

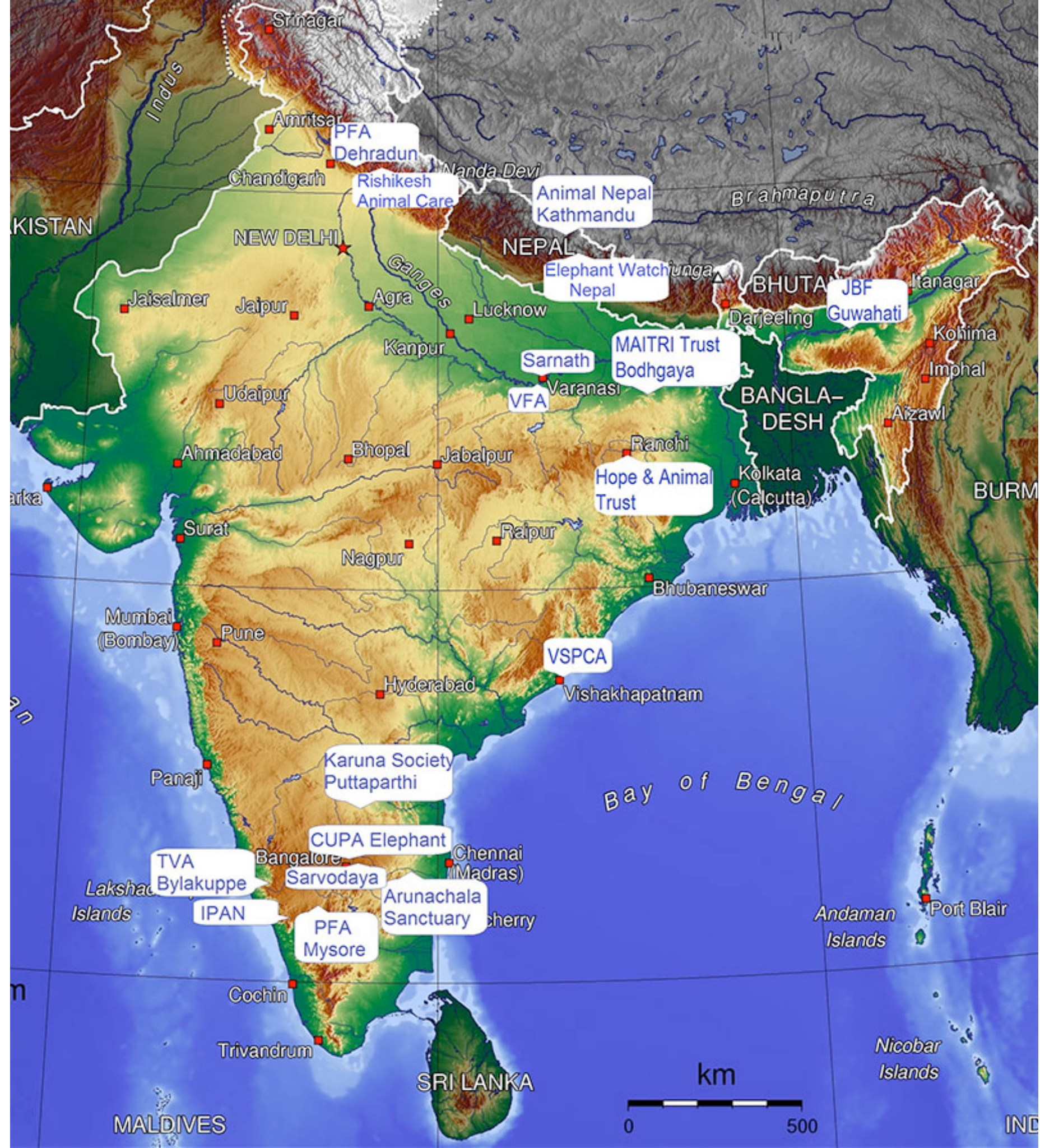
# Ahimsa in Action

Hi everyone, I am here to talk about India's greatest contribution to helping animals.... and that is..... Ahimsa in Action!

