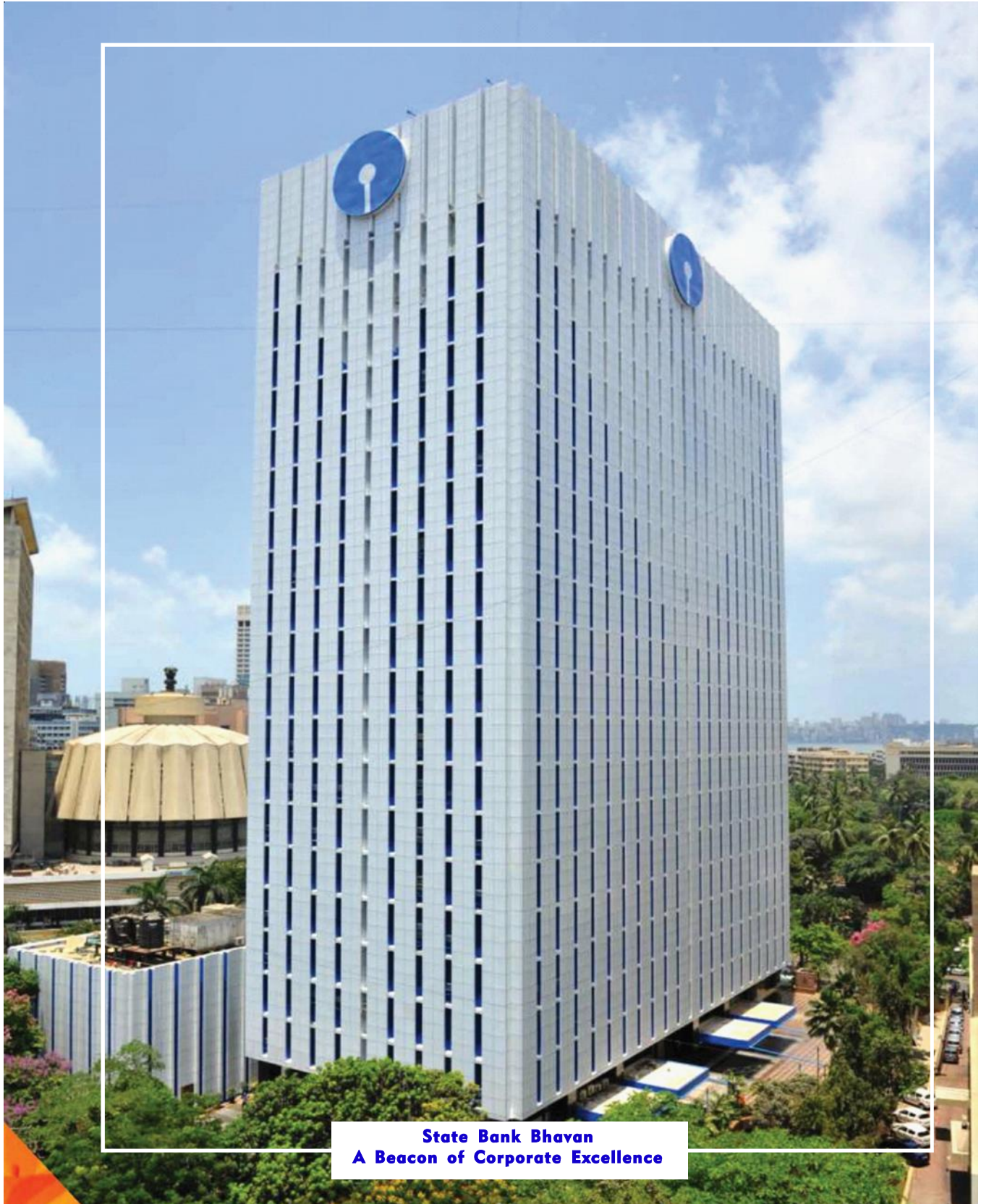




Officers' Cause



**State Bank Bhavan
A Beacon of Corporate Excellence**

Editorial

EMPOWERING DREAMS SBI'S COLLECTIVE DRIVE TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

The State Bank of India (SBI) once again demonstrates its unwavering strength by achieving its highest-ever profit this year, surpassing even the most optimistic forecasts of economists. However, as emphasized by our Chairman, Sh. Dinesh Khara, the pinnacle of success is not the final destination; maintaining this position demands ongoing dedication and adaptability. Despite allocating significant resources for wage revision, pension and other initiatives, the bank has emerged as a shining exemplar of success under his stewardship, guided by a vision committed to upholding this remarkable milestone.

