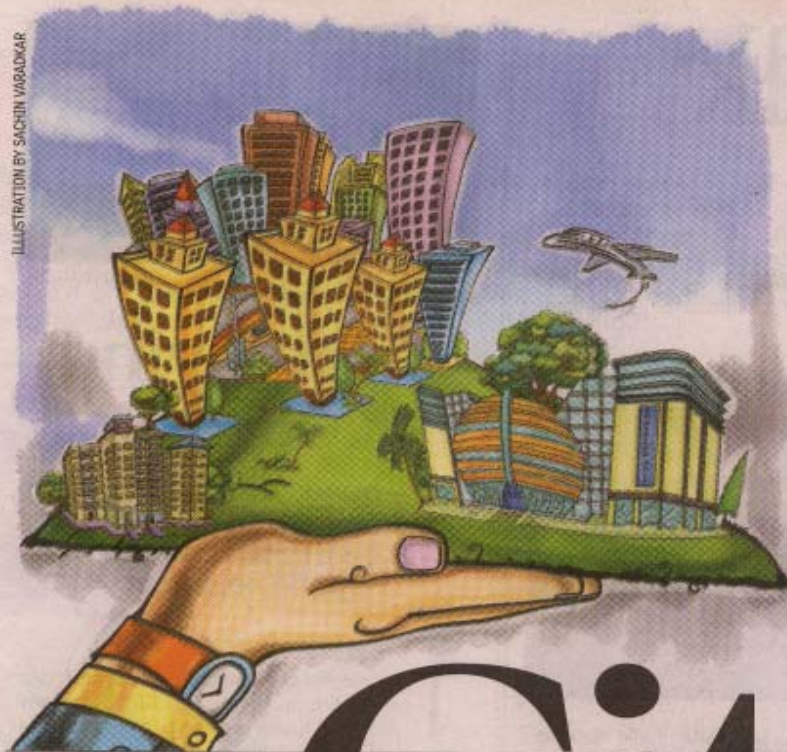


ILLUSTRATION BY SACHIN VAGADKAR



everything is accounted and everyone knows who has taken how much. "This organisation has given us a lot of exposure and has also encouraged us in various ways to fight for a better living. We hope that the government support us and helps quicken the process," mentions Fatima Bi, from the street next to Jula Maidan. Lets keep our fingers crossed.

### MUM'S THE WORD

**A unique mother-daughter group aims to bridge the gap between the two generations**

Mother and daughter relationships are changing with each generation. To make this bond stronger, Aarti Shirut, Deena Sheth, Rashmi Kotak and Anita Agarwal started a group called The Mother-Daughter Group at Shivaji Park, Dadar. Not only does this group encourage a stronger bond between mothers and

# City's little helpers!

## WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE

**Mahila Milan, a group of pavement and slum dwellers who have devised survival strategies to improve the lives of the urban poor**

While NGOs work towards helping others, the NGO Mahila Milan at Byculla and Mumbai Central have devised ways to help themselves. "We have formed savings groups, negotiated with the state for our rights and for shelter planning both in terms of design and location. This process of united action has brought about important changes in relationships within our families and communities. For the first time in Mumbai, women have

emerged as community leaders," says Jockine, one of the founders of the group, which was established in the year 1984 and has 13 centres in the city.

The first centre, which was started in Mumbai Central has been successful as pavement dwellers will now move into their new homes in Mankurd within the next six months. Fortunately, this organisation has no political connections, and the leaders are selected by the dwellers themselves. There is no hierarchy and all 11 of them are presidents. The money collected is deposited everyday at their centre in Mumbai Central. "This system has changed the lives of many in our street. They can acquire a loan from the centre to start their own business," says Bano Bi, of Water Street in Byculla. People can't misuse these funds since

**THE PHRASE 'STRENGTH IN NUMBERS' IS APT FOR THESE SIX GROUPS THAT HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE TO MANY LIVES IN THE CITY, FINDS SWATI SONI**

daughters, it also works as a support system for mothers, once their daughters get married.

