices and Professional Guidance

Hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices can significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals with hearing loss. However, these devices should only be used after a comprehensive

hearing evaluation. An individual may experience discomfort, inadequate amplification, or even auditory strain without proper assessment. A professional evaluation ensures the selected device meets the individual's hearing needs, optimizing speech clarity and overall auditory function. Personalized fittings by an audiologist further enhance the listening experience, improving environmental awareness and communication. Mobile apps and assistive devices can also help in phone conversations and public gatherings, making daily interactions smoother and more accessible.

A Call to Action

Early intervention and awareness are essential in reducing the long-term impact of hearing loss. This World Hearing Day, let's encourage routine hearing screenings, promote safe listening habits, and ensure access to quality hearing care.

Under the leadership of Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta, AHMS Jammu has set an example in prioritizing hearing health and providing comprehensive care to those in need. We can create a more inclusive and hearing-friendly world by spreading awareness and supporting those with hearing challenges. Together, we can ensure that no one is left unheard!

> (The authors are from Department of ENT AIIMS Jammu)

and Its Impact Understanding World NGO

■ DR SONIA VERMA

rold NGO Day is a significant occasion celebrated annually on February 27th, dedicated to recognizing the contributions and impact of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the globe. The day serves as a powerful reminder of the essential roles that these organizations play in addressing various social, economic, and humanitarian challenges. From education and healthcare to disaster relief and poverty alleviation, NGOs strive to create a better world for communities in need.

Historical Context

The roots of World NGO Day can be traced back to the growing recognition of the influence and importance of NGOs in the 20th century. As the world became increasingly aware of global issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, NGOs emerged as vital players in humanitarian efforts. The concept of NGOs began to evolve in the early 19th and 20th centuries, coinciding with various social reform movements that focused on human rights and public welfare.

The need for a dedicated day to honor these organizations became more apparent as their roles expanded and diversified. Organizations like the United Nations recognized that NGOs contributed significantly to achieving global development goals, particularly in the areas of sustainable development and humanitarian response.

This realization culminated in the official recognition of World NGO Day in 2012, following an initiative led by international NGO leaders and policy advocates. The purpose of this day is not only to celebrate the efforts of these organizations but also to spur action and raise awareness about the vital work they conduct.

Implementation and Significance February 27, 2014, marked the first

implementation of World NGO Day, providing a platform for NGOs to showcase their milestones and the positive changes they have fostered within society. This day serves as an opportunity for NGOs to form partnerships, engage with the community, and highlight the stories of individuals they have helped. By showcasing their achievements, NGOs can inspire others to join their missions, volunteer, or contribute in various ways.

World NGO Day transcends national boundaries, facilitating global communication and cooperation among NGOs and supporters. It's a call to action, encouraging individuals, businesses, and governments to consider how they can contribute to and collaborate with NGOs to foster positive

In conclusion, World NGO Day is more than a date on the calendar; it embodies the spirit of giving, compassion, and collaboration. As we observe this special day, we acknowledge the collective effort of NGOs, volunteers, donors, and supporters who work tirelessly to create a brighter future for

The Importance of NGOs

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become essential pillars of modern society, addressing a myriad of social, humanitarian, and environmental challenges that governments and private sectors often struggle to tackle effectively. The ability of NGOs to operate independently of state control allows them to respond quickly to urgent needs, advocate for marginalized communities, and create sustainable solutions that genuinely

Social Issues and NGO Impact

NGOs play a pivotal role in promot-

ing social justice and equality. They often focus on issues such as:

Education: According to UNESCO, approximately 263 million children and youth worldwide are out of school. NGOs work to bridge this gap by constructing schools, providing scholarships, and developing educational programs. For instance, organizations like Teach For All work globally to recruit and train teachers to ensure every child has access to quality edu-

Healthcare: In regions where medical facilities are limited or inaccessible, NGOs step in to provide essential healthcare services. For example, Doctors Without Borders operates in conflict zones, delivering care to those affected by war and natural disasters. Statistics show that in 2021, they provided care to over 11 million people across 70 countries.

