



OFFICERS' VOICE

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Editorial

THE MISSING TRUST

Growth and development bring along with them a shift in the cultural ethos and value systems. This is true in respect of nations as well as institutions. Our Bank has grown from a small bank in the South to a mid-sized bank with national presence. The growth has brought along with a sharp change in our work ethos and value systems also.

Two decades back, when a Branch Manager or even a Zonal Head gave oral instructions, he used to stand by his words and to come to the rescue of his subordinates in case they landed in troubles. We had a case of a Branch Manager who had discounted bills with the oral permission from the Zonal Head. At a later date when the bills discounted were returned unpaid and became NPA, the Branch Manager was charge sheeted for discounting bills beyond the delegated powers. In the domestic enquiry, the Zonal Head had come as a witness and confirmed the permission given by him in his deposition and this saved the officer from the gravity of the charges.

In sharp contrast, during the last few years we have come across several instances where the officers and Managers acting under oral instructions later came to grief as their actions were beyond their powers. The following examples will prove the point:

a) In one case, a Branch Manager booked a proposal for additional bill discounting limits for a long standing export customer of his branch. As the

proposal was pending with the Zonal Head, the Branch Manager along with the borrower met the Zonal Head at his office who reportedly orally permitted the Branch Manager in the presence of the borrower to release the limits. Subsequent to release of the limits, the bills discounted were returned unpaid and later they became NPA. The Branch Manager was suspended and major penalty proceedings were initiated against him. In the enquiry, the Zonal Head refused having orally permitted release of the limits.

b) In another case, agriculture loan proposals which were declined by the AFO attached to the branch were later processed by the officer and the AFO attached to the Zonal Office, who were reportedly advised by the Zonal Head to go to the branch and process the proposals. Later it turned out that there was misutilisation of the loan proceeds. All the officers who are involved in the transactions are now facing vigilance enquiry. The officer who was a member of the Credit Grid retired recently and did not get his terminal benefits as enquiry has been ordered for his failure to point out lacunae in the proposals. The person who had orally instructed these officers did not come forward to own up the instructions given by him to his subordinates.

c) In one branch, cheques were discounted in respect of one of the



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Current Account customers in the absence of a sanctioned limit (there was no record for having sanctioned limits) for a period of more than one year. Later the cheques were returned unpaid resulting in NPA of about Rs.30 lacs. All the officers and employees who were involved in the transactions at different times are now facing major penalty proceedings for discounting cheques without any authority. The stand of the Branch Manager is that he had instructed the staff to discount the cheques only if the earlier cheques discounted were realized!

- d) *In another case, a Branch Manager issued a Certificate of Safe Custody of Articles in a format as required by the customer. It was reported by the Branch Manager that he had discussed the matter with the officer concerned in the Zonal Office who had approved issuing the certificate, even though there was no permission to do so in writing. The certificate issued by the branch was in violation of our existing systems and procedures regarding Safe Custody of Articles. The Branch Manager is under suspension. The officer at Zonal Office who had reportedly permitted not only denied having permitted but claimed that he had clearly denied permission to do so!*
- e) *In a recent case in one of our branches, one of the joint NRE depositors came to the bank with a xerox copy of power of attorney seeking on the strength of which issuance of a duplicate deposit receipt in his name. The deposit receipt was issued by the officers reportedly under the instructions of Asst. General Manager who was in charge of the Branch. Later the deposit was prematurely closed and credited to the SB account of the account holder also reportedly at the instructions of the AGM and subsequently the proceeds were withdrawn. Bank is now facing a claim from the other joint depositor who denies having executed any power of attorney. The officers who have carried out the transactions claim that they had only obeyed the oral instructions of the AGM of the branch. The AGM denies having any knowledge of the transactions.*

There is a common thread in all the cases cited above that the officers who had carried out the transactions had done the same on oral instructions trusting their bosses. As there is no proof of such instructions, the officers who carried out the transactions in trust stand exposed to disciplinary actions. The superiors who had reportedly

instructed the subordinates to carry out the transactions deny having any knowledge of the same. When the trust is missing, what is the recourse available to the hapless officer who obeyed the instructions in trust? He will be left with no other choice than facing the disciplinary action where he will not be able to prove his innocence as there is no evidence of oral instructions given by the boss and hence accept the punishment which comes on completion of the proceedings.

