

Now charity begins at celebrity homes

By K. Kannan

NEW DELHI, MARCH 14. "You can make a change. Why not start it today?" With this catchline, here comes a series of "fund-raisers at home" meant to sensitise civil society towards issues of urban poverty before actually asking for donations to support a cause.

This new model of "philanthropy for social justice" evolved by Actionaid India Society was launched on Friday evening at the residence of Nafisa Ali and Pickles Sodhi where the celebrity couple's circle of friends were invited to experience Arvind Gaur's play "Court Martial". This was followed by a presentation on Delhi4Change -- the most recent initiative of the non-government organisation which seeks to create a just, humane and caring city. "Mobilising support for the urban poor can happen only if civic society gets involved in a major way. And philanthropy is



Scene from Arvind Gaur's play "Court Martial" staged at Nafisa Ali's residence in New Delhi on Friday evening.

not just a matter of giving donations, it also involves an attitudinal change so that the homeless do not remain faceless and voiceless," says Jerry Almeida, Chief Executive of Actionaid India Society.

And so, as part of an overall objective of

creating a support base for Delhi4Change, Actionaid has decided to undertake cause-related marketing in people's homes. This way, it feels, the party circuit is injected with concerns of social justice. "We plan to have such events every fortnight. It can be a musical performance or the staging of a play or a dance programme. Actionaid will then present its vision for Delhi and seek support by appealing to the social conscience of people," says Mr. Almeida.

Over the coming days and months, such "fund-raisers at home" have been planned at the residences of Sharmila Tagore, Saeed Mirza, Lucky Ali, Mita Vashishth, Javed Akhtar, Jatin Das, Pritish Nandy and other 'socially responsible celebrities'. "Initially we will hold these fund-raisers in Delhi and then we will move over to Mumbai, Chennai and other cities," adds Mr. Almeida.