Disaster Relief: In times of emergency, NGOs are often the first responders. In response to natural disasters, they mobilize quickly to provide food, water, shelter, and medical International assistance. $_{
m The}$ Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has been pivotal in disaster response, reaching millions of people globally during humanitarian

Environmental Advocacy

Beyond social and humanitarian work, NGOs are critical advocates for environmental protection. They fight against climate change, advocate for wildlife protection, and promote sustainable practices. For instance:

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) works tirelessly to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth. They have gained remarkable success, contributing to the protection of 300+ species and creating numerous protected area networks.

A report by the Global Witness indicated that environmental defenders, often represented by NGOs, have saved thousands of hectares of forests from deforestation, showcasing the profound impact these organizations have on preserving our planet.

Economic Empowerment

NGOs also contribute to economic development by empowering communities through poverty alleviation initiatives. Programs focused on microfinance, vocational training, and skill development have lifted countless people out of poverty. In 2019, the Grameen Bank celebrated helping over 9 million women achieve financial independence through micro-loans.

In conclusion, NGOs are vital in addressing the multifaceted problems faced by communities worldwide. Their unwavering commitment to social causes serves not only as a lifeline for those in need but also as a powerful engine for change, contributing to a more just, equitable, and sustainable world. By championing the essential work of these organizations, we further our collective goal of improving lives and fostering a brighter future for all

NGOs and Their Daily Impact

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engage in a vast array of activities that create meaningful impacts on the lives of individuals and communities every day. Through their commitment to education, healthcare, disaster relief, animal welfare, and poverty alleviation, NGOs not only provide immediate assistance but also foster long-term change. Let's delve into specific roles and actions undertaken by NGOs, supported by inspiring stories and case studies that highlight their significance.

Education

Education is a fundamental right, yet millions lack access to it. NGOs like Room to Read work tirelessly to address this challenge. They establish libraries, create reading programs, and train teachers in low-income countries. For example, in a rural village in India, Room to Read built a library in a local school. The initiative sparked interest in reading among children, leading to higher literacy rates and improved academic performance. For many students, this was not just about education; it was a pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Healthcare

Healthcare initiatives often target underserved populations, ensuring access to essential medical services. In regions like Sub-Saharan Africa. where healthcare is limited, NGOs such as Partners In Health establish clinics and provide life-saving treatments. In one particularly moving account, a woman named Marie was suffering from a treatable illness but faced financial barriers to access care. Through Partners In Health, she received timely medical intervention that not only saved her life but also allowed her to return to her family, ultimately leading to her becoming an advocate for healthcare access in her

Disaster Relief

Natural disasters can wreak havoc, displacing entire communities and overwhelming local resources. NGOs like Direct Relief rush to provide support immediately after calamities. During a devastating earthquake in Haiti, Direct Relief worked relentlessly to deliver medical supplies, hygiene kits, and emergency assistance. Their response grew from delivering medications to establishing temporary clinics. When the dust settled, many families, like that of a young girl named Claire, expressed their gratitude, knowing they had shelter and care due to the swift actions of NGOs.

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is another critical domain where NGOs are making substantial changes. Organizations like The Humane Society rescue abused animals, provide veterinary care, and work on legal initiatives to prevent cruelty. A heartwarming example includes the transformative story of a dog named Max who was found abandoned and injured. Thanks to volunteer efforts from an animal welfare NGO, Max received the medical treatment he desperately needed. He was rehabilitated and subsequently adopted into a loving home, demonstrating the tremendous impact that dedication and compassion can have on saving lives

Poverty Alleviation

The battle against poverty is ongoing, and NGOs are at the forefront of this struggle through empowerment initiatives. Kiva, an online platform for micro-lending, has successfully enabled individuals to fund small loans directly to entrepreneurs across the globe. For instance, a woman named Amina in Kenya used a Kiva loan to start her small business selling fresh fruits and vegetables. With her business flourishing, she not only improved her family's financial situation but also created employment opportunities in her village. Her success story echoes the importance of providing financial resources to break the cycle of poverty.