It is time for all the officers to open their eyes to the reality of life that there is hardly any boss today who could be trusted and who will stand by his/her words. What shall he do under such circumstances in future?

The first and foremost, one should acquire enough knowledge about the work he /she is handling and be thorough with the systems and procedures.

Secondly, if any oral instructions are given by the boss, carry out the same only after getting a written confirmation of the instructions from him/her. Alternately, the officer can carry out the transactions in the ID of the Branch head who gives such instruction. In case the boss orally permits carrying out certain transactions, carry out the same and confirm having carried it out after obtaining his/her permission.

If instructions are issued orally which are in violation of laid down systems and procedures, the same need not be obeyed. It is likely that in such circumstances, the boss may give false complaints to ZO/HO about his /her "non-cooperation". It is likely that a pliable boss sitting at ZO/HO may call for explanation from him/her. There may be oral threats and abuses. But these are to be faced boldly so that s/he could avoid a greater mishap in the form of disciplinary proceedings at a later date.

Thirdly, the officer will be in order in insisting to his boss to confirm in writing his/her oral instructions, which according to him/her are in deviation of the laid down systems and procedures.

Lastly, if the deviations of systems and procedures become a routine, the officers have two options - either to report these to the Organisation which in turn will take necessary steps to bring the same to the notice of authorities concerned in the Bank or they can report with facts and figures to CVO under the "Whistle Blower Policy" of the Bank. By doing so they will not only be helping the Bank but helping themselves.

Remember that when the trust is missing, trust yourself.

M. GOURANGADAS, ASST. GENERAL SECRETARY RETIRES AFTER SERVING CBOO FOR THREE DECADES

M. Gourangadas, Asst. General Secretary working at our Bangalore - S C Road branch retired from the services of the Bank on 30th June on attaining the age of superannuation after serving the Bank for 40 years and serving CBOO for 29 years.



He joined the Bank as a clerk at Bangalore - Jayanagar Branch in 1970. During his early days itself he proved his leadership qualities as he was actively involved in the activities of Corporation Bank Employees' Union. He was promoted to officer cadre in 1976 and continued as a member of CBEU along with a large number of his colleagues promoted to the officer cadre. It is only after the then leaders of the workmen union told them that they would not be able to espouse officers' cause they stopped their membership and joined CBOO.

1981 was a turning point in the history of CBOO as the Organisation elected a new General Secretary, Sri T. R. Bhat who had shared his vision for building a vibrant and strong CBOO. One of the strategies adopted was to establish Regional Units corresponding with the Regions of the Bank. It was the need to establish a Regional Unit for Bangalore Region. During my interactions, T R. Bhat had shared that it was Mr. K. Achutha Pai, then President who had spotted the talent in Gourangadas and suggested Bhat to enlist his services. In the first Regional Conference of Bangalore Unit held in April 1981, Gouragadas was elected as Regional Secretary. The rest, as they say, is history. During the last 29 years he served the Executive Committee of CBOO in different capacities:

Regional Secretary, Bangalore	:	1981- 83
Treasurer	:	1983 - 87 (two terms)
Assistant Secretary	:	1987 - 91 (two terms)
Asst. General Secretary	:	1991 - 93
Treasurer	:	1993 - 95
Deputy General Secretary	:	1995 - 2001 (two terms)
Vice President	:	2001 - 2004
Asst. General Secretary	:	since 2004

During the 29 years, he served the Organization with distinction as he was part of our Negotiating Committee since 1981 and continued till his retirement. His argumentative and persuasive skills are incomparable. He was the fountain head of the think-tank in the Organisation and provided fore - thoughts. In the Executive Committee meetings when the views were

divergent and consensus lacking, it was his saner view which always guided the decisions. I had the privilege to work with him ever since I entered the EC in 1987. I had observed that whatever he used to speak was backed by wisdom and experience.

He is a person with firm convictions which gave him a mark of a tough guy. But always his convictions are aimed towards protecting officers' right to unionise and also betterment of the quality of life for our members. He had kept organizational interest above all others. He never hesitated to call a spade, a spade. Many a time this had led to misunderstandings; but in the end everyone would agree that he had no self interest in whatever he had done.

He always advocated to prepare second line leadership in the Organisation. During 2004 General Body, he expressed his wish to step down from the post of Vice President so that youngsters could take over the reins. But he did not run away from the responsibilities. He continued to serve the EC in his capacity as Asst. General Secretary.

He was prepared to keep aside all his personal work when it came to organizational work. For the organization, he was always available at a short notice; whether it was branch visits or resolving an inter-personal conflict among members.

Even though he was the senior most member in the EC, he never aspired for any positions, be it the post of General Secretary or Officer Director. During 1998 when the Organisation was thinking to bring changes at the top leadership keeping in view of the future, he was asked to take up the mantle. But his response was, "my temperament will not suit the post, but I will continue to serve in whatever way I can."

After taking over as the General Secretary in 1998, I had the responsibility of implementing the decision of the General Body to have a building of our own as a mark of our Silver Jubilee. Gourangadas as the Chairman of the Building Project Committee worked very hard to realize the dream project within the time limit. I still recollect the visit we used to make to the building site to assess the progress. If CBOO Centre today stands tall as a mark of our collective strength, the contribution of Gourangadas towards it is invaluable.

I also had the privilege of his saner counsel whenever I was in a dilemma or difficulty. If I look back, I can proudly say that his guidance has kept me in good stead.

Gourangadas is happily married to Mrs. Bhavana, a member of Corp Bank Family and has a son, Mr. Shishir and a daughter, Mrs. Shirin. Both are settled in USA.

In his retirement, CBOO will be missing a trade unionist who lived by his conviction. But his thoughts and words of wisdom will ever remain with us to keep CBOO as a vibrant Organisation.

On this occasion we salute Gourangadas for the yeomen service he had rendered for the common cause. I wish him a happy, healthy and active retired life. May God bless him and his family with peace and prosperity in the years ahead.

- Editor

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RETIREMENTS

The following members retired from the services of the Bank on attaining the age of superannuation on 30th June:

1. Mr. Guruprasad G. K., Senior Manager, Rayadrug branch.

Mr. Guruprasad joined the Bank as a clerk in 1970 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1977. He was promoted to MMG Scale-II in 1985 and to Scale-III in 2008.

During 39 years of service, he worked in Cuddapah, Prodattur, Hindupur, Vijayawada - S N Puram, Guntur, Amidyala, Eluru, Kakinada, Mumbai - Mulund, Hyderabad - Siddiambar Bazar, RO, Secunderabad - M G Road, Hyderabad - Currency Chest and Zonal Office.

2. Mr. Amrutha Prabhu, Senior Manager, Bangalore - Indiranagar - II Stage

Mr. Prabhu joined the Bank as a clerk in 1972 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1977. He was promoted to MMG Scale-II in 1985 and to Scale-III in 1998.

During 38 years of service, he worked in Bellary, Gulbarga, Malpe, Bangalore - SC Road, Cheekanahalli, KGF - Andersonpet, Bangalore - Shanthinagar, Jayanagar, Kolar, Bangalore - Service, RO, Hassan, Dodballapur, Bangalore - Yeshwanthpur Market Yard, ZO- Lucknow, Hubli - ZO, NCM, Bangalore - IBR Centre and Currency Chest.

Mr. Prabhu had served the Executive Committee of CBOO for nearly 6 years by virtue of different responsibilities undertaken by him: He was Regional Secretary, Bangalore for two terms (1985 - 1989) and Treasurer (1989-1991).

3. Mr. R. Manokaran, Chief Manager, Chennai - T. Nagar

Mr. Manokaran joined the Bank as a clerk in 1972 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1977. He was promoted to MMG Scale-II in 1985 and to Scale-III in 1998. He was promoted to SMG Scale-IV in 2004.

During 37 years of service, he worked in Tiruppur, Mettupalayam, Munjurpet, Kumbakonam, Chennai

- Mylapore, Madurai - V K Street, New Delhi - Service, Chennai - RO, George Town, Mint Street, Mylapore, Coimbatore - Velandipalayam, Chennai - Whites Road and Noida.

4. Mr. Shridhar B. Salian, Senior Manager, ZAO-Bangalore

Mr. Salian joined the Bank as a clerk in 1973 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1980. He was promoted to MMG Scale-II in 1997 and to Scale-III in 2008.

During 36 years of service, he worked in Mumbai - RO, Shivajipark, Central, Fort, Nasik, Mumbai - Bandra, Hulyal, Mumbai- A R Street, Mangalore - Kankanady, M G Road, HO - CRMD and Communication Cell.

5. Mr. K. Narayana Kamath, Chief Manager, IAD-HO

Mr. Kamath joined the Bank as a clerk in 1973 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1979. He was promoted to MMG Scale-II in 1991 and to Scale-III in 1994. He was promoted to SMG Scale-IV in 2004.

During 36 years of service, he worked in Mumbai-Mulund, RO, Worli, Wadala, Fort, Mangalore - Car Street, Punja Arcade, Honnavar, Mudradi, Mangalore - Padavu, Puttur - Bolwar, Bangalore - Indiranagar - HAL II stage, Mangalore - Bunder, M G Road, Mumbai - Mira Road, Versoa, Mangalore - R B Complex, Ponampet and Mapuca.

6. Mr. P. Suresh, Sub-Manager, Bangalore - Rajmahal Vilas Extn.

Mr. Suresh joined the Bank as a clerk in 1974 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1980.

During 36 years of service, he worked in Bangalore - SC Road, Malleswaram, Ahmedabad - Shahibaug Cross Road, Bhavanagar, Bangalore - RO, J C Road, Melekote, Kanaswadi, Bangalore - IAD Cell, RO, R T Nagar, Hassan-Main, Salagame Road, Bangalore - White Field and Mahadevapura.

7. Mr. M. Venkat Rao, Senior Manager, Visakhapatnam - Mini Caps

Mr. Rao joined the Bank as a clerk in 1974 and was promoted to officer cadre in 1984. He was promoted

to MMG Scale-II in 1998 and to Scale-III in 2007.

During 35 years of service, he worked in Hyderabad - Siddiambar Bazar, Secunderabad - M G Road, Shankerpalli, Cuddapah, Mumbai - Fort, Central, Beluguppa, Hyderabad - ZO, Khammam and Thondangi.

8. Mr. P. Subramanian, Senior Manager, Erode

Mr. Subramanian joined the Bank as an officer in 1982. He was promoted to MMG Scale-II in 2001 and to Scale-III in 2007.

During 27 years of service, he worked in KGF - Andersonpet, Kumbakonam, Soosaipruam, Madurai- West Masi St., Koothanur, Anniyur and Katchaikatti.

CBOO while thanking them for their co-operation, wishes them a happy, contended and active retired life.

WITCH SPELL

A mother was driving her young daughter to friend's fancy dress party. She was dressed as a witch. "Mummy, what do witches say when they're making a spell?"

Mother told her that they might say "Hubble, bubble, toil and touble!". She seemed satisfied with this and toddled off to the party.

When the mother picked her up a few hours later, however, she was very subdued. Mother asked her if anything was the matter. She said that everyone at the party keep laughing at her.

"why would they do that?" asked the mother, concerned.

"I don't know", she replied. "But every time I made a spell they just laughed."

"What did you say?" , asked the mother.

"Just what you told me to. 'Double, bubble, toilet trouble'."

CBOO NEWS

REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Lucknow

A meeting of the Regional Committee was held on 10th