We take immense pride in our exceptional workforce and talent pool. Last month, we witnessed elevations in various grades/scales, including top executives and newly promoted officers joining the distinguished rank of OJMSG-I and TO within our officers' fraternity. To each of them, we extend our heartfelt congratulations, acknowledging their accomplishments and wishing them ongoing success and satisfaction in their professional endeavours. It's essential to underscore a crucial aspect: as achievements mount, so do responsibilities and expectations. We have full confidence in their vision, professionalism, positivity, and ability to navigate complexities, all of which will undoubtedly fuel our bank's continued success.

It's also important to acknowledge that climbing the career ladder is not the sole measure of excellence within our esteemed organisation. The contribution of every member of our SBI family holds paramount importance. The dedication, hard work, and commitment of each member to our shared goals drive our bank's success. One's efforts, whether recognized with a promotion or not, are invaluable to our collective achievements. The role performed at each level is integral to propelling our esteemed institution to new zeniths of success. So, let's continue to work together, supporting one another, and striving for excellence in all that we do.

Recognizing the vast reservoir of potential and talent within our team underscores the significance of

maintaining continuous self-confidence, introspection, innovation, motivation and tapping into untapped capabilities. While everyone possesses the potential for productivity and business growth, unlocking it necessitates concerted understanding and effort across all organizational levels. Converting every negative into a positive is imperative. It is crucial for everyone to acknowledge that numerous longstanding disparities affecting both current and retired employees have been recently addressed, nurturing optimism for further rectification of existing imbalances between officers and clerical staff.

The concerns regarding human resources especially officers and their impact on organizational growth have been thoroughly discussed in various forums, including the "LEAP" initiative at SBI Kolkata, which involved a synergy meet with top executives of the bank, as well as the Central Negotiating Council Meeting and subsequent discussions at various levels within the Corporate Centre. Our esteemed Chairman is well-informed about these concerns, and we are confident that under his astute and compassionate leadership, a resolution will be achieved. This resolution will not only address the interests of our officers' fraternity but also contribute to the overall welfare and success of the bank.

We firmly believe that the primary aspiration of every SBI employee is to uphold the esteemed reputation of our beloved organization. To continue our current trajectory, it's imperative for all stakeholders to collaborate with unwavering sincerity, dedication, and a profound sense of ownership. The pivotal role played by officers, particularly Branch Heads and Controllers across all levels from branch to apex, cannot be overstated. It's imperative to acknowledge that productivity goes beyond mere diligence and personal sacrifices; it also involves making informed decisions and managing resources effectively while ensuring a healthy work-life equilibrium.

This productivity paradigm encapsulates a synergy of various indispensable elements that are interlinked; they don't operate in isolation but rather

influence one another reciprocally, ultimately leading to amplified productivity, as elucidated below:

★ **Motivation** serves as a crucial catalyst for productivity, akin to a muscle that can be strengthened over time through deliberate effort. Taking control of one's choices and understanding their significance infuses individuals with a sense of empowerment, nourishing a proactive approach towards goal attainment. Additionally, rewarding individuals for decisions made, irrespective of the outcomes, cultivates a positive mindset and bolsters motivation, thereby mitigating the risk of succumbing to emotional detachment or apathy.

★ **Teamwork**, characterized by psychological safety, is essential for productivity. Psychological safety creates an environment wherein individuals feel secure in expressing their thoughts and ideas without fear of reprisal or judgment. This atmosphere of trust and respect stimulates open communication, facilitating the exchange of innovative ideas and effective problem-solving, thereby propelling efforts towards success. Cultivating psychological safety necessitates instilling a sense of purpose, clarity regarding roles and goals, and promoting open dialogue and inclusivity.

★ In tandem with motivation and teamwork, maintaining **focus** is imperative for sustaining productivity. Visualizing our day and preparing mentally for tasks provides the foresight needed to navigate challenges effectively, strengthening our productivity skills.

★ The significance of **goal setting** in driving productivity cannot be emphasized enough. While SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timeline) goals offer a structured approach to goal setting, stretch goals boost growth and innovation by encouraging individuals to step out of their comfort zones to a certain extent. Combining stretch goals with SMART goals, after ensuring

a balance between ambition, feasibility, capabilities, and personal commitments, is consistently effective in optimizing productivity potential.

