



***OFFICERS' CAUSE,
JULY - 2019***

Editorial

FLAGSHIP OF ECONOMY

The Indian Banking is the flagship of the Economy in the country. The contribution of the banking industry to the growth of economy since the country became independent is unparalleled. When the country became free from the clutches of the colonial rule, we had burning issue of feeding the millions and millions of population who were living below the poverty line. The employment, the shelter and clothing apart from the food was the major task for the successive Governments at the Centre as well as the States. The agriculture became the main occupation of more than 70% of the population in the country and looking for the helping hand of the Government. It needed a massive financial support and they were under the grip of the Multan's. The financial institutions mainly banks were under the control of the private sector. The co-operative sector which was entrusted with the responsibility of meeting the requirements of the agriculture and allied sector was not in a position to take up the gigantic task of providing succor and support of finance to the agriculturists in the country. The private banks were looking after only the big industrialists who were also the owners of most of the Private Banks. As the agriculture needed a tremendous impetus and the resources for its operation, there was a massive challenge before the Indian administrators of taking care of the millions and millions of farmers who were operating across the country. The Britishers have exploited the resources of the country

throughout their colonial regime and did nothing to nurture and support the agriculture sector. The small scale and cottage industries which were supplementing the generation of income of the common man all over the country needed the financial support from the Government.

Thus the stage was set for taking over of the banking industry by the Government. The huge domestic savings raised from the common man by the banking system should have been channelized towards the upliftment of the common man. Unfortunately, the banks which were under the ownership of the private sector failed to meet the requirement of the agriculture and industrial sector. The resources were available only to the big industrialists and not to the common man. Then the Government of India under the leadership of the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi took the bold initiative of nationalizing 14 Banks which were under the Private Sector. The second doze of the nationalization of 6 banks followed in the year 1980 thus ensuring that more than 90% of the banking sector is brought under the State control.

The Government of India had taken over earlier Imperial bank of India on 1st of July 1955 through an enactment so that it can have an exclusive control of a Bank for its operations. The Government business as well as the currency management was being looked after by the State

Bank of India. Thus, the major chunk of the banking industry came under the ownership of the Government and also a strong instruments in the hands of the Government for espousing all its social economic welfare activities apart from the strengthening of the various sectors of the economy under its directions. The Banking Industry became a powerful weapon in the hands of the Government for the advancement of agriculture, to secure food security, to provide financial support to the small and large farmers, for the mechanization of the agriculture sector, to ensure that the agricultural allied activities are given proper shape so that the country not only become self sufficient in food production but also in a position to export the same.

The Nationalization was followed by the dictum of taking the bank to each and every nook corner of the country through rapid branch expansion. The Branch net work spread not only across the country but to the difficult and backward areas of the several states where the economy was in a poor shape. Thus the Nationalization helped the Government not only providing the finance to each and every members of the society all over the country but became a strong organ for the mobilization of the domestic savings and utilize the same for the advancement of the common man of the country.

On 19th July all over the country we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Nationalization of Banks in order to commemorate the great contribution made by the Public Sector as well as Old Generation Banks for the advancement of the economy. To-day, the Government is claiming that the country is poised to become the 5th largest economy in the country shortly and thereafter to move forward to become the 3rd largest economy in the world next only to US and China with its vast scope available for advancement in the country. The India has seen the modern sectors of the economy growing rapidly during the last 2 decades. The core sectors have undergone changes. The Agriculture and Industry have undergone tremendous changes. The Corporate sector is now all pervasive entering all walks of our economy. Under these circumstances, the Government is

attempting to wash off its hands from the ownership of the Public Sector Banks. They have been systematically campaigning that the Public Sector Banks has to be privatized as they are finding it difficult to infuse further capital. The tragedy is that the Government has forgotten the tremendous contribution made by the banking industry for the economic prosperity of the country.

The trade unions in the banking industry have been championing the cause of the Public Sector Banks. The Federation being the voice of the common man has been in the forefront in the efforts concerning the protection of the Public Sector Banks. The initiative of the Federation under the slogan " Save Public Sector Banks" has gained momentum throughout the country and has become one of the main campaign not only for us but also for the Confederation and other constituents of the United Forum of Bank Unions. The Financial Sector has a huge potential for the advancement of the economy of the country. It has to remain with the ownership of the Government. Any attempt to dilute its ownership is a threat to the common man's savings. He has to fall back on these savings for his welfare. The slogan that the deposits of the Banks belongs to the masses of this country and it has to be harnessed for the welfare of the common man in the country is relevant even to-day.

The euphoria of Liberalization, Globalization and Privatization which started during the year 1991 with the introduction of the reforms in the Financial Sector aimed at throwing open the monopoly of the Insurance, the Pension, the Banking etc., to the private operators at the instance of the World Bank to help the sagging economy of the Western Countries, became a great threat to the existence of the Public Sector Banks.