"Currently, we have 25 members in the group. We meet once every month to discuss various aspects of our lives," says Shirut. The group organises picnics, takes up social service programmes and conducts many events. "We design events in such a way that our daughters can also help out. Long live the strength of a woman!"

### MIGHTY HEART

#### Sion-based Bharat U helps find treatment for the destitute

In a city where pedestrians and motorists don't spare more than a glance at a destitute, there's one man who has dedicated his life to the homeless and even given them a new lease of life. Bharat U has been tracking the destitute for the last 15 years by driving around the city in his van. "The destitute are generally suffering from an illness and people tend to ignore them or pass them off as drunkards," says the retired business professional who operates around the Lokmanya Tilak Hospital, Sion.

It all started 15 years ago when he came across a helpless destitute. While he takes the destitute to various shelters and old-age homes, he doesn't like to get attached. "All I want to do is help these people, I am not doing any favour for them. Our duty ends at the gate of the respective NGO," explains Bharat. Having started all out on his own, Bharat now has a team of around 20 volunteers helping him in this endeavour. Sister Insanta of Asha Daan notes, "If it hadn't been for this man, the lives of the destitute wouldn't be saved. The volunteers are doing remarkable work, by picking up such people and giving us a chance to do something for them in return." Indeed!

### FRIENDLY SUNDAYS

#### King Circle-based Sunday Friends are all set to uplift the lives of others

Sunday Friends provides a safe place where very low-income families come together with volunteers in a secular community setting. Children and their parents are provided with opportunities to earn the things they need to promote self-reliance and a healthy, productive lifestyle. Through everyday activities, such as preparing healthy meals, writing letters to donors and making gifts for nursing home residents, they give back to their community as they develop self-sufficiency.

All of their activities foster the growth of developmental assets in children. They also include their parents so that the practice of positive life skills will continue throughout the week in their homes.

### TRIAL BY FIRE

#### AGNI (Action for good governance and networking in India)

AGNI started out by tackling civic services with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) and citizen groups. Soon it was facilitating the formation of Advanced Locality Management (ALM) groups. It is meant to provide a single window access to all services managed by the ward office. They have many success stories related to issues like encroachments in Wadala, bad traffic routing, garbage clearance, water supply, the condition of roads and pavements and illegal buildings.

They are also associated with public

meetings, press conferences and media publicity served to educate citizens of the city.

### ONLINE 'YOGI'

#### Karmayog sets a platform for all to share ideas and concerns via a discussion group of over 5,500 members

Karmayog's vision is to improve our world by connecting citizens, civil society organisations, media, corporates, government officials and organisations by online and offline methods.

With their website for free access by parents, beneficiaries and donors, lists of material providers, ENT hospitals, surgeons and doctors, are compiled and posted on the website. Karmayog is a facilitator that provides both the starting point for people to connect, and a platform to sustain and build on such interaction.

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## A Ring of Change igniting a Smile

### Karunya's struggle from a loser to an achiever was made possible by the brainwave of his beloved Shruti



Karunya's life was a misery. Day in and day out his parents compared him to his elder brother who fared better than him in all respects of life. At times Karunya thought of giving up his life. But then destiny had something else in store for him. Shruti entered his life like a fresh wisp of breeze and blew away many a dark clouds of misfortune. On his birthday she presented him with a *Zodiac Power Ring*, which she herself

owned too. From that day till this day, Karunya never looked back. Now, Karunya is one of the most prominent marketing managers and often lectures college students on personality development and confidence building techniques.

Powered by the sun sign characters based on Astronomic Scientific Method, Zodiac Power Rings are exquisitely crafted in the Panchdhatu, a divine composition of 5 metals namely Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron and Zinc. These rings are to be worn according to the birth dates as they enhance willpower, confidence, assertiveness and concentration. On regular wearing, it controls anger, mental tensions, mood fluctuations and stress.

So go ahead, take a look at the brighter side of life.

To know more SMS 'zpr' to 58888 or log on to [www.zodiacpowerings.biz](http://www.zodiacpowerings.biz)  
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