I am Eileen Weintraub from Seattle and for the past 18 years years, I have dedicated my life to helping India's animals. In 2008, I founded Help Animals India in order to provide funding and advice to animal protection groups across India.

Here is a map of our current partners. I have a long commute to visit them!







Like many of you here, I have always helped animals through rescue and advocacy. A vegetarian since I was 21, I have also been a practitioner of Eastern religions. India introduced me to my niche - when I was able to find the people who could help me make a difference and make the best use of my passion to help animals.

Help Animals India enables small grassroots organizations the ability to grow and develop, funded building of shelters, spay/neuter campaigns, assistance in disaster relief from the Indian tsunami in 2004 , yearly cyclones, and the recent earthquake in Nepal.

This is Sparky rescued from Kathmandu.



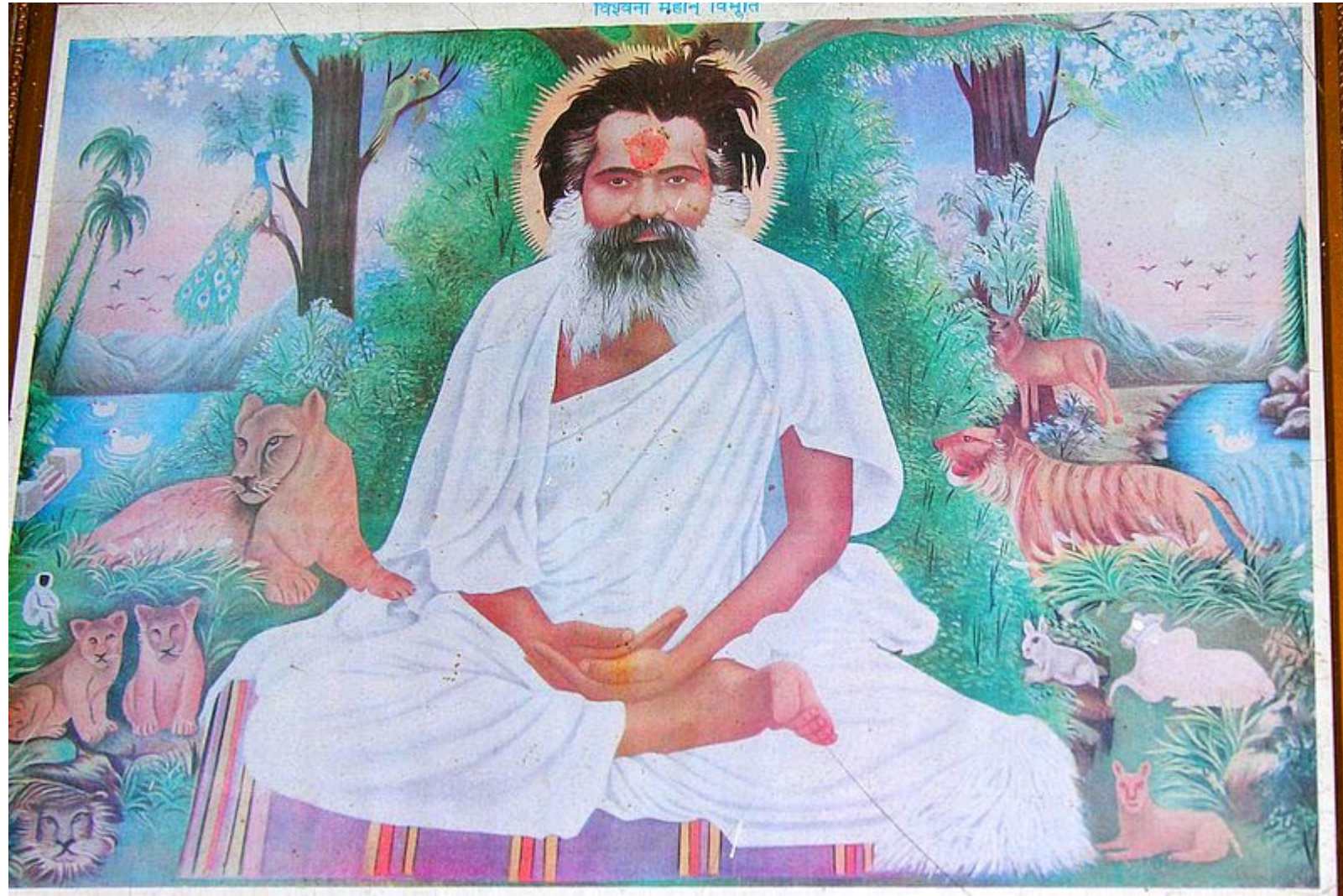
We fund animal rescue for dogs and cats, to cows, elephants, monkeys, birds, and others....