★ In the quest to boost productivity, the roles of **creativity and innovation** are paramount. Repetitive actions inevitably lead to predictable outcomes. Therefore, it becomes essential to harness every piece of acquired information or experience, amalgamating it with fresh insights to promote innovative solutions. Tuning into our emotional responses towards specific ideas in a supportive environment can provide invaluable perspectives. Feeling a hint of unease or apprehension regarding a new concept may signify its potential for innovation. Embracing this discomfort encourages us to perceive situations from novel angles, akin to shedding light on a previously darkened room. While creative breakthroughs are undoubtedly thrilling, it's crucial to remain receptive to exploring alternative paths. This adaptability is the cornerstone of productivity, empowering us to unearth truly exceptional outcomes.

At the core of productivity lies not speed, but rather a deep comprehension of tasks, meticulous planning, and an unwavering dedication to excellence. For SBIans, productivity goes beyond mere numerical accomplishments; it involves infusing purpose and significance into every endeavour. As guardians of a legacy spanning over two centuries, we stand as pillars of the economy, entrusted with the monumental responsibility of nation-building. Our commitment to productivity extends beyond mere profitability; it represents our pledge to make discerning decisions that herald transformative outcomes.

Ultimately, SBI's journey towards excellence hinges on harnessing the collective potential of its workforce, cultivating a supportive atmosphere, nurturing a culture of empowerment & innovation, and steadfastly pursuing objectives that embody meaningful improvement. ■

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: WHY NECESSARY AND HOW TO ACHIEVE

By.....Vijay Ronjan, Retired CGM SBI

Achieving work-life balance in public sector banks in India is a crucial issue that affects not only the individual employees but also the overall productivity and morale of the banking institutions. Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium where employees feel that their work commitments and personal life are not in conflict, leading to better job satisfaction, reduced stress, and higher productivity. This balance is particularly challenging in the public sector due to the traditional work culture, high job security, and considerable bureaucratic procedures. The situation is worsening day by day as Top Management functionaries are resorting to Micromanagement and excessive number of review meetings thus leaving no time for frontline staff to think, strategize and implement the action plan. Another big issue is the ratio of Admin Staff strength vs branch staff strength. There is an acute shortage of branch staff strength in PSBs , which imbalances the work and life of front line staff.

Management has to understand that in a stressful job of delivering efficient prompt service to customers with zero error, if they are not providing sufficient support in the form of staff and technological resources, the efficiency of staff will go down.

I would like to explain in brief here why work life balance is important for people working in PSBs in India and what Organizations should do to achieve this important objective.

IMPORTANCE OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

First let me talk about the importance attached to work life balance. In my view the importance can be explained point wise as under:

1. Employee Health and Well-being: Continuous work pressure and lack of personal time can lead to stress and burnout, negatively impacting an employee's mental and physical health. A good work-life balance ensures that employees remain healthy and less prone to illnesses, which in turn reduces absenteeism and healthcare costs for the employer.

2. Increased Productivity: Employees who have a balanced work-life scenario are more likely to be motivated and efficient in their job roles. This is crucial in the banking sector where the accuracy and speed of processing financial transactions are paramount.

3. Employee Retention: Banks with a reputation for supporting work-life balance are more likely to attract and retain top talent. In a competitive jobmarket, retaining skilled workers is essential for maintaining high service levels and institutional knowledge.

4. Reduction in Workplace Stress : Managing job stress in high-stake environments like banks is crucial. Effective work-life balance reduces the risk of occupational stress, fostering a more harmonious workplace.

5. Corporate Image and Responsibility: Public sector entities are increasingly judged by their social responsibility. Promoting work-life balance enhances their image as an employee-friendly organization.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

Let us talk about strategies which each PSB can adopt to enforce work life balance. They can be summarised in 3 parts ,viz, Organizational changes, Cultural reforms and Policy initiatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

1. Flexible Working Hours : Implementing flexi-time and allowing employees to choose their working hours within certain limits can accommodate personal needs better. In banking this is possible in back office job and also with digitisation , lot many works can be taken off from frontline staff and push to back office.

2. Remote Work Options: Encouraging telecommuting or work-from-home options for roles that do not require physical presence can help reduce commute times and enhance employee satisfaction. This is true where marketing and selling is a priority.