Environmental Advocacy

Many NGOs focus on environmental protection and sustainability, recognizing the interconnection between ecological health and human wellbeing. The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and promote

sustainable livelihoods. In regions rich in biodiversity, they partner with local farmers to promote eco-friendly agricultural practices. The impactful story of a farmer who shifted to sustainable practices illustrates this. Not only did he see improved yields and incomes, but his commitment also contributed to the conservation of forests, benefiting both wildlife and the local commu-

As these stories demonstrate, NGOs are indispensable players in promoting positive change across various sectors. They empower individuals, respond to crises, and champion the rights of both people and animals. Through their daily work, every individual can contribute to a larger mission of creating a more equitable, sustainable, and humane world.

The Critical Role of Donors

Donors play a crucial role in the functioning of NGOs, serving as the backbone of support that enables these organizations to operate effectively. Without the generosity of donors, NGOs may struggle to fund their programs, provide essential services, and meet the diverse needs of the communities they serve. The impact of donations extends far beyond monetary contributions, encompassing various forms of support that significantly enhance an NGO's capacity to make a difference.

Financial Contributions

While financial donations are vital, they represent only one aspect of supporting an NGO. Monetary funds are primarily used to cover costs, run programs, and purchase necessary supplies. However, consistent financial backing allows NGOs to plan long-term initiatives, making a sustainable impact on the communities they serve.

Volunteerism

One of the most impactful ways individuals can support NGOs is through volunteering. Volunteers share their time, skills, and passion for social

Direct Service: Many NGOs rely on volunteers for hands-on work such as teaching, medical aid, and disaster relief. Engaging in these activities fosters community connections while addressing urgent needs.

Professional Expertise: Experts in various fields can offer invaluable support by providing skills in marketing, legal assistance, and fundraising. This professional input can help NGOs enhance their outreach and efficiency. Resource Donations

Resource donations can significantly

complement financial contributions. Individuals can support NGOs by: Providing Goods: Donating items

like books, clothing, hygiene products, and medical supplies can help alleviate resource shortages faced by NGOs. For example, a clothing drive can provide warm clothing for homeless shel-

Technology Donations: Offering old electronics such as laptops or cameras can streamline operations and enhance outreach efforts. Access to technology enables NGOs to perform better in today's digital age.

Through these diverse forms of support, donors create a lasting impact on NGOs and the communities they serve. Their contributions ultimately foster resilience and hope, promoting a better tomorrow for individuals in

Crowdfunding as a Solution

In recent years, crowdfunding has emerged as a transformative solution for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), allowing them to tap into new avenues of funding and engagement. This modern approach leverages digital platforms to connect NGOs with a diverse audience, ultimately facilitating creative fundraising initiatives

The Digital Revolution

The rise of the internet and social media has revolutionized the way NGOs engage with potential supporters. Platforms like GoFundMe, Kickstarter, and Indiegogo enable NGOs to present their causes directly to the public, eliminating traditional barriers to fundraising. By sharing compelling stories and transparent financial goals, these organizations can reach individuals who may not have previously been aware of their mission or work.

Engaging Younger Generations

Crowdfunding is particularly effective at engaging younger generations, such as Millennials and Generation Z, who are increasingly motivated by social impact. These groups are not only more likely to support causes online but are also inclined to use their social media networks to amplify the message.

Key Benefits of Crowdfunding for

Broader Reach: Crowdfunding platforms provide global visibility that local organizations might struggle to achieve otherwise. NGOs can engage with diverse communities, thereby expanding their supporter base.

Increased Engagement: Interactive campaigns, such as live updates and videos, enhance donor involvement and foster a sense of community around the cause. Supporters can con tribute, share, and advocate, strengthening the NGO's impact through collective effort.