So, why an organization that helps a foreign country ? As a lifelong animal advocate in the USA I saw the need . After my trips to India, I could clearly see the same problems just starting up that we have already addressed here for decades. I knew that I could make a difference, so did what I could.

Why is India the land of ahimsa, the Hindu ideal of nonviolence

There is an ancient heritage of reverence for life.





Yet, contrary to popular belief,  
this is a country where countless animals suffer  
severe neglect. Human overpopulation, poverty,  
pollution, superstition, apathy, and ignorance  
all contribute to the animals' plight. In a country  
where human misery and impoverishment remain  
high, the welfare of destitute animals is low.

Our world is filled with violence against animals and, as  
advocates for animals, we are more keenly  
aware of it than most people.

As individuals we are dedicated to a cause far greater than any one, life  
– that is, as we are dedicated to the suffering of billions of  
animals worldwide – we are warriors for peace  
for *all* beings.

Ancient India had a simple solution to stopping violence with “ahimsa”  
or “non-harming.”

We can recall Ashoka, the Indian Emperor in  
the 3rd century B.C. He saw the terrible results of  
warfare and subsequently abhorred *all*  
violence. So he prohibited all killing,  
included hunting. And for a while, at least, peace and harmony  
prevailed due to his famous edicts.

Before Ashoka, it was the Buddha and, a few centuries  
before him, Mahavira – the founder of Jainism – who preached non-  
harming even of insects.

Many Indians pray daily – religion is  
woven into their lives — but a popular  
saying among my Indian animal advocate friends  
is this:

“Hands that help are holier than lips that pray.”

These are the animal activists and advocates who inspired me to start our charity.

These activists are the ones alleviating animal suffering on a daily basis. Our dollar goes very far in India, sometimes as much as 10 times as far. This is why I fundraise for animals here and send our donations there.

The challenges of Modern India are great indeed. With a population currently of almost 1.3 billion, they will soon surpass China.

When Gandhi was alive, he strove to bring 500 million people out of poverty. Now with almost three times the population and a rising middle class of 800 million people, there are as many people left in abject poverty as the total population was during Gandhi's time.

India's predominately Hindu population comprises about 400 million lacto-vegetarians. However, the consumption of meat has become fashionable to young people /And unlike the West, where the vegan message is spreading and the teenager says: “Mom I don't want to eat meat,” in Hindu families, rebellion can be just the opposite: “Ma, I *want* to eat meat. I want to try a Big Mac”

Outside the cities, much is in a time warp, and farming is done as per age-old



practices. Rural poverty has, generally, fallen, but hardships remain for farmers, with suicides (due to economic difficulties) and climate change-related flooding, heat and drought bringing misery and destitution.

Vegan advocacy in India is small, although growing. So only in small pockets in large cities is the idea of a vegan diet heard of or considered. Yet in the same cities across India US fast food outlets proliferate., as the Hindu taboo against beef makes chicken meat all the more popular. The sad result: factory farming of chickens is on the rise across India, and, along with the KFCs, roadside shops selling live chickens are everywhere to be found.







Meanwhile, the sacred cow continues to be milked for all she is worth. India accounts for 16% of the world's milk production. Compassionate alternatives, like soy milk and tofu soy paneer, are sparsely available and generally unknown.

Some seemingly good news: This year brought the historic ban on the sale of beef in several states, thanks to the orthodox Hindu platform of the new national government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Due to their religious status, Cow slaughter was essentially illegal in much of India already, but this law also made it illegal to sell even imported beef, putting many Muslim butchers out of business.