The Federation is in the forefront ever since the so called reforms in the financial sector in particular in banking commenced during 1990's with the sole objective of privatization of the Public Sector Banks. It has also chalked out a

SUCCESS AWAITS AT THE DOOR WHERE DILIGENCE IS

series of programs all over the country for implementation by the affiliates of the Federation as well as the Confederation. The July 19th is being observed Golden Jubilee of Nationalization of Banks by the Confederation all over the country. The Federation as the major partner of the Confederation has taken

up the responsibility of ensuring the success of this campaign all over the country. Let it not be a mere one time activity but we should continue to strive throughout to ensure the protection of the Public Sector Banks so that they are available for the service of the common man of this country. ■

Congratulations

COMRADE RAVINDER GUPTA TAKES OVER AS CHAIRMAN, AISBOF

Consequent upon superannuation of Chairman, AISBOF Comrade G Subramanyam on 30th June, Comrade Ravinder Gupta, Senior Vice President, AISBOF, who is also the General Secretary of SBIOA (Delhi Circle) has been unanimously elected as Chairman of the Federation.



Comrade Ravinder Gupta, born on 02.11.1960, is B. Com Graduate and a Certified Associate of IIB. He joined the officers' fraternity as a Trainee Officer in 1988 and was involved in association activities since his promotion. He has an ocean of experience in banking and trade unionism. He has been holding various responsibilities at Circle, Federation and Confederation level. He is Senior Vice President of AIBOC and AIPCOC. He had been an ace cricketer and had been a regular member of Bank and Delhi team. He is appreciated and respected for his trade

union acumen and for his contribution towards the welfare of officers' fraternity.

Com Gupta is a well-known face in electronic and print media. He is a regular panelist in electronic media on diverse issues, predominantly featuring banking, finance trade union and economy. He has always expressed his opinion in an articulate manner. He is actively involved in the movement of officers' fraternity in

defending the public-sector. He has been extending an invaluable support to the Federation and Confederation by liaising with various government departments and institutions in Delhi and also in various legal matters.

We welcome Shri Ravinder Gupta as Chairman of the Federation. We are confident that he will contribute in a significant way in espousing the cause of officers' fraternity. ■

Retirement

COM. G. SUBRAMANYAM CHAIRMAN, AISBOF DEMITS OFFICE

Comrade G. Subramanyam, Chairman, All India State Bank Officers' Federation who was also the General Secretary of SBIOA (Hyderabad Circle) and Vice President of All India Bank Officers' Confederation laid down office on 30.06.2019 on superannuation from Bank's service.



Born on 18th June, 1959 at Pondicherry, he did his graduation in commerce. He started his journey in the Bank on 14th September 1983 in Andhra Pradesh. Prior to this, Comrade Subramanyam sojourned 3 years as Accounts Assistant in Andhra Mechanical & Electrical

Industries, Hyderabad from 1980 to 1983. He excelled his prowess as a trade unionist in SBISA. He was Certified Associate of IIB, promoted as a Trainee Officer in the year 1992, to MMGS II on 01.08.1998 and to MMGS III on 01.11.2002 respectively.

Comrade Subramanyam, an ace cricketer of his time, has been a towering personality in the Banking Trade Union movement, not only in Andhra Pradesh, but also in the country. He was endowed with the gift of oratory and is an articulate speaker. He could raise the level of arguments with élan during any

ARISE, AWAKE, STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

negotiation and would prevail over the other side through cogent logic and systematic articulation. His strategic thinking, strong leadership, respect for colleagues and great sense of humour were inspiration to all of us. He has put in great efforts in instilling values such as determination, tolerance, equity, honesty and professional stewardship. He is an embodiment of optimism and hard work. He is completely a committed and dedicated leader. We are incredibly honoured and extremely privileged to have Comrade Subramanyam at the helm of affairs. He has always been a man of principle, who never ever compromised on ethics and principle. His uncompromising stand as far as principles were concerned, his never say die approach to the unreasonable and unjust stand of the Management on several issues, was admired and appreciated by both the Management functionaries as well as the comrades all over the Circle. In all his assignments in the journey of trade union movement, he showed his professionalism of a true trade unionist, collective bargaining and superb negotiation skills, which helped to unlock difficult situations on many occasions. He always believed in sharing the vision of the Circle Management in a collaborative and co-operative approach with the Management for the progress of the Circle and our institution. He always endeavoured to keep SBIOA (Hyderabad Circle) vibrant and spirited so as to combat any challenge with his innate ability and vision.

He is a thorough gentleman and a great human being. A simple and humble person, endowed with all the rare qualities of an effective and efficient leader, and a caring personality devoted to the cause of officers.

