

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

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Circular No. 2019/40

Date: 25.07.2019

To All Affiliates (Please Circulate)

Dear Comrade,

CEASELESS INSTANCES OF HUMILIATION, INTIMIDATION AND COERCION OF BANK OFFICIALS

We reproduce below text of the letter written to the Secretary, DFS on the captioned subject for your information. Copy of the letter has also been sent to the Chairman/ MD and CEOs of all Public / Private Sector banks.

With greetings,

(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

Text of Letter No. AIBOC/2019/64 dated 25.07.2019

The Secretary
Department of Financial Services
Ministry of Finance
Government of India
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

CEASELESS INSTANCES OF HUMILIATION, INTIMIDATION AND COERCION OF BANK OFFICIALS

We draw your attention to an audio clip which has gone widely viral that portrays the humiliation of a lady official meted out by the Regional Head & the RO official of Bank of Baroda, Pune City Region. This is not an isolated case. Such instances have become extremely common and many such audio clips are going around social media. You would surely agree that it is an ignominious addition to the spate of violation of human dignity, official decorum, decency, principles of reasonability and justice within the parlance of the banking industry by the senior executives of the public sector banks. As usual, while making derisive remarks on the performance of the lady officer, the concerned Regional Head pronounced a threat of a 'transfer to a rural branch' (in many other cases, such threats given are of 'cross-country transfers'). The shameless verbal scathing of the lady official in which the higher official indulged in and then the menacing threat is a blatant testimony of how decades of performance of officials are conveniently ignored; while many executives are using their position to terrorize the junior officials with vengeance and vindictiveness for their personal aggrandizement, especially forcing them to sell third party products. It is pertinent to point out here that despite guidelines issued by you to all the PSBs to desist from mis-selling of third party products, the practice is continuing unabated. Further, the banks are also showering incentives to executives through monetary benefits and by way of 'educational tours' in exotic foreign locales.

02. The focus on increasing the productivity and performance of the employees will be lost unless the top Bank Management of all public sector banks wakes up to the fact that the employees need psychological support, motivation and inspiration to contribute to the growth and development of the organisation. Improvement in productivity simply cannot happen with threats, abuses and vilification. Needless to say, that we observe with

deep consternation, that the much talked about idea of fostering of 'Work-Life Balance' in the banking industry by the top managements of the Banks is a sham and for all practical purposes treated with disdain by a section of the senior level executives.

03. Employees of different public sector Banks across the board, covering the length and breadth of the country and encompassing all segments of banking business would unequivocally and unhesitatingly reveal that such evil practices are rampant in the banking industry and when some unfortunate incidents like suicides etc. are committed by such depressed, frustrated and suffering officials, the top managements of all the banks do not realize that this is a serious malaise – all caused by blatant violation of the principles of work-life balance and misplaced priorities. While the employees face punitive action whenever there is an instance of 'misbehaviour' with customers as per the 'Zero Tolerance' guidelines, such castigatory measures are never initiated for instances of 'Internal Customer' misbehaviours committed by certain errant executives.

04. There has been widespread angst, frustration and disappointment among the tiers of 'financial army' of the nation, who have been tirelessly working with utmost sincerity, dedication and integrity while in difficult terrains amidst a plethora of constraints. We wish to draw your kind attention to the judgment of Hon'ble High court of Uttarakhand in Praveen Pradhan v. State of Uttaranchal and others dealing with the case of suicide of an engineer, who had allegedly committed due to harassment by his superior and colleagues, in which Ld Court had observed that *"under the pretext of administrative control and discipline, a superior officer cannot be left to enjoy an extreme liberty to make the intense humiliation and scolding inhumanly. He may be free to take any administrative disciplinary action as per the rules, but cannot be permitted to enjoy the liberty, full of ego, to humiliate a subordinate in a horrified manner"*.

05. Sir, the harassment and bullying of the employees at workplace is a direct infringement into the basic constitutional rights as enshrined our Constitution under Article 21, which lays down that an individual has the right to live with dignity. It is obligatory on the part of the State to protect the dignity of the individual at all places including at the workplaces. The pledge in the preamble of our constitution is to secure the "Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual" which includes dignity of the employees at the workplace. Article 42 of the Constitution directs the State to make a "provision for securing just and humane conditions of work" (at workplaces), while Article 43 directs the State to secure conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and culture opportunities by making a suitable legislation or in any other way. Thus the State is under an obligation to make it possible for the employees to work in genuine and human condition of work without any humiliation and harassment in which their right to honour and dignity is not infringed.

06. Against the above backdrop, we earnestly request you to urge the top management of all the banks to stop all such offensive practices prevailing in the industry and categorically instruct all concerned to initiate strong demonstrative action against the executives/officials who have been launching such derogatory and disgraceful assaults on the junior officials for reasons best known to them. Sir, we reiterate that anything short of demonstrative actions against the erring officials/executives by the top managements of the bank who are committing such offences with impunity, will only impede the process of restoration of sanity, rationality and logical work environment in banks and would not only affect the health, morale and spirit of the suffering bank officials adversely but will also ultimately affect the standard of customer service in the banking industry.

07. We would deem it a privilege if you kindly meet a small delegation from our Confederation to apprise you further on related issues at your convenience.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary
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