As animal advocates, we applaud this and cannot imagine such a law in our own countries. This is great news, but our work is only beginning, as illegal slaughter houses and sales continue despite the ban. Others feel it is racist and discriminatory against Muslims and other Indians for whom cows are no more sacred than chickens. Sadly, the beef ban does nothing for the spent dairy cows, male calves and bulls who are still sold and slaughtered illegally.

The major animal welfare stakeholders are at odds as to whether to fight for laws for "humane" slaughter.

It is a difficult position to be in as currently without any slaughter laws there is no enforcement for a burgeoning population.

There is some vegan advocacy which is growing in the more prosperous and educated cities.

However, when animals right in front of you need to be rescued, education for diet is not as much of a priority.





Help Animals India, focuses mostly on saving street animals and educating people to not tolerate and ignore the suffering in their midsts by working to strengthen , advise and guide the charities to improve their mission and save more animals.

Veterinary protocols have lagged far behind modern Western standards by as much as 50 years, and people have had no where to turn to bring their cats and dogs in for spay neuter, as the animals often would not survive the poor vet care. Fortunately, over the past 10 years, many animal welfare groups often with foreign support have worked to improve this situation. For example, this fall, we are sponsoring a cat surgery teaching camp for vets, as this is not taught in vet schools.

In addition to domestic animals, Wildlife is also greatly at risk due to the maddening pace of development (several hundred acres are lost for habitat daily)

Monkeys are often treated as a menace, elephants are incarcerated in temples where they lead lives of indentured servitude. The acre or two zoo elephants have in the west would be paradise to those elephants confined to a stall in a temple or forced to work all day with no relief.

These babies were orphaned and rescued from a construction site:





15/04/2012





This is Aneesha an elephant we supporting rescuing and now are sponsoring in deep South India. She is disabled, a result of her previous tragic life as a logging elephant.

Wildlife vet knowledge is in its infancy even though understanding for Ahimsa prevails. It is common in rural village life to tolerate animals in their midst from birds nesting in the houses to community dogs to unwanted cows being left to live out their lives on the street.

This is changing as India modernizes and people in the suburbs do not want street animals around. The ancient world was full of animals coexisting with humans - even those who were shortly to be sold for slaughter. Animals had a relationship with us, even as slaves. Now they are unseen in our modern slaughterhouses . Climate catastrophe makes it imperative we continue to fight to reduce meat consumption worldwide . With 1/6 of the world's population, India is not to be ignored in our fight for the planet and to bring justice to animals.

Gandhi famously said: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."





<http://arunachalaanimalsanctuary.com/>



In theory, India has been living up to that ideal. In practice, not much.

India has among the world's strictest animal welfare laws. Which is great in principle. Every item of cruelty I am going to mention now is illegal; however, these laws are not enforced.

Religious Animal sacrifice – still prevalent in some traditions

Cow abandonment – Hindus worship the cow and many families keep a cow for her milk. Once she is spent, she is either abandoned on the street, or illegally slaughtered along with her male babies.

Cruel animal transport -- with cow slaughter being illegal in all but a few Indian states, cows are illegally transported under extremely brutal conditions to states where they can be slaughtered.

Wildlife poaching trade — it is a dangerous business indeed for the anti-poaching forces to bust up this trade and nab the perpetrators. I was in Karnataka state when the tiger census was done – in all of India, land of the tiger, there are only a few thousand tigers left in the wild.

Captive Elephants – there are about 4000 elephants in captivity. These figures include elephants in forest camps, zoos, circuses and temples, as well as privately-owned elephants used for begging, logging, tourism, and festivals.

In the wild, approximately 27,000 elephants survive, all of whom are under great threat due to habitat fragmentation by development. They even get killed when they try to cross train tracks which run through the forest. Another common cause of death is electrocution by low hanging

wires that run through areas farmers string up to stop elephants from raiding their fields.

Street performing animals - ignorant people watch performing monkeys, rabbits, elephants, birds and other animals forced to perform for tourists, they are kept under abusive conditions and often drugged . If you hear of anyone visiting India, ask them not to support animal performances by giving money. Better yet, they can take action by protesting and making a scene, as foreigners in India are generally respected.