It is due to Comrade Subramanyam's astute leadership qualities that could make SBIOA Hyderabad circle attain the present stature of being one of the strongest pillars of our mighty Federation. He has been the instrumental genius behind every innovation. Throughout his illustrious Trade Union career, he had served the interest of the members with utmost sincerity, commitment, honesty and dedication. He had devoted his entire life for the welfare of the members, who were his extended family. Because of his foresight and pragmatic approach, the merger of Associate Banks with SBIOA (Hyderabad Circle) was a smooth process. Words can neither qualify nor quantify how helpful his guidance

and advice to the Federation leadership over the years. We salute him for his vision, unmatched leadership, work ethic and especially his sense of humour and goodwill. We will continue to value his leadership and tireless commitment to our trade union movement, his advice and his unflinching support.

We take this opportunity to place on record our deepest appreciation for all the contribution made by Comrade Subramanyam for building the edifice of a strong movement of officers in the state of undivided Andhra Pradesh, which is worthy of emulation by one and all. We place on record his contribution and the values espoused by him while discharging his role as a trade union leader. Retirement marks the start of another chapter in one's life. We convey our best wishes on his retirement. May every moment of his life be fulfilling and full of joy. He will be missed, remembered and revered. Working with him has always been an immense pleasure. His humility and graciousness have won our hearts. The legacy he has left will be remembered in the years to come. His perceptiveness as a trade union leader transcended all boundaries.

A befitting farewell function was held at Hyderabad yesterday i.e. on 30th June 2019. The large congregation of officers, irrespective of cadre, were present on the occasion. Trade Union leaders from banking fraternity from across the country attended the occasion. This was an appropriate tribute to one of the most respected trade union leader in the Banking Trade Union movement of the country.

We sincerely believe that Comrade Subramanyam is just retiring from bank's service on superannuation and he is not quitting the battle field for the cause of the society in general and the members in particular. We will feel extremely privileged to have his guidance in the forward march of AISBOF. The undersigned, in his individual capacity and on behalf of all the members of AISBOF, conveys his sincere appreciation for his colossal contribution and urge upon him to continue his fight against injustice, for the cause of the common people and the members and extend his valuable guidance to the banking trade union movement.

We wish Comrade G. Subramanyam, a very happy, healthy, contented, active and serene retired life. ■

WORK IS WORSHIP , DO YOUR DUTY

INDIVIDUAL HOUSING LOAN SCHEME (IHLS) GROUP TERM INSURANCE POLICY EXTENSION OF COVERAGE TO ALL IHL ACCOUNTS

Federation glad to inform that Bank has issued a circular today, vide No:CDO/P&HRD-IR/25/2019-20, extending insurance coverage to all Individual Housing Loan Accounts of employees, irrespective of date of sanction, in the running policy of SBI Life Insurance Company limited, based on the outstanding as on 30/06/2019. The outstanding in Individual Housing Loan Accounts of employees sanctioned prior to 01/10/2014 will, therefore, also be covered under the Group Term Policy No.72100274804 with SBI Life Insurance Company limited w.e.f 01/07/2019. The premium for coverage of additional accounts under the policy will be paid by the Bank at Corporate Centre.

2. Incidentally, our Federation has been actively pursuing with the Bank for extension of insurance cover to staff housing loans sanctioned prior to 01.10.2014, over a long period of time. A letter No. 6528/39/19 dated 12.06.2019 was addressed to the Bank for consideration (copy enclosed). This issue was taken up in the CNC Meeting held on

28.03.2019 and subsequently featured as an agenda item in the CNC Meeting held on 18.06.2019.

3. We sincerely thank the Bank for taking this appropriate step in the larger interest of the employees of the Bank, which is hailed by one and all.

4. Simultaneously, we have been pursuing several other game changing HR initiatives viz., enhancement of own contribution to PF, introduction of milestone award for retirees, enhancement in insurance coverage under 'Sampoorna Suraksha' to a minimum of Rs.25 lakh, improvement in IHLS (enhancing tenure of construction from 2 to 5 years as is under 'Realty'), many amenities/issues pertaining to Visually Impaired Officers (VIOs) and for upward revision of monetary ceiling of Lease Rental, Mobile Handset, Furniture & Fixtures and other perquisites.■

MEETING WITH IBA CHAIRMAN AT NEW DELHI

Text of Joint Representation/Memorandum Dated 03.07.2019

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION (AIBOC) ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION (AIBOA) INDIAN NATIONAL BANK OFFICERS' CONGRESS (INBOC) NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF BANK OFFICERS (NOBO)

**The Chairman, Indian Banks' Association,
New Delhi**

Dear Sir,

**REG: 8th JOINT NOTE-WAGE REVISION-
UNCONDITIONAL MANDATE BY BANKS.
REF: OUR JOINT COMMUNICATION DATED 25TH
JUNE, 2019.**

Further to the above referred communication coupled with the earlier one by UFBU, we are yet to get the response from IBA. We sincerely feel that there is an imperative need to revisit the decision based on the following convincing reasons.

