



**READ AND CIRCULATE**

14<sup>TH</sup> November, 2016

Chairman,  
Indian Banks' Association,  
MUMBAI.

Dear Sir,

**Reg : Problems faced by employees and officers in bank branches and undue pressure of work due to demonetisation scheme**

We refer to our earlier two letters to IBA dt. 9-11-2016 regarding instructions given by RBI to work on the two weekly holidays i.e. 12th and 13th instants as well as the instructions given by different Banks asking employees and officers to either report early or work for extended hours. It must be within the knowledge of the IBA by now that the entire workforce in the banking sector has risen to the occasion looking to the plight of the customers and general public and have out-performed their duties for the past four days overlooking their physical limitations.

As is reported in the press and media, even **Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi** has complimented and congratulated the bank employees for their extraordinary work: **"I publicly thank all the bank employees. The amount of work which bank employees normally have to put in over a year, they have worked more than that in the last one week alone."**

While we do not wish to go at this stage into the merits or otherwise of the scheme announced by the Government in achieving the purpose for which it has been intended, we would definitely like to point out that the scheme has been announced but without proper preparedness by the RBI to meet the situation.

There is so much of a chaotic condition prevailing in the bank branches and the situation is unbearable, both for the customers and the general public as well as for the bank officers and employees.

Rs. 100 Notes are in dire shortage. Consequently there is tension in the branches as customers and general public prefer Rs. 100 Notes for their routine consumption needs. Government and RBI must be fully aware that already there is a huge gap between the

Indent and supply of Rs. 100 Notes. For example, in the last year 2015-16, as against the Indent of 535 crores pieces of Rs. 100 Notes, the supply received was only to the tune of 490 crores pieces.

Even till now, new Rs. 500 Notes have not been issued by RBI or received the bank branches or Currency Chests. One cannot understand the reason behind banning the existing Rs. 500 Notes and not providing new supply of Rs. 500 Notes in time. All customers do not prefer Rs. 2000 Notes as was the case with Rs. 500 or Rs. 1000 Notes. This is also resulting in lot of friction and argument in the branches between the customers and staff as though staff are deliberately pushing to give them Rs. 2000 Notes.

Then, it was announced that the ATMs would be ready to function in two days i.e from 11th instant but reality is that most of the ATMs across the country are closed or non-functional or partly functional. This has added additional pressure on the staff and all customers are compelled to come inside the branch to draw cash from their account. Now, it has been told that it may take about another three weeks' time for the ATMs to work normally. This is also doubtful because, the existing two lacs ATMs of the Banks are located in various locations including about 35,000 ATMs in the far off rural areas. The ATMs need to re-calibrated with proper trays to accommodate the new denominations of Rs. 2000 and Rs. 500 which are of different sizes. May be, the software also would require some changes. With acute shortage of Rs. 100 Notes, the ATMs are likely to be dead machines for quite some time which would add to the ire of the people. This anger is bound to be shown on the branch staff thus making their life further miserable.

Already, for the past four days, officers and employees in the branches have faced the brunt but with their exemplary patience and commitment to their duties coupled with an admirable sense of social responsibility to the people at large, they have undertaken the job unmindful of physical fatigue and mental exhaustion. They have worked beyond their normally expected capacity and depriving themselves of even their minimum conveniences like lunch, etc. and could complete the work only late in the night in many branches. The pressure has been singularly heavy on the staff directly handling cash, currency chest , etc..

Thanks to the modern theory of having lesser space in the branch premises, there has been virtual suffocation inside the branches due to heavy crowd of people for long hours from morning till late evening. This has posed a hazard to their health. There are reports of senior citizen customers fainting in the premises and employees falling sick. We need not overstate these difficulties as you can well imagine the same.

Again thanks to the present-day manpower policies, branches have just enough staff strength or invariably shortage of staff, and this sudden deluge of people in the branches has put the staff out of gear in attending to them. Though it is going to be a temporary

phenomenon, this experience has underscored the need for some element of buffer staff in the branches for any such contingencies. We know that Government is expecting the Banks to undertake most of their schemes.

Further, the employees and officers in the branches also faced a lot of problems of IT related issues and the computers were hung on occasions thus adding fuel to fire in facing the impatient customers and public.

When the counters had to be closed for want of cash or when computers are down, there have been physical attacks and abuses including against lady staff. This has demoralised the workforce, particularly the young employees and officers who have joined the Banks in recent years that they would be required to work under such pathetic situations. You can well imagine their plight when few of them even contacted us to say that they would like to resign their jobs. To say the least, it was traumatic experience for many of them and working for long hours in these very difficult circumstances has resulted in unimaginable stress and strain.

Some of the bank managements have issued instructions for payment of overtime wages for the Awardstaff and some compensation amount for the officers. While their suffering has been uniform, the compensation is ununiform. It was expected that IBA would advise all the Banks to follow some common guidelines but Banks are taking their own decisions.

Asking the staff to come early and work late for exigencies is understandable but it has its physical limitations. Staff cannot be expected to work for continuous long hours for days together, even foregoing their holidays. It appears that the situation may continue for longer period as most of the ATMs are not likely to work in full swing for the next few weeks and the pressure of work in the branches will continue. Sir, employees and officers have almost reached their camel's back and cannot stretch themselves any longer.


To sum, we seek your immediate intervention as under:


1. RBI/Government should be approached to allow all Government departments, agencies and institutions to exchange the banned 500/1000 notes in addition to banks and post offices.
2. RBI should immediately ensure adequate supply of cash in denominations of Rs. 100 and new 500 Notes.
3. ATMs should be re-calibrated on a top priority basis and made ready for use within the shortest possible time.
4. Extra business hours can be implemented where required but the staff should be deployed on shift basis and not the same person for continuous long hours.
5. Where employees/officers are required to work in later hours, arrangements for conveyance, food, etc. should be made.

6. Uniform instructions are to be sent by IBA to all Banks on payment of Overtime wages/compensation amount.
7. For the work done in the last few days, instructions should be given to ensure the payment along with this month's salary.
8. Special care to be taken by Banks while asking lady employees/officers to work in late hours.
9. Additional infrastructure like more terminals, etc. to be provided. Separate arrangements to be made to handle senior citizens.
10. Additional machines to be provided to branches handling heavy cash to detect fake notes as this problem is aggravated in the current process.

Thanking you and seeking your priority attention on these issues and suggestions.

Yours faithfully,

  
**S. NAGARAJAN**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**  
**AIBOA**

  
**C.H. VENKATACHALAM**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**  
**AIBEA**

MANGALORE

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