3. Time Management Training: Training employees in effective time management can help them complete tasks more efficiently, leaving more room for personal activities. I always believe that if work is organised and balanced, life is going to be balanced automatically. However, it's the job of managers to see that punctuality does not mean start only, punctuality also means timely completion of job and closure of offices and branches. Each and every employee must be trained and monitored to work within the defined time frame.

4. Limiting Overtime: Establishing strict policies about overtime can help ensure that employees are not routinely staying late, which disrupts their work-life balance. Monitoring EoD is very important in Banks. When I was in service, I used to monitor the closure time of branches and started asking controllers why branches were not getting closed on time. This had a positive impact.

CULTURAL REFORMS

1. Leadership Training : Training senior staff and managers to recognize the importance of work-life balance, encouraging them to set an example for their teams. In my view there should be some negative points given to Controllers and Supervisors whose staff sit late and attend office on holidays. Late sitting and working on holidays are sign of inefficiency which must be discouraged.

2. Recognition of Family Needs: Acknowledging that employees have responsibilities outside work by providing support through childcare facilities, parental leave, or care for elderly family members. Of late inflows of lady staff is on rise in all banks. This is a positive sign. However, recognising their dual responsibility and according importance to their needs has to be considered by the management of banks.

3. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP): Offering services such as counseling and support for personal or job-related issues can help employees manage stress better. In PSBs, though medical facilities are there to take care of physical health of employees, I have not seen any initiative to take care of mental health of employees who are working in a stressful situation. Providing facility of counsellors may help them in a big way.

4.Regular Feedback and Communication: Keeping lines of communication open between employees and management to discuss and adjust work-life balance strategies as needed. Unfortunately, there is a total lack of communication between employee and supervisors. Listening is an art and a stress reliever too. There must be an open communication channel where employees can exhale and express their ideas and issues without fear. In my stint as CGM SBI Delhi Circle, I tried to formalise this channel on Teams where once in a month all categories of employee can join in and express their views, ideas and even submit grievance too. The programme was called "**Aapki Baat, Apno ke Sath**". We used to get lot of ideas and suggestions and it became a good medium for employees to exhale.

POLICY INITIATIVES

1. Annual Leave Encouragement: Actively encouraging employees to take their allotted leave days to disconnect and rejuvenate. Unfortunately this is a big issue where many a times leave are not getting sanctioned. Any controller who is rejecting the leave must have to explain to superiors for such rejections. A leave due has to be sanctioned. This needs to be ensured.

2. Sabbaticals and Career Breaks: Offering longer leaves of absence for personal growth or family commitments without the risk of job loss. This gives opportunity to rejuvenate, learn new things, and makes employee realise the value of work life too.

3. Workload Monitoring: Regularly reviewing workloads to ensure they are manageable and fairly distributed among teams. This is very important tool. If work distribution is proper, load will be less on one or two persons. Please remember that overloaded vehicles are prone to accidents.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, achieving work-life balance in public sector banks in India is essential not only for the well-being of the employees but also for

the productivity and efficiency of the institutions themselves. By implementing flexible work policies, providing support for personal responsibilities, and fostering a culture that values individual well-being, banks can create a more motivated, efficient, and committed workforce. This balance is not merely a luxury but a strategic imperative in today's high-

stress work environments.

I would like to end with the words of Tom Smith (Bestselling Author and Co- Founder, Partners In Leadership) – "Leadership is the ability to facilitate movement in the needed direction and have people feel good about it." ■

SBI: BREAKING RECORDS, SETTING STANDARDS

Text of AISBOF Letter No. 6180 /31/24, Dated.10.05.2024, Addressed to The Chairman, State Bank of India, Corporate Centre, Mumbai.

On behalf of All India State Bank Officers' Federation, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to you and the entire SBI Family on the remarkable achievement of a record-setting net profit of ₹ 61,077 crores for FY24, showcasing a growth of 21.59% YOY after accounting for wage settlement and one-time exceptional item of ₹ 7100 crores.

2. Sir, the Operating Profit of ₹ 93,797 Crores stands as a resounding testament to your stellar leadership, which has motivated the entire workforce. The bank's position has been justified by prudent management decisions and the devotion of our employees, particularly officers, which has resulted in a considerable improvement in all metrics, including a robust increase in net interest income, expanded credit growth, and improved asset quality. Your

guidance and strategic acumen have played a pivotal role in achieving such remarkable results, and we are inspired by your vision for the bank's growth and success.