1. The officers' Service Regulations 1979 applicable to Public Sector Banks are governed by the Banking

Regulation Act, 1970/ 1980 and the State Bank of India Act, 1955. Any change in the terms of service condition should have the concurrence of Central Government through official Gazette notification and also of Reserve Bank of India.

2. The Standardization of Pay and allowances have come to stay based on the Pillai Committee recommendations in Public Sector Banks from 01/07/1979, 1980 and in State Bank of India w.e.f. 01/10/1979.

3. All the seven joint notes on wage revision right from 1985 till 2015 covered all seven scales of officers in Public Sector Banks.

4. The Successive Pay Commissions for Central Government employees covers right from Sub-

LET CUSTOMER SERVICE BE OUR MOTTO

ordinate cadre and up to Cabinet Secretary.

5. The CLC (Central), in the proceedings held on 28th May, 2018 in which IBA representatives too participated, advised to continue with the past practices of covering all seven scales while finalising the wage revision.

6. Subsequent to the meeting on 28th May, 2018, IBA did inform the six banks namely State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank and Oriental Bank of Commerce to revisit their decision on truncated mandates given by them to IBA for wage revision. Oriental Bank of Commerce did give the revised mandate to cover all the officers up to Scale VII.

7. In the past two joint notes, officers' organisations had shown flexibility to elongate the scale from Scale IV up to Scale VII and also differential Special Allowances to Scale IV & V and Scale VI and VII.

8. When the Officers' Code of Conduct and Discipline

and Appeal Regulations are common from 1976, how come a new theory is promoted by 5 banks?

9. Out of 19 banks, 14 banks have given full mandate, leaving the five. Will the decision of minority prevail over the majority? How will IBA fulfill the mandate of 14 banks as they have no plan to draw different scale of their own for officers of Scale IV and above?

The officers' fraternity is getting frustrated and impatient for the undue delay in wage settlement due to the obstinate stand of the management of few banks. They are becoming restless and want to express their anguish through the platform of officers' organisations.

We, therefore, in the best of interest of the Industry and its present performance in trying circumstances urge upon you to resolve the much vexed question of fractured mandate by these 5 banks so as to take forward the wage negotiations to a faster mode and not force us to take the path of agitation.

Activist
Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary
AIBOC

Sd/-
(Nagarajan S)
General Secretary
AIBOA

Sd/-
(K K Nair)
General Secretary
INBOC

Sd/-
(Viraj Tikekar)
General Secretary
NOBO

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR, HON'BLE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

Text of letter no. AIBOC/2019/58 dated 26.06.2019

Shri Anurag Singh Thakur ji,
The Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance & Corporate
Affairs, Government of India
North Block, New Delhi - 110001

Respected Sir,

FEW ISSUES CONFRONTED BY THE BANKERS

At the outset, we, the largest association of officers in the banking industry representing more than 3,20,000 officers, congratulate you on your being elected as the Member of Parliament for the third successive term and also being chosen as the Minister of Finance for State in the NDA-II Government led by Shri Narendra Modi ji. We are sure that with your vast experience in Lok Sabha and various public positions assumed by you in the

past more than a decade, would immensely help in building up a strong and pro-people Finance Ministry of the Union Government.

2. Our members have been playing active role and responsibility, right from framing the policy, till its implementation in Banks. Aims and objectives of banks, especially Public Sector Banks, are entwined with the constitutional objectives and the pleasure of the government of the country. Contribution of the public sector banks and old generation private sector banks towards nation building is immense and noteworthy. Bankers have been drivers of growth for decades. Nationalization of Banks in 1969 gave new dimension to the banking in the country. Banks became extended arms of the Government, implemented wholeheartedly, various pro-society programmes such as village adoption, irrigation, dispensation of credit for agriculture and small business, realized the objectives of Government in

BE TRUTHFUL, BE FEARLESS

successful completion of green, white, blue revolutions. Rural and semi urban economy underwent unimaginable change on account of programmes like Service Area Approach which resulted in comprehensive development and infused purchasing power. Banks realized dream projects of Government – Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) affordable insurance scheme, Aadhar linking, DBT and Demonetisation/Remonetisation of economy. Banks today, have touched nook and corner of the country, thereby achieving the pursuit of financial inclusion.

