

Self help, not charity



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Charity of huge ransoms to organisations of the poor and deprived is almost always done out of goodwill. But what we don't realize is that in doing so, we might be suppressing their self-esteem or depriving them of a motive to stand on their own feet and learn to earn their own livelihood.

Mouth and Foot Painting Artists is one such organization. Their motto is 'Self-help , not Charity'. As its name suggests, MFPA is an organization consisting of physically handicapped people who paint with their mouth or feet . MFPA has brought to the forefront the exquisite creations of the disabled artists to express their artistic skills. They have created a variety of products right from book marks to T-shirts to coffee mugs. Owing to their perseverance, their products have hit the international market and are now competing with machine made goods worldwide.

These might be only a few of their many achievements I have cited, but honestly, I wrote this article not to tout their achievements or advertise their organization, but simply because I was moved by that one letter I read written by a disabled man. It had a simple message-What the disabled need is not sympathy. It is just the feeling of belonging to the society and of being an equal that can pull them out of their misery. Categorising them as differently abled or special people is by no means going to boost their spirit. All they need is an opportunity to prove themselves and this organization is doing just that.

Today, they live with a sense of dignity, pride and most importantly satisfaction, for they have created for themselves an opportunity to earn an independent, honest and secure livelihood. As it is rightly said- " The only

difference between an obstacle and an opportunity is your attitude towards it. The only disability in life is bad attitude.”