Will the Fake Chintito Sit Down?

CHINTITO

When we started this Chintito column on our newspaper broadsheet from our Dhanmandi Road 3 office in May 1993, our humble vision was to inspire our youth with the spirit of Muktijuddho (mind you, the early youth readers are today 40 years +), encourage a nation to courageously battle corruption in all spheres, mock at our follies so that we may be enlightened, and to inculcate values of life based on religion, social customs and human virtues.

It was beyond our comprehension then that not so much our column but the name Chintito would catch the imagination of some people so much so that they would be adopting the same as a prefix or prefix to their name, or as whole as their blog, twitter, and Facebook identity.

Among others we have found in our limited search Chintito Kobi, Moha Chintito, Chintito Jeebon, Chintito Torun, Chintito Mon, Chintay Chintito, Chintito Teen, and so on. While we have no copyright on the name Chintito, we are flattered that the Bangalee nation feels worried by the happenings in their society, country and the world. We obviously take some gratification that our column begun two decades ago paved the way for the birth of so many thinkers. And don't we need them!

The worry for us is however the total lack of originality in the thinking among many of us, even in matters as small as naming oneself. Why copy a name? The parents of a newborn would be shamed beyond measure if the name of their child remotely matched that of their neighbour or someone in their fourteen generations. And so we have an array of names today that make merry any assembly of family and friends. That pride is not witnessed among these thinkers named 'x-Chintito' or 'Chintito-x', or with greater recklessness simply 'Chintito'.

What worries us even more is that a few bloggers and individuals have taken the liberty, illegal as it is, to claim themselves as Chintito of *the Star* magazine. There has never been a greater misrepresentation of the truth, and perhaps the claim can be established as Cyber crime, seeing that a LinkedIn profile has also been posted under a fake Chintito.

There are various veins of concern regarding faking of a character, one of them being the blame of any crime or misdemeanour committed by the fake 'Chintito' being appended to our columnist. That would be quite a problem for those who are acquainted with our person at The Daily Star Bhaban.

Just imagine a lady coming to the Bhaban and demanding vigorously to meet the Editor because she thinks that Chintito pinched her bottom. But the pincher in actuality was the faker.

It could be the other way round too. A male victim of a fake she-Chintito could come barging into our office and claim compensation for being robbed of all his 'possessions' during his moment (okay half hour) of weakness.

After 20 long years, several governments, and the passing of a whole generation, perhaps it is now time to reveal the real Chintito to put an end to the anonymity, not for any particular reason but to stop the buccaneering of another's identity, and to save oneself from any serious cyber crime.

Through this column I would like to run a poll on how many of our readers would like for the real Chintito to reveal him or herself before the world. That would give you an opportunity to express your opinion, and some of you may like to hold on to your imagination of the person. But the fact is I too am tired of my mask and it is getting sticky after years of wear and tear.

A freedom-fighter who found out my identity said to an audience that he and his late brother used to discuss about the probable home district of Chintito. While his brother opined Chintito was from Barisal, the freedom-fighter argued that the columnist must be from Noakhali. Then there could be some of you who differed and believed from the writing that the author was from Mymensingh or Rangpur.

We have had letters claiming that Chintito was a woman. And of course some of you think that he is from the male species. I would be very upset personally if any of you thought in between, although there is no blame if one is naturally born that way.

In a blog there was a claim that Chintito was a middle-aged person. My objection would depend upon whether the blogger assumed middle age was something to be ashamed of. Not really. I have seen 20-year olds behaving like they were touching sixty; and octogenarians acting like teenagers. I am in favour of the latter.

So I could be from any district in Bangladesh, all of them are so very beautiful in their own way. I could be either a male or a female, but definitely not a male behaving like a sissy, neither a woman acting manly. I am perhaps aged around dignified eighty with the mindset of sweet sixteen.

Yes! all could be revealed on my 21st birthday! ■