3. While wishing you a great success in all your endeavours as a Union Minister of State for Finance, we take this opportunity to place before few issues pending and invoke your immediate attention.

a. Salary revision: Salary revision is carried out in Banks through a mechanism of bi-partite negotiations between IBA (an association of managements of banks) with us, the trade unions (represented by UFBU). Member banks of IBA formally give a mandate to IBA to negotiate on behalf of them. Though the salary revision has fallen due for revision from 01.11.17, no meaningful dialogue has taken place till date. There have been few issues which have become impediments in the negotiations. They are:

i. Fractured mandate: So far, member banks were giving mandate to IBA for salary negotiation up to General Manager cadre (from Scale I to Scale VII – Scale VII being General Managers), as they are subjected same sets of service rules. A few banks have given mandate to IBA to negotiate only up to MMGS III, thus leaving officers in Senior Management in Grades IV, V, VI and VII in no-man's land. On the contrary, it may kindly be observed that Central Pay Commission is applicable to all section of Government employees, from messenger to the Cabinet Secretary.

Despite our repeated requests, discussions and agitations, neither Government nor banks nor IBA have taken any initiative to get the mandate from 5 banks which are yet to give full mandate. This fractured mandate has become stumbling block in negotiation. As a majority organisation representing the entire bank officers' fraternity irrespective of scale, we are not in a position to initiate wage

negotiation talks only for officers upto Scale-III – particularly when majority of the state sector Banks (15 out of 20) have conveyed their full and unconditional mandate to IBA for wage negotiation for all Bank officers up to Scale-VII (i.e. General Manager) cadre. Banks which are yet to give full mandate to IBA are: **State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India and Indian Bank**. We request you to please issue suitable instruction to them to mandate IBA immediately, paving way for meaningful negotiation.

ii. Charter of Demands and the parity of salary vis-à-vis Central Government officers: Salary of officers of the banks was higher than that of the IAS officers till 1979. In the name of parity, the salaries of bank officers were capped and clipped. Later, Government has been revising the salaries of IAS officers, through CPCs; but not the salaries of bank officers with the same parity. The gap has been widening with each pay revision. Now the starting Basic Pay of a Scale I officer in a PSB stands at Rs.23700/- compared to Rs.56100/- for Group 'A' officers of Central Government. This alone is enough to tell the tale of wage revision for officers in banks. To be brief, before 1979, the Basic Pay of a bank officer was more than that of an IAS officer, while now the emoluments of bank officers is a fraction of what an IAS officer draws.

For all practical purposes, officers of banks are treated as public servants. As a matter of fact, Bank officers have been equated to Group 'A' officers of Central Government. The service conditions are also on the lines of Civil Services. Banks are working as the extended arm of the Union Government, implementing its policies and programmes in the financial sector and are under the control, supervision and ownership of Government. This being the situation, it is unfortunate that the same yardstick is not being followed while carrying out revision of salaries and allowances for these two sets of officers. While in government service, salary being paid to the officers, is having no relevance to their performance, banks being the extended arm of Government and within its ownership, there is no rationale as to why similar approach cannot be adopted. Moreover, banks are earning and improving their operating profit, year after year,

though the net profit has declined on account of the policies like maintenance of Cash Reserve Ratio (earning zero income for banks), Statutory Liquidity Ratio, directed lending, provisioning norms, write off policies, hair-cuts driven by Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code etc. over which neither the banks nor the bank officers have any control. Beyond all, services of the bankers to the country cannot be valued at all, considering the fact that they serve the citizenry of the country under varied and compelling circumstances, sometimes even endangering their lives. Government has been following a contradictory stand. While for the purpose of control and monitoring and restrictions – bank officers are treated as Government servants, for the purpose of salary and allowances, they are NOT!!

We request that the profit and any such parameter be delinked for the purpose of salary revision, as we serve the nation like other Government employees.

b. Pension updation: Pension is revised for retired Government employees with every pay revision automatically. Recently, Government has updated pension of RBI personnel. But, for bankmen it does not happen at all. With this, many are being paid pension which are awfully low. Retirees cannot meet day to day expenditure and cannot afford a dignified living. Family pension is nothing short of a pittance – half the rate applicable to Government employees!! Pension drawn by officers in highest Scale (i.e. General Managers) of yester years is lesser than that of clerks who have retired / are retiring today. We request that pension needs to be updated with every salary revision and family pension needs to be revised as is applicable to Government employees. Retired officers have a right to lead a reasonable life for having devoted their life time to the cause of the Organization and Nation Building.

c. Working Environment in Banking Industry and recruitment of staffs: Perhaps, banking industry is the only industry where business doubles every 10 years, but the staff position halves. There was no recruitment in Banks for decades and decades. This decade is termed as decade of retirements. Large number of officers/staffs who were recruited in 1980s is retiring and

there will be an exodus in next couple of years. With this, the existing officers have to shoulder huge work load. They are forced to work on all days, disregarding weekly and other holidays. Officers, thus, have been invisibly chained to their offices and have lost personal, social and family life. Work-life balance has been severely impaired. This needs to be seen from the angle of human rights also. This has also been one of the reasons for increased ill-health among bank officers. A large number of suicides are being reported. Young Officers are suffering from cardiac/lifestyle diseases. It is not out of place to mention here with recently, a young officer in 30s suffered a heart attack on duty. There is an urgent necessity to bring in a suitable law so as to prohibit exploitation of officers.

