

Clerical Error

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“Sir, though we may be illiterates, is this just?” Both Buchchaiah and Borraiah resentfully incriminated Headmaster of High School who was in his chair in his room. On hearing tone in high dudgeon of two men,

“Who are you? How can you have entered without seeking permission?” Headmaster got his dander up within no time he,

“Sonappa! Where are you?” shouted. After few minutes, Sonappa entered and,

“I am in the staff-room while closing covers with gum to be posted.” Replied timorously.

“Couldn’t you notice who are coming school? How can these men have entered this room?” very furiously Headmaster put questions as if he was conducting inquiry against irregularities committed by that attender, Sonappa.

“Sor.. sorry, sir. I couldn’t have paid attention as I have been on job. Excuse me sir.” Sonappa was aflutter in submitting his reply.

“Take them away and educe from them what they want.” Headmaster instructed Sonappa.

“Sir, we would like learn things forthrightly from you. Sonappa couldn’t afford what we need”. Buchchaiah interfered straightway.

“Ok. Be seated.” Headmaster pointed a bench kept at his right hand. In his tone either request or command wasn’t voiced. He exhibited civil manners lukewarmly towards them.

“Thank you sir” both thanked Headmaster and sat on the bench as asked.

“Ah! Sonappa ! Get them water in glasses to have.” Headmaster instructed. Sonappa immediately,

“Yes sir.” Said as if obeyed his words and went out.

Both Chowdamma and Chukkamma were awaiting their husbands before front doors of their homes which were situated side by side. Both those houses had common front yard in the east. In that yard there were two cots which frames were woven by the cord. For one hour they had been standing and talking to each other. Then after, they viewed their husbands who were sighted at a distance.

“Oh! Chowdamma! See! They are coming.” Chukkamma said as if they got relief from boredom caused due to be awaiting.

“Yes. Chukkamma . I have too seen.” With same tone Chowdamma answered.

“Can you imagine with what conciliation from the Headmaster they are returning?” Chukkamma asked.

“I have a doubt that whether they could have emphatically disputed with the Headmaster.” Chowdamma expressed her disbelief.

“Ah! As you said, same disbelief is just now breaking forth in my mind.” Chukkamma said as she backed Chowdamma up.

“Let us see how far they succeeded in the business.” as Chowdamma said both Buchchaiah, husband of Chowdamma and Borraiah, husband of Chukkamma reached. They came and sat on each cot. Chowdamma sat on the floor before her husband and Chukkamma did so before her. After few minutes elapsed, Chowdamma felt that Buchchaiah might have got relief as both returned on foot from the High school which was at another village three kilometers away from their village, so, asked,

“What is the matter?”

“He promised to get it corrected”. Buchchaiah replied in a tone of little disappointment which Chowdamma smelt, so,

“When does he get it?” with little indignation she asked.

“He didn’t assure how much time it takes.” Buchchaiah impatiently said.

“Then, how long we can be going on with inexplicable grievance which we can’t tell to any our well-wishers and can get pacified.” Chowdamma began to sob in crying.

“Chowdamma, don’t sob. When we are impeccable, we shall not worry.” Chukkamma tried to console Chowdamma, then,

“Tell us. How have you dealt the matter with Headmaster?” requested her husband.

“Ok. Sister, I will narrate.” Buchchaiah told and narrated.

“Now tell me. Who are you? Why have you just invectively questioned me while entering room without taking permission to enter and without mentioning the matter and the reason?” Headmaster while keeping his temper and revealing their misperception inquired.

“Sir, I am father of Manikyam and he is father of Muthyalu both have just passed S.S.C. from this school.” as Borraiah was saying, Headmaster,

“Oh! You are fathers of our students. I congratulate you both. I’m very much happy. Both have passed in first division.” Intervened and expressed his happiness by congratulating them.

“Thank you sir. We are too happy in this regard. But our honour and reputation must be vulgarized due to your job. All our relatives and friends must condemn us heinously.” Buchchaiah resumed what Borraiah held back.

“What is the matter? What is wrong with me? In what way I am concerned with you to be vulgarized?” Headmaster put questions as if he was in a quandary.

“Sir, Both we are illiterates. We are told that in the Memorandum of marks my name is recorded as father of his son and his name is recorded as father of my son.” Buchchaiah revealed the matter.

“Oh!” Headmaster sighed heavily.

“This mistake was taken place due to a clerical error. This is a very common thing. So many things like this are taken place rarely. I can look into the matter and take action for rectifying the error. Don’t worry.” Headmaster tried to console them and assure them.

“When do you take such action and how much time it requires for the correction to be done?” Buchchaiah didn’t get consoled.

“Today only I take action and submit our request to the Higher officers.” Headmaster said.

“You yourself are the Head of this school. Can’t you correct it right now?” Borraiah said as though he reminded the competency of the Headmaster and suspected his capability.

