

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

(Registered under the Trade Unions Act 1926, Registration No.:3427/Delhi)

C/o Bank of India, Parliament Street Branch

PTI Building, 4, Parliament Street, New Delhi:110001

Phone:011-23730096 Tel/Fax 23719431

E-Mail: aiboc.sectt@gmail.com



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All Affiliates/ State Committees/ Members,

Dear Comrades,

CLEAN-UP DRIVE: HIGHEST TRP FOR BANKS : AT WHAT COST ?

Please refer to our circular dated 12.11.2016 welcoming the demonetization scheme of Government of India and at the same time appreciating your efforts, gesture and selfless sacrifice in implementing the same. From 8.00 p.m. on 08.11.2016, the time demonetization scheme was announced, banking sector has got the maximum coverage and TRP in the national media. But the unsettled question is at what cost to the people who manage the Banks at the ground level accountable and responsible for implementing the policy of the Government. Is it the Authority taking the Policy decision, is it the Management of the Banks or the personnel facing the affected common man. Undoubtedly, it is the man on the field, the employees managing the Branches of the Banks from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Mehsana to Meghalaya.

At the cost of repetition I would say that it is a time tested fact that whenever any scheme is launched by our Government in the national interest, the Banking community has withstood the difficult times faced by them due to sudden announcements of these schemes without building adequate infrastructure. This is because, we, being mature selfless soldiers of our economy, working on the field with a direct contact with all classes of people understand the system, its vibrations and limitations better than anybody. We forget the step motherly treatment extended to us by the Management and rulers and gear up at every call which is in the national interest, taking it personally many times keeping aside our family issues.

While we have already wholeheartedly welcomed the move of demonetization, the reports coming from different parts of the country on the plight of Bank employees is much far from satisfactory. At the instructions of our Government, we the employees on the field immediately took up the uphill task, sacrificing our holidays and ignoring urgent domestic responsibilities. Instructions have been issued to the Banks for increasing the working hours. More and more miracles are expected from Bankers like mobile vans to disburse cash to needy patients at the hospitals, increasing the cash holding limits of Business correspondents and so on, when we are working at the worst weird situation without support from anybody. It is high time the administration wake up to the pathetic, grueling conditions that we, the soldiers of economy are subjected to. The reports pouring in from different parts of the country is utterly chaotic and extremely maddening situation and condition being faced by Bankers, especially women and young staff who are being abused and mishandled! How is it humanely possible for anyone to work from 9.00 a.m. till late midnight without getting justified break required for any machinery to function smoothly and particularly when the working environment is not at all conducive to retain mental peace and physical fitness and more importantly when we are actually handling cash! Nobody can deny the fact that today our working conditions are worse than that of bonded laborers, even against the guidelines laid down by various laws and ILO to which India is a signatory! But still we are silently working because it is for the national cause. On one hand we are facing the unprecedented huge crowd of furious common man and on the other hand are facing the problem of shortage of currency. The Bankers have been detained to the process of exchange of notes from anyone anywhere involving verification of the identity of the person with the notified document, along with the work of accepting the

deposits of banned currency and making payments to the existing customers with limited currency stock. The Top Management of the Banks as well as the Government conveniently forget the selfless sacrifice made by the man on the field at such crucial junctures and after the success of each scheme, start questioning him about other targets for which he has hardly any time to devote. Surely, the unsung heroes in the current context are the Bankers who are all slogging. On one side they have to meet all the statutory requirements at short notice and on the other side they have to handle the common man who is in a state of confusion and panic. They have to handle these and at the same time, they have to take care of normal work of different monthly targets and KRAs. But this is once again another occasion to remind everyone that the Bankers, the real person on the field has proved time and again their worth for the national cause.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister's emotional speech and acknowledgement of the work done by the Bankers is really appealing. The Hon'ble Finance Minister has also acknowledged the contribution of the Bankers, for working overtime. But unfortunately it is more bricks than bouquets that come to Bankers share when it comes to day to day dealing with general public. It seems that hardly anyone at the top has realized the situation on the ground. Due to shortage of currency, Branches are managing the cash left in their currency chest and are running on soiled notes. In some parts of the country, the intelligence reports have confirmed increasing public unrest and Banks are seeking Police help to control the scuffling crowds. The effort involved in simultaneously replenishing the ATMs all over the country and reaching notes to all Bank Branches is currently proving beyond the capacity of the Banking network and logistics firms. The question that arises in our mind is that couldn't some of the glitches we are experiencing been anticipated given that the highly confidential decision is reported to have been taken six months ago. It has now made us wonder whether the decision making authorities had complete statistics and inputs to decide the most important part of the process i.e. implementation of the decision at the ground level.

It has been noticed that more confusion and mistrust is being created by statements given by Government representatives. Where was the need to mislead general public by issuing statements that ATMs will start functioning in two days, sufficient cash is provided to Banks and many more such. This is creating mistrust and anguish against we Bank employees without our fault. Let the authorities know that Bank employees are also human beings. From our side we are trying to utilize all platforms and opportunities to convey these hardships and feelings and are trying to seek redressal thereof. The only grey line emerged is that after the statements by the Prime Minister and Finance Minister appreciating the services of the Bank employees, the press has also changed its tone.

The most important and serious question is when this situation for the Bankers is going to improve! We, as responsible organization do not believe in complaining or talking about our hardships only and have a few suggestions for sailing smoothly out of this chaotic national crisis which has of course arisen due to certain noble aims and cause. Why can't we utilize the services of Income Tax Department, State and Central Revenue Departments, other Government Financial Institutions and other Government offices to help out the general public and be a supporting force to overcome this turmoil at the earliest and bring back the public confident? The exchange of notes, which does not involve any Banking operations, can be handled by these Authorities as well and for this currency notes can be arranged by RBI expeditiously and other logistics agencies. We are sure being equally responsible and conscientious personnel, they would derive satisfaction equivalent to ours and at the same time this shall reduce some of our burden as also quicken the process of normalcy.

Let us not stop and march together in building nation of our dreams.

With greetings,

Yours Comradely,



(HARVINDER SINGH)

GENERAL SECRETARY