There is also an imperative need to recruit employees in all cadres. This not only provides respite to working officers/employees, but also employment to the youth and helps building 'knowledge– bank' and continuity.

d. Misplaced focus of bank business: Banks were meant to be a bridge between savers and the users of money. Banks are regarded as trust houses of citizenry who keep their savings which are deployed by banks, by way of credit, for productive purposes so that money becomes useful to the society, improves economic conditions and add to the productivity and the GDP of the country. Additionally, Banks were also carrying on few ancillary services, which are not being handled by any other Institutions as such, like Custodial Safe Deposit, Safe Custody, Advisory Services etc. to help customers. In fact, these were complimentary services to the banking business. The core activity of banks continued to be collecting deposit and lending. Of late, a misplaced concept has crept in. Powers that be, want the banks to be 'super market of all financial services" and hence included marketing of third-party insurance, mutual fund products etc. within the ambit of banking business while there is no augmentation of staff for the same. There are exclusive institutions/ organizations and financial system in existence to extend such insurance and mutual products. There is no necessity that bank should be indulging in these sorts of activities, discarding its main objective. In fact, these are one of the prime reasons for deterioration in asset quality. Deliberately and by evil design, marketing of these third-party products has been incentivized. Incentives are in the form of

financial, non-financial bounties and perks. Foreign excursions are being arranged in the name of education / training programmes (from junior level to the topmost management). Officers / Staffs are being lured and allured by these incentives. With this, the focus of banks and the officials has shifted from core activity of lending, serving customers to just marketing third party products. The shift has been so intense that prime and important activities like follow-up, monitoring and recovery of loans have been relegated to back stage. These are going to harm the very fabric of banking. As these third-party products are sold on the basis of incentives, mis-selling / wrong selling / force selling is rampant. There is an urgent necessity to stop handling of such non-banking activities in banks in the interest of banks and the customers.

e. Strangling and Weakening Public Sector Banks: There is an orchestrated effort to strangle and weaken the Public Sector Banks through the NPA weaponry. Through a designed set of Schemes (like CDR, SDR, JLF, S4A etc.), the RBI permitted the banks to evergreen their NPAs for more than a decade. Suddenly in the year 2016 & 2017, the banks were forced to declare these evergreened accounts as NPAs and provide for them out of their Operating Profits within two-three quarters under the Asset Quality Review (AQR) policy (which was declared by the then RBI Governor, Shri Raghuram Rajan, but was found to be totally wrongful two years later). Due to this ruthless body-blow of AQR, most of the PSBs were made to bleed and post net losses and eventually pictured as weak. Even before the banks could manage to wriggle out of the AQR assault, RBI introduced an illogical Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) concept and brought more than 11 banks under this restrictive and retrograde mechanism. Later on, many of these banks have arbitrarily been declared to be out of PCA restrictions. There is a need to relook into this aspect.

f. Denationalization of Banks: During 1969 and 1980, the then Government nationalised many banks to ensure availability of banking facilities to the common man of the country, liberating them from the clutches of money lenders. Banks have contributed to the successful implementation of various policies and programmes. Public Sector

Banks have played a stellar role in the success of all revolutions be it Green, Blue, White. Public Sector Banks took banking to the places which were not accessible and in which private banks were/are not interested. Public Sector Banks have implemented pro-citizenry programmes like No-Frill Accounts, Jandhan, affordable insurance schemes of the government including Aadhaar, which are unheard in any part of the world. Today's financial and economic independence of the countrymen is on account of the active role played by the Public Sector Banks which account for around 80% of Indian banking and nearly 100% in rural areas.