3. While celebrating this historic milestone, we cannot overlook the pressing issue of the long-standing disparity in grade/special pay for our hard-working officers. The existing gap in pay and benefits between officers and clerical staff is a matter of concern for us. We have recently communicated our concerns to DMD(HR) & CDO regarding residual issues of officers and a copy of the communication is attached herewith for your kind perusal and intervention.

4. Once again, congratulations on SBI's amazing results. We are immensely proud to be a part of this remarkable journey, and we are convinced that with your leadership, the bank will continue to scale new heights and set new benchmarks in the banking industry.■

AIBOC WRITES TO HON'BLE FINANCE MINISTER, GOVT. OF INDIA ON IMPLEMENTATION OF 9TH JOINT NOTE IN REGIONAL RURAL BANKS

Text of AIBOC Circular No. 2024/11, dated 8.05.2024, addressed Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Respected Madam,

URGENT CALL FOR EQUITABLE WAGE REVISION IN REGIONAL RURAL BANKS: A PLEA FROM AIBOC

Greetings from AIBOC!

With reverence and aspirations aloft, this piece of communique solicits your pragmatic evaluation of

the issue and your favourable consideration bestowing fairness and equity in treatment to otherwise seemingly neglected but deserving segment of the nation's financial stakeholders.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the employees of RRBs have been extending an yeomen service to the nation. While discussing financial inclusion and outreach, we must acknowledge the invaluable contribution RRBs make in the remotest corners of our country while playing a pivotal role in the economic inclusivity and steering marginalized sections towards the mainstream economy. The dedication exhibited by RRB employees and officers in nurturing the grassroots economy warrants fair compensation

akin to their counterparts in commercial banks.

The recent wage revision within the banking industry was solidified through a Settlement agreement signed on March 8th, 2024, between the Bank Unions and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). However, it's imperative to note that employees and officers serving in Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) are yet to benefit from this revision. We are unequivocal in our belief that the staff of RRBs rightfully deserve to partake in this wage revision, as mandated under Section 17(1) of the RRB Act, 1976, and in alignment with relevant Supreme Court precedents.

While commercial bank employees have seen improvements in their salary packages, RRB officers and staff eagerly await their fair share and are accordingly pinning their hopes on your benevolent intervention to ensure they receive

equitable treatment and prompt implementation of a wage settlement within their respective institutions. Such a legitimate favour would undoubtedly bolster morale and enhance their contribution to the banking sector's vitality thus augmenting an overwhelming economic growth propagating the essence of participation.

Representing the All-India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), the preeminent apex-level organization with a membership strength of more than 325000 officers, advocating for bank officers, we respectfully bring this matter to your attention. We earnestly urge you to advise the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to expeditiously issue the necessary notification for the wage revision in RRBs. Such action would not only solidify the banking sector but also contribute significantly to the overall upliftment of our nation's economy. ■

THE NOMADIC LIFE OF A PSU BANKER

By.... Tamal Bandyopadhyay

Here's a peek into the life of a public sector banker who did well professionally, but paid a price for it.

Let's call him Mr A. His wife describes him as a nomad, but he seems happy about the Bharat darshan he could indulge in during his career that spanned over three-and-a-half decades.

Hailing from a middle-class family in West Bengal, A, a postgraduate, joined a mid-sized south-based public sector bank in the late 1980s as a probationary officer (PO). He started out with postings at four branches for his "on-the-job training" in general banking, agriculture, credit and foreign exchange in Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Balugaon (Odisha), Erode (Tamil Nadu) and Kolkata (West Bengal) for six months each.

Since there was no leased accommodation for a PO, he had to live in small, dingy rooms with professionals from varied fields. The four places were very different from one another in terms of language, food and weather.

After a successful probationary period, he was posted at Balasore in Odisha, those days known for the Chandipur beach and the Indian Ballistic

Missile Defence Programme's test range. Since new private banks had still not made their appearance, there was no competition for business. A got married during this stint, and became a father.

He had, however, barely started enjoying being a parent when he was sent to Gangtok as a manager-designate for the bank's first branch in Sikkim. With a six-month-old daughter in their arms, the family landed in Gangtok late December when the temperature was 4 degrees Celsius.