Killing community dogs – Even though many cities promote street dog sterilization, without direct intervention street dogs are still being poisoning due to rabies and other fears.. The ABC or animal birth control program in India is one of the major projects we support and a battle is on now to stop the killing of dogs in the state of Kerala.

These dogs are humanely caught by a net and expertly sterilized and rabies vaccinate. We have sponsored tens of thousands of dogs to be helped like this.







The pet business – I became alarmed about this during my first visit. There are millions of middle class families in India, many of them just starting to buy pets with pet shops proliferating. Can India avoid the problems that animal shelters in more developed countries have just begun to get a handle on – overpopulation, poor care, and abandonment? We even have extreme cases of animal hoarding. Right now, the future looks extremely challenging as the pet throwaway culture is the norm. Is it shocking to see so many former pet dogs wandering the streets? Not in a country where entire generations of human beggars live on the street.

With little infrastructure for adoption or fostering, the animal shelters cannot keep up.

Factory farming – it is still just starting up, mainly with chickens. The latest figures include 200 million held in battery cages. Pork and beef are eaten much less, as Muslims do not eat pigs and Hindus do not eat cows.

It is common to see goats or chickens outside, shortly to be turned into dinner. Is this abuse really different than it is here?



# STOP ANIMAL ABUSE

REPORT ANIMAL CRUELTY  
TO  
POLICE / ANIMAL WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS

प्रायोजक:



**mEDia** 24x7  
outdoor | retail | rural

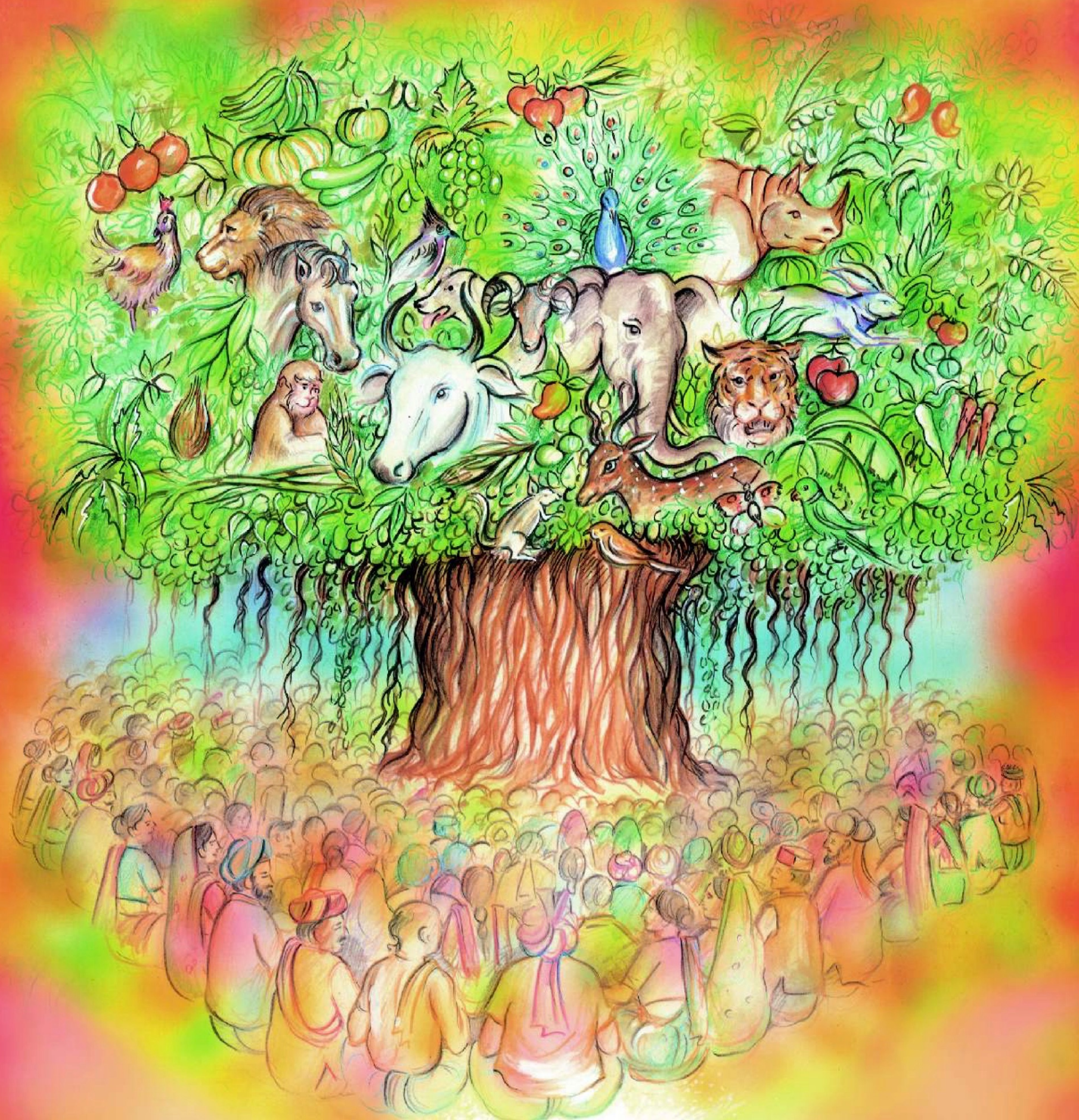


The only difference is that it is outside for all to see, while in the west it is hidden behind locked doors.

What do we as activists and sensitive people do when we encounter a suffering animal? Do we stop our travels and try to rescue the one animal? Do we try to do even more and help the many by filing a court case, starting an animal shelter, or advocating vegan diets?



# LIVING DEMOCRACY





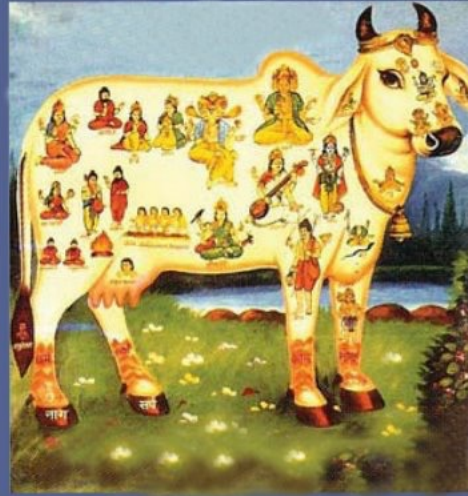
These are decisions  
all of us must face. When I travel overseas, I travel with  
friends who are local activists – if they say we can stop and help,  
I trust their judgment. If they say there is nothing that can be  
done, I will try and find the acceptance within my own heart –  
I do not wish to be reluctant to witness these realities.

These are all the challenges. The good news, again, is India's  
animal welfare laws and an underlying culture of respect for all  
life. In a country where caste is still an issue and women and children  
suffer many injustices, what we can do to help animals is just a  
drop in the bucket, but the bucket is getting filled.

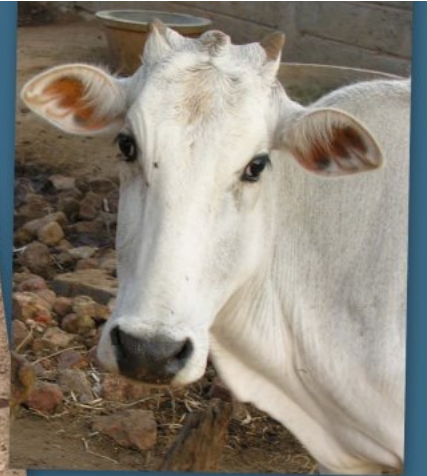
With a fundamental understanding of ahimsa, the  
majority of people do not want to be cruel. Poor people traditionally see  
their cows as part of their family – and yes  
that did mean keeping the cow and bullock for life - but those  
days are long past.



Help Animals India



VSPCA





It is my honor to represent so many  
great activists halfway across the world where our  
dollars can go so much further. We are all warriors in  
the most important cause of all, which is  
healing the world. Oppression of all species  
by one species will never lead to peace.  
Animals have been suffering and dying since  
the world began, but it is how we educate others leading to kindness for  
the animals and “*tikkun*” which  
is a Hebrew word meaning “repair the world”),  
that will ultimately lead to peace and  
harmony for all.  
Thank you.