Of late, there have been attempts to merge the Public Sector Banks in the garb of efficiency, scale of operations, NPAs etc. These, in fact, no way help either the merging entities or the common man. The result will be closure of bank branches in name of rationalization of branches. Credit delivery will be affected. Common man will suffer as branches will be closed. We have already witnessed this in the merger of Associate Banks with State Bank of India (It is reported that more than 2500 branches have been closed after merger in SBI). These, we believe, are steps in the direction of privatization. Robust, time-tested and huge banking resources and network may go to the hands of corporates and foreign entities. We think that this is nothing but reverse bank nationalization. Government is fast tracking Mergers & Acquisition in banking, which is a route already proved to be unsuccessful and therefore abandoned in the global economy. If this is not stopped, irreparable and irreversible damage will occur to these banks and the customers and other stakeholders of these banks. This year, being the Golden Jubilee Year of Bank Nationalization, we appeal that the benefits derived from Nationalization may please be kept in mind and endeavour to flourish the public sector banks. Further, we urge you to nationalise all old generation private sector banks in the larger interest of customers and the nation.

g. Five Day Week: Keeping in view the scientific practices prevailing across the countries, the demand for Five days week was originally placed in the 10th BPS, when 2nd and 4th Saturdays were declared as holidays. At present, it has become a priority, which is likely to bring many positive effects, such as increased productivity, improved job satisfaction and morale, decreased absenteeism, reduced energy

costs and work-life balance. Globally, the organizations work 5 days a week. The working conditions in the Banks have been strenuous. Poor infrastructure, lack of adequate staff has made the officers till late in the night, resulting in poor health, huge pressure on the officers, which culminates in serious work-leisure mismatches, life style diseases and of late, repeated acts of suicides being committed by the officers of the Banks. Officers are called upon to work on holidays and Sundays, frequently disrupting the personal life. On account of this, officers are being burnt-out, unable to justify themselves in their family. Introduction of Five-Day Week will not only result in savings to the organization in terms of overheads and bring in a human element in the officers' lives, but also would enable a meaningful social life – which in turn will result in higher efficiency in work place. 5 Days' week will also rejuvenate many other commercial sectors/activities of the economy. A positive move in this regard would be hailed by one and all. The matter may please be addressed at the earliest.

h. National Pension System (NPS): While the contribution is defined and certain in this scheme, the return is most uncertain and undefined. The funds of NPS are subject to market risk. This does not provide family pension, which convention pension provides, in cases of unfortunate death of pensioner. We also urge upon your good office to restore the Old Defined Benefit Pension scheme and scrap the National Pension System, which has been implemented in Banks since August, 2010. There is tremendous resentment amongst the new recruits, who want restoration of the Old Pension Scheme.

i. Reckoning allowances as Basic for the purpose of arriving superannuation benefits: We also invite your kind attention to the Judgment delivered by Hon'ble Supreme Court on 28th February, 2019 in Civil Appeal No. 6221 of 2011 filed by Regional Provident Commissioner (II) West Bengal, wherein it was held that the Special Allowance payable in all these concerns to all the employees without exception falls within the definition of Basic Wages in Sec 2(b) of Employees Provident Fund Act, 1952. It is also pertinent to submit that the definition of Basic Wages in Sec 2(b) of EPF Act is similar to the definition of Wages in Sec 2(s) of

Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. The above judgment is clearly applicable to Banks' Provident Fund Scheme too, making it obligatory on Banks to reckon Special Allowance for contribution to Provident Fund for employees, who are PF optees and as a sequel extend its application to pay defined under Pension Regulation 2(s). In view of the ratio applied by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Special Allowance with its Dearness Allowance component should be reckoned for payment of Gratuity, contribution to Provident Fund and computation of Pension. It is also pertinent to submit that all allowances counted for the purpose of making contribution to the Provident Fund and for the payment of Dearness Allowance are the component of Pay for the purpose of computation of Pension in terms of Pension Regulation 2(s)(b)(ii). The employees who fall under the Xth Bi-partite settlement should also be rightfully extended the benefits of this landmark judgment.

j. Attack on Bankers – Need to put in place adequate security measures: There have been frequently reported incidents of attacks on bankers, both by miscreants, disgruntled elements and motivated mobs. Recently, an officer was shot dead in the broad day light by miscreants within the bank premises. Many officers monitoring loans and on recovery job, have lost their precious lives in the line of duty or faced fatal injuries due to the faulty policies and inadequate security measures deployed by the bank management. Customers also being injured/ murdered when such incidents happen. These have instilled sense of fear and uncertainty in the officers and staff as well as customers of the Banks. The lackadaisical approach of the management of the banks is very evident. Banks have been compromising with the basic requirement of security arrangements including posting of armed guards at branches and security personnel at ATM sites in the name of curtailing overheads. For past more than one-and-a-half years, almost all banks – both public and private sectors – have stopped deploying armed security guards at their branches and ATM counters. As such, banks and ATM sites have become soft targets for the dacoits and terrorists. The security arrangements need to be fortified to instil the confidence in officers and customers. Finally, we request your good office

NEVER BEND BEFORE THE INSOLENT MIGHT

to instruct the banks and all the state government machinery to provide adequate security arrangements at bank branches and ATM sites for the bank personnel and customers. Banks should recruit their own permanent security personnel for better and continuous monitoring of security measures in the Bank, instead of depending on out-sourced personnel/agencies.