The new branch office was almost ready, except for the strong room where money would be kept. He managed to get a decent flat, paying extra for it from his pocket since the rent far exceeded his entitlement.

By this time, new private banks started appearing on the horizon. For his bank, business was not growing on expected lines. A could not provide the customers with the latest computerised facilities, which these private banks offered. He pushed for computerising the branch, but the management saw it as an excuse for non-performance.

The next posting for the "non-performer" was Repalle in Andhra Pradesh. From Gangtok, where

the average summer temperature was 9-10 Celsius, he now had to cope with temperatures as high as 35-38 degree Celsius. An equally daunting challenge was the language barrier. He left his family at his in-laws' house in Bhubaneswar (Odisha), and went to Repalle alone.

The red chillies and spicy food were a nightmare for A till his wife joined the coastal town, which is famous for its temples, rice mills, high-quality cashew nuts and seafood.

The next stop was the foreign exchange department at the bank's Vizag branch. He loved the city – the blue sea and its lagoon, the green pastures, mountains and hillocks, and its polite, courteous, cultured people. A posting at the foreign exchange department did not excite very many people in those days since it involved longer work hours and few holidays. A proved to be an exception. At his farewell, the chief manager spoke about his "stellar performance on a sticky wicket". He got a promotion, and was transferred to Bhubaneswar.

This stint was a fight against bad loans. As senior manager (recovery), A spent his Sundays, and other holidays, meeting the loan defaulters. There were cases of business failures leading to bad loans, but handling the wilful defaulters – those who had money but were not paying off – was far more difficult.

By now, his daughter had started going to school. She used to ask her mother why her father had to be in office on Sundays when her friends' fathers would take them out.

A managed to arrive at compromise settlements for a large number of sticky accounts and recover a good amount. The branch was among the top 10 performers across India in bad loan recovery.

The reward came in the form of a posting to the Mumbai treasury. The bank's accommodation at Jogeshwari, a western suburb of Mumbai, was decent, but finding a good school for his daughter, an ICSE student, was a challenge.

Finally, one ICSE school agreed to admit her on the condition that he would contribute handsomely to its development. His daughter could finally start going to a school, but A's savings vanished into the blue.

The treasury markets start at 9 am, and the officers are supposed to report half an hour before that. A had to leave home by 7.15 am to drive down to the office in south Mumbai, but the return journey used to take as much as three-and-a-half hours on some days. He would reach home late, at about 9.30 pm, and immediately head to the dining table for dinner. An essential chore before going to bed was to shave so that he could get up a little late the following next morning. Despite the water crisis in summer, incessant rains during monsoon, high cost of living, and the mad rush in public transport, the family of three fell in love with Maximum City.

His daughter was now in Class IX and preparing for the board exams. The critical year demanded stability, but A, who had been in Mumbai for five years, was transferred to the Delhi zonal office as deputy zonal manager. He could not leave his family behind.

The toughest problem in Delhi was getting his daughter admitted to Class IX.

Initially, every day, he would give false assurances to her that something would turn up very soon, but he was beginning to lose hope. One morning, his daughter burst into tears and asked whether she would ever get admitted to school again. In office, A broke down before the zonal manager, who took the initiative to arrange for a school admission after admonishing him. He should have put his daughter in the Central School, or he could have left his family with his in-laws and moved to Delhi alone.

A took up the idea of moving alone during the last leg of his career.

After two more stints at Raipur (Chhattisgarh) and Patna (Bihar) as zonal head, his last port of call was Mumbai again. By this time, the industry had changed – there had been privatisation, amalgamation of public sector banks and the near-collapse of a few banks of different hues. As retirement approached, he started suffering from an identity crisis as his bank was merged with another.

The list of A's transfers is far longer than mentioned here. It made him a better banker with different exposures, but it came at a price. His daughter could not make many friends since she

had been to eight schools. Often, she remained an outsider in her school. His wife, too, suffered from bouts of depression. They lived like a nomadic tribe.

A few of his colleagues, who were qualified to rise up the ladder, gave up midway, and embraced a tension-free life. He does not know whether they were wise to do so, but the children of some of them who abandoned the aspiration for promotions are well-placed in their lives.