Though having understood the tone of Borraiah, Headmaster,

“Yes, I am Head of this High school. But Secondary School certificates are issued by the Board of Secondary School Education. So, we have to submit the matter to the Higher Authorities. Therefore, on today only it can’t be done. Besides, for submitting the matter and obtaining rectified certificates, sometime will be required.” Headmaster tried to explain the procedure in detail.

“How much time?” Borraiah asked.

“Exactly I can’t say, what I can do is that today only I will send our submission by post.” Headmaster told what and how far he could do on that day.

“Can’t you get it corrected by tomorrow?” Buchchaiah asked as though he felt that it would be better for the correction to be done as soon as possible.

“How can it be possible? Don’t you understand it takes at least time of three days for the post to be delivered to the board”. Headmaster failed to convince them, so, said angrily.

Both Buchchaiah and Borraiah became speechless. Nothing struck them to speak out. For few minutes they maintained silence, then Headmaster,

“See, as soon as possible, I can obtain rectified memorandums of marks pertaining to your sons. Now you can take leave.” Said and pointed exit to them.

At the gate of High school, Sonappa prevented Chowdamma and Chukkamma when they were about to enter premises of the High school.

“Oh! Attender of this school. Don’t prevent us. We have to ask Headmaster.” Chowdamma furiously told.

“What is the matter?” Sonappa enquired.

“We don’t tell you or any other except the Headmaster.” Chukkamma told more furiously.

“Ok. Wait here only. I submit your request to the Headmaster. If he gives appointment, you can be, then, allowed to enter.” Sonappa told what he could do.

“We can’t wait for any long. Right now we need appointment. Tell him. We are following you.” Chukkamma looked as she was enraged by someone. As said Chukkamma and Chowdamma followed Sonappa without paying their ears to his word.

At the entrance of the room, Sonappa forcibly stopped them not to enter and he only went in and came out within few minutes and said,

“Our sir is talking to a parent like you. Immediate his coming out, you can go in.”

“Ok. We can wait.” Chukkamma said.

More or less three or four minutes elapsed. He, who was in the room, came out. Within no time both rushed into the room as if they supposed that any other might enter so that they would have to wait some more long. On seeing them, Headmaster,

“Who are you? What is the matter?” enquired.

“Sir, I am mother of Muthyalu and she is of Manikyam “as Chowdamma was saying, immediately Headmaster got idea that who were they and why they came.”

“Oh! Yes. I have understood for which you have come. Yesterday only the report was sent to the Board”. as Headmaster was saying, Chukkamma,

“When will it reach and when will you receive? Until then, should we go on abashing ourselves as well as being mortified?”

“Why should abash yourselves and who are mortifying you? “Headmaster couldn’t apprehend the inference lies between their words.

Sir! You are learned. We are illiterates. For you it is correct what you did. “Chukkamma didn’t pay her attention towards what Headmaster said.

“See, oh! Women. Yesterday I promised both fathers of Manikyam and Muthyalu and submitted the matter by post to the Board. Haven’t they told you?” Headmaster said.

“But you haven’t told them how much time it requires”. “Chukkamma said as if the Headmaster failed to attend the work at an early date.

We should wait. But I can’t tell on which date I can obtain. “Headmaster told what were his limits.

Until then, we have to go on being loathed and do endure.” Chowdamma said very sadly.

“Who do behave with you alike?” Headmaster failed to get why they were serious in the matter which had little importance in his view.

“Sir, this news has been already reached to all our relatives and neighbours who are illiterates like us. All of us would speak out everything frankly and openly that too in the presence of those to whom the matter pertaining. We don’t know they are cracking jokes with or without having any malice”. Chowdamma started to weep many tears.

Oh! Lady. Why are you weeping.” As Headmaster was saying, Chukkamma interfered,

“What is left for us except to weep and cry. Both we were born in same village. Since our birth both we haven’t been tainted by any till this news has been spread. None could have dared to asperse our character.”

“Why are you thinking so deep? When nothing is wrong with you, why do you take as much serious?s. Please be cool”. Headmaster couldn’t have told more.

“How can we be cool? Our hearts are burning in fury. Our sons are started already to be treated as bastards”.

“Are your sons?” Headmaster shocked.

“Yes, our sons are. Besides they might be calling us as whores”. Chowdamma blatantly cried.

“Oh! Lady, please don’t cry. I can make the matter corrected. But we should wait”.

Headmaster tried to pacify her.

“Who knows what you can and how you can. But our reputation has been already damaged. Now we are both whores”, Chowdamma paused few seconds, then, “My husband himself knows I am impeccable and sinless, but you have made me so culpable as myself begotten my son through her husband and she is too impeccable and sinless like me, but you had made her so culpable as herself begotten her son through my husband. Thus both of us have been proclaimed as sinners though we are clean and faultless”. On being pourn out heart of Chowdamma, Headmaster at once stood up from his chair, reached them, bent before them and touched their feet with his both hands and expressed his repentance as,

“Oh! Ladies, Don’t say like that and treat yourselves alike. As soon as possible I can do it corrected. Kindly pardon me.”

*** The End ***