k. Taxing Leave Encashment: Sir, every employee, whether in government or others, works hard, makes all endeavour to save the Privilege Leave (Earned Leave) as it can be encashed upon superannuation. To that extent, employee would have undergone stress, strain and inconvenience, with the only aspiration these saved leaves can be monetised, resulting in a corpus amount that can come to his/her rescue, post-retirement. Essential this is a part of a social security measure, Government should think of. Here, we have observed an aberration of unequal treatment of citizens of the country. Income Tax Act treats the government and non-governmental employees differently. While entire Leave Encashment amount is tax free in the hands of government employee and the legal heirs of deceased, non-governmental employees, including bankmen, are not extended with this benefit and in their cases, tax exemption is restricted to Rs. 3 lakh only, which is unfair and discriminatory. Further this ceiling has been fixed decades and decades back. Keeping in view the inflation, present value of the earnings, and in order

not to discriminate the salary earners, please exempt the leave encashment fully. We request that necessary Amendment may please be carried out to Sec 10AA of Income Tax Act.

l. Data integrity and safekeeping: Banks have been collecting personal details, Aadhar, PAN, thumb impression of customers and staff for various purposes, be it a party of KYC or for access control. There are umpteen number of incidents where bank appoints third party in handling its affairs. In the garb of access control, the thumb impression of officers and staff are obtained and handled by third-party, outsourced agents. This is a ticking bomb. These are likely to be hazardous sooner or later unless they are safe-vaulted and third party vendors are obviated. We request you to instruct, in strict terms, that the Banks shall not assign any task which involves storage and handling of personal / KYC details to third party vendors. This is not only in the interest of the officers / staff and customers, but also in the interest of the banks and the economy.

4. Sir, as a responsible Trade Union representing the aspirations of over 3.20 lakh bank officers, we have already taken up these issues with IBA, individual banks and also the Ministry of Finance. Despite repeated attempts and agitations, issues stand unresolved as yet. With your assuming the office, we sincerely seek your kind indulgence and request you to direct the concerned to resolve the issues to the mutual satisfaction urgently. ■

WELFARE ACTIVITIES FELICITATION OF RETIRED EMPLOYEES/OFFICERS SUGGESTION FOR INTRODUCTION OF MILESTONE AWARD

State Bank of India has been in the league of elite employers and pioneer in HR initiatives. Bank has its due credit to many "firsts" in the industry. Bank has been recognizing the services of the employees/officers and a memento is being presented to retiring officers, ranging from Rs.10,000/- (JMGS I) to Rs.1,25,000/- (Chairman).

2. We understand that some PSUs have introduced path-breaking HR initiative of recognizing the contribution of its retired personnel, who are also a major stakeholder.

Retired personnel are being presented with a cash memento starting from Rs.70000/- to Rs.2,00,000/- on reaching the age of 70 years, with 5 yearly intervals thereafter.

3. We find that this is an innovative way of recognizing the services of employees/officers, who have toiled for the cause of the organization during prime of their age. We earnestly hope that our bank, being the premier financial institution of the country and front runner in implementing various welfare measures and HR Policies should also initiate some path breaking welfare policy for

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SBI Seniors, which will be hailed by one and all. Let us acknowledge and respect the contribution of our veterans, who have made our esteemed institution to reach where it is today.

4. We, therefore, request you to form a suitable scheme on the above lines which will strengthen the bondage of personnel with the Bank eternally and surely it will be another landmark decision that will be written in golden letters in the annals of the glorious history of our esteemed organisation. ■

**PROBATIONARY OFFICERS (RURAL BANKING)-PO (RB):
RELAXATION IN SERVICE CONDITIONS ON RETAINING PO (RB) IN RURAL BUSINESS FOR A MINIMUM PERIOD OF 10 YEARS**

It has been our constant endeavor that opportunities have to be made available to the officers recruited under specialized streams to enable them to be part of generalist pool of officers. Over a period of time, their skills would have been honed in general banking

making them capable of shouldering the responsibilities as of any other general pool officers. Given the fact that the banking business has become structured, with standardized approach in all operational areas, it is highly desirable that specialists should also be given an opportunity to join the pool of general bankers. This will provide an opportunity to such officers by opening up new vistas of possibilities. Towards this end, we have been demanding conversion of officers recruited under special channels [like Probationary Officers (Rural Banking), RMROs, CRE-PBs etc.] to general cadre.

2. We are glad to inform you that bank has considered one of such request and has issued circular No:CDO/P&HRD-CM/23/2019-20 dated 19.06.19, relaxing the policy approved at the time of recruitment of POs (RB) of retaining such officers in rural business for a minimum period of 10 years and thereby permit them to be posted in any other verticals of the Bank as may be required by the Bank, in respect of POs(RB).

We thank the Bank management for taking this appropriate step. ■

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