The journey of a bank officer is a story of sacrifice and of the support the family lends. Often, like many others, A too feels that he did well professionally, but that he was probably unfair to his family. As he looks back, he becomes melancholic and remembers the lines of Edward Thomas's The Owl:

*And salted was my food, and my repose,
Salted and sobered, too, by the bird's voice
Speaking for all who lay under the stars,
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.*

It's a poem about both fulfilment and deprivation – about the emotions of empathy and guilt. Nothing can sum up the life of a PSU banker better.

(We are publishing this column with the consent of the writer. It first appeared in the Business Standard on May 19, 2024. The author writes the “**Banker's Trust**” column every Monday in the Business Standard. To read his previous columns, please visit <http://bankerstrust.in>. Follow him on Twitter:@TamalBandyo) ■

WITHHOLDING EMPLOYEE'S RETIREMENT BENEFITS IS ARBITRARY, ILLEGAL, SIN: CAT TO GOVT

Srinagar, May 5: The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) in Srinagar has observed as “arbitrary, illegal, and sin” the withholding of retirement benefits of employees for...

Srinagar, May 5: The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) in Srinagar has observed as “**arbitrary, illegal, and sin**” the withholding of retirement benefits of employees for prolonged periods, saying it was out of sync with the constitution.

“Withholding of retirement benefits of retired employees for years together is not only illegal and arbitrary but a sin, if not an offence,” a bench of M S Latif said in a judgment passed in response to a plea by 64-year-old Kaka Jee Koul, who superannuated on March 31, 2020, as a Sub Inspector in the Home Department. The tribunal held that depriving an employee of his retirement benefits for a prolonged period was against the “**concept of social and economic justice which is one of the founding pillars of our constitution**”.

“In our system, the constitution is supreme but the real power vests in the people of India as the constitution has been enacted for the people by the people, and is of the people,” the CAT said. It said that a public functionary cannot as such be permitted to act in a way that the law would not countenance causing harassment to a common

man in particular when the person subjected to harassment had been their employee. The tribunal said this while relying on the observation of Lord Hailsham in Cassell and Company Limited versus Broome (1972 AC 1027) and of Lord Delvin in Rookes versus Barnard and others (1964 AC 1129) as also the Apex Court in the Lucknow Development Authority versus M K Gupta JT 1993(6) SC 307.

It also cited a Supreme Court's judgment titled Mukti Nath Rai versus State of Uttar Pradesh (1992 (2) SCC 644), wherein the apex held that “**in these hard days it is essential that payment of pension should begin promptly**”.

The tribunal made these observations while deciding the plea by Koul who through his counsel, Advocate S N Ratanpuri had approached it seeking intervention for direction to the Home Department to grant him the due promotion to the post of Inspector and release of retirement benefits in his favour. The case of Koul was that he was serving as a Sub-Inspector in the Home Department and superannuated on March 31, 2020. A Departmental Promotion Committee was convened wherein his case was considered for promotion while he was in service. However, given the pendency of a criminal case against him, the sealed cover procedure was adopted by the department. Koul submitted that after superannuation he was acquitted in the criminal case

registered by the Crime Branch against him for offences under Sections 420, 468, 459, 471, and 120-B of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC).

He submitted that after the judgment of acquittal was pronounced by the competent authority (Sub-Judge and Judicial Magistrate, Baramulla,) he immediately moved a representation before the authorities for the release of his pensionary benefits which were due to him as also his consequential benefits. Koul said that the representation so filed was received by the respondents but no decision

was taken on it. He said that given the non-disposal of the earlier representation, he was compelled to file another representation dated March 17, 2024. The short case of Koul was that he otherwise deserved to be promoted as Inspector with all consequential benefits but for the non-consideration of the representation was compelled to knock on the doors of the court through his plea. While disposing of the case, the tribunal directed the respondents (authorities) to decide following his entitlement and on its merits within four weeks of the representation Koul reportedly filed before them. ■

IRDAI MANDATES HEALTH INSURERS TO DECIDE ON CASHLESS CLAIMS WITHIN 1 HOUR.. *Business Standard*

Regulator IRDAI on Wednesday released a master circular on health insurance specifying that an insurer will have to decide on cashless authorization within one hour of request.



The master circular on Health Insurance products repeals 55 circulars issued earlier and it is a significant stride towards reinforcing the empowerment of policyholders and bolstering inclusive health insurance, IRDAI said in a statement.

“The circular has brought in one place the entitlements in a health insurance policy available to a Policyholder/prospects for their easy reference and also emphasizes measures towards providing seamless, faster and hassle-free claims experience to a policyholder procuring health insurance policy and ensuring enhanced service standards across the health insurance sector, it said.