Flexibility: NGOs can create tailored campaigns for specific projects or needs, allowing donors to choose where their contributions make the most difference. This targeted approach often results in higher donor atisfaction and retention.

Success Stories

Many NGOs have successfully utilized crowdfunding to raise substantial funds and support for their initiatives. For instance, a health-focused NGO might launch a crowdfunding campaign to provide medical supplies during an outbreak, reaching its financial goals within days. These campaigns not only provide immediate financial relief but also heighten awareness around pressing issues.

In summary, crowdfunding represents a transformative opportunity for NGOs, enabling them to connect, engage, and rally support for their humanitarian efforts in an increasinglv digital world.

Modern Influences: Technology and Youth

The Role of Young Influencers

In today's digital landscape, young influencers play a pivotal role in promoting the missions of NGOs across the globe. Utilizing platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, they spark conversations around pressing social issues. By sharing compelling stories and personal experiences, these influencers engage their audiences, driving awareness and action towards various causes. Their ability to reach vast numbers of followers allows them to amplify the voices of marginalized communities, catalyzing a wave of support that transcends traditional barri-

Social Media and Digital Activism

Social media has revolutionized activism, providing an accessible platform for NGOs to connect with supporters and share their narrative. Through hashtags, campaigns, and interactive content, organizations can quickly disseminate information about urgent needs and projects. For example, a simple tweet or Instagram post can mobilize thousands, encouraging people to donate, volunteer, or participate in community initiatives. The immediacy of digital activism allows NGOs to respond to crises in real-time. gathering resources and support when

Shaping Public Perception

The influence of technology on public perception cannot be overstated. With young influencers championing social causes, issues like climate change, mental health, and animal welfare have gained prominence. Followers are prompted not only to consume content but to engage and contribute actively. This shift fosters a culture of empathy and social responsibility among the younger generation, highlighting the collective impact of digital engagement.

Key Aspects of Digital Engagement Awareness: Digital platforms provide an avenue to educate followers on NGO missions, projects, and results. This transparency cultivates trust and encourages long-term commitment.

Collective Activism: Campaigns can mobilize communities swiftly, allowing for synchronized actions such as global climate strikes or fundraising events.

Empowerment: Young people harness the power of their online presence to advocate for change, demonstrating that everyone has a unique role in contributing to a better world.

In this evolving landscape, the synergy of technology and youth activism acts as a formidable force, considerably strengthening the outreach and effe tiveness of NGOs. Through their engagement, young activists are not only reshaping public discourse but also paving the way for a more compassionate future.

The Heroes Behind the Scenes

Volunteers are the heart of NGOs. They dedicate countless hours to various causes, from educating children to assisting in disaster relief efforts. Their selfless dedication brings life and energy to the missions they support. Each moment spent in service can create ripples of change, transforming entire communities. Similarly, donors play a critical role by providing the necessary resources that enable NGOs to operate and expand their outreach. Their financial and in-kind contributions sustain essential programs and ensure that help reaches those in need.

Inspiring Hope for a Better Future

Together, these heroes foster hope in uncertain times. Their collective efforts make positive strides towards a future where everyone has access to basic needs, education, and healthcare. By sharing their resources, skills, and passion, they remind us that even the smallest actions can lead to monumental change. The stories of those who have been positively impacted by NGOs are testaments to this powerful fact, inspiring others to join in these essential efforts.

Building a Sustainable Tomorrow

Every interaction-be it a donation, a moment shared in volunteering, or advocacy on social media-contributes to a legacy of empowerment and resilience. It paints a picture of humanity that emphasizes our interconnectedness and shared responsibility. As we celebrate the contributions of NGOs, their supporters, and the communities they serve, let us also commit to playing a part in this ongoing journey toward a more equitable world. By standing together and offering our support, we can ensure that hope flourishes and that we continue inspiring change for generations to come.

(The writer is Director/CEO Synergetic Green Warriors Foundation)