

An Itch for Change: Challenges of Change Management for MamaBhasha Publications

“So, the decision is final. All the necessary arrangements should be done at the earliest. The formal inauguration will be done on the first of November 2008.”

With these words the chief executive officer of MamaBhasha Publications Ltd. swept out of the room. The general managers of all the other departments also left the boardroom, except for Kiran Varma, the general manager of the Printing Unit. He sat there, deep in thought.

To all others, the opening of the new location for MamaBhasha Publications’ Printing Unit would be an auspicious occasion, falling on the same day as Kerala Piravi,ⁱ November 1. Management was even sponsoring a sumptuous Kerala Sadya, a traditional lunch. But to Varma and his team of eighty-seven employees, the news was not at all appealing.

Company Background

MamaBhashaⁱⁱ Publications Ltd.—a book publishing company—was started in a small, single-story house in 1982 in the heart of Kottayam.ⁱⁱⁱ It is known for being one of the first publishing companies in Kerala, India. As the firm grew, its building expanded. There were eventually seven departments, each headed by a general manager, and the employee count grew to 370 by 2011. The feature that differentiated MamaBhasha from other publishing firms was its organizational culture. The employees were treated as family members, and they reciprocated through their genuine commitment to the firm. This was one key factor that the firm acknowledged supported its success. The firm never shrank from its responsibility in providing maximum benefits to its employees. As a result, there had been no conflict or disagreement of any kind between the firm and its employees throughout the firm’s thirty years of existence. Most employees were from the local

i November 1 is commemorated as state formation day in Kerala, India.

ii Mama bhasha means “my language” in Malayalam, the language predominantly spoken in the Indian state of Kerala.

iii Kottayam is a city in the Indian state of Kerala.

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This mini-case was developed by Ajith K. Thomas (Associate Professor) and Elizabeth Dominic (Assistant Professor) of Saintgits Institute of Management in Kottayam, India, as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective handling of a situation.

Secondary research was performed to accurately portray information about the featured organization and to extrapolate the decision point presented in the case; however, company representatives were not involved in the creation of this case.