Sharing salient features of the master circular, it said, wider choice to be provided by the insurers by making available products/addons/riders by offering diverse insurance products catering to all ages, regions, medical conditions/ all types of Hospitals and Health Care Providers to suit the affordability of the policyholders. It also specifies Customer Information Sheet (CIS) which is provided by the insurer along with every policy document.

It explains the basic features of insurance policies in simple words like type of insurance, sum insured, coverage details, exclusions, sub-limits, deductibles, and waiting periods. In case of no

claims during the policy period, the insurers may reward the policyholders by providing an option to choose such No Claim Bonus either by increasing the sum insured or discounting the premium amount. The master circular pitches for striving towards achieving facilitation of 100 per

cent cashless claim settlement in a time bound manner.

“To decide on cashless authorization requests immediately and within one hour and final authorization on discharge from hospital within three hours of request from the hospital,” it said.

It also talks about providing end-to-end technology solutions for effective, efficient and seamless onboarding of policyholders, renewal of policy, policy servicing, and grievance redressal. For claim settlements, it said, the policyholder shall not be required to submit any documents rather insurers and TPAs should collect the required documents from the hospitals. With regard to portability requests on the Insurance Information Bureau of India (IIB) portal, it said, stricter timelines being imposed for the existing insurer and the acquiring insurers to act. An insurer is liable to pay ₹ 5,000 per day to the policyholder in case ombudsman awards are not implemented within 30 days. In the event of death during the treatment, it said, mortal remains to be released from the Hospital immediately. This master circular represents a landmark effort to empower the policyholders, ensuring they receive the highest standards of care and service; fostering an environment of trust and transparency in the health insurance sector, it added.



Celebrating Excellence

Meet Our Newly Elevated Deputy Managing Directors



Shri Shiva Om Dikshit



Shri Kshitij Mohan



Shri Satish Rao Nagesh



Shri Virendra Bansal



Shri Ashok Kumar
Sharma



Shri G S Rana



Shri Ravi Ranjan



Shri Prem AnupSinha



Shri Naveen Chandra Jha

The **All India State Bank Officers' Federation** extends sincere congratulations to all our esteemed colleagues for their well-deserved promotions across various grades/scales in the Promotion Year 2024-25 including top executives. We also extend a warm welcome and hearty congratulations to the newly promoted officers as they join the distinguished ranks of OJMSG-1 and T0 within our officers' fraternity. The achievements are truly commendable, reflecting dedication, hard work and commitment. We wish all successful individuals continued success and fulfilment in their professional journey ahead.

STATE BANK BHAVAN: A BEACON OF CORPORATE EXCELLENCE

In the heart of India's financial hub stands a towering symbol of corporate prowess - the State Bank Bhavan. This iconic building, housing the top management of the State Bank of India, serves as the nerve center where pivotal decisions shaping the nation's banking landscape are conceived and executed.

Inaugurated by the visionary Chairman Shri R K Talwar on 1st October 1971, the State Bank Bhavan embodies the principle that **"Form follows Function"**. Designed with meticulous attention to detail, it seamlessly integrates form and function to create an architectural masterpiece.

Spanning across 8001 sq. yards, with a carpet area of 21,400 sq. ft., the Corporate Centre building comprises two distinct elements. A towering block houses the administrative offices, while a lower structure accommodates a banking branch and an auditorium. This duality in design reflects a harmonious blend of utility and aesthetics.

The tower block, soaring across 19 upper floors along with the ground floor and two basements, stands as a testament to modern engineering. Its central core houses essential facilities such as lifts, fire escape staircases, and lavatories, ensuring efficient vertical connectivity. Office spaces, meticulously arranged around the core, boast innovative features like built-in filing cupboards and drawers, enhancing organization and insulation.

Moreover, the ingenious use of Formica in interior decoration and furniture underscores a commitment to practicality and maintenance ease. Beneath the surface, the basements serve as a multi-functional space, offering parking for over 100 cars and housing essential utilities like the air conditioning plant, sewage treatment facilities, and the bank's archives.

As SBI achieves unprecedented milestones, State Bank Bhavan stands tall as a symbol of its enduring legacy. It is not merely a building but a testament to the bank's unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation. In every corner, it echoes the ethos of progress and efficiency, shaping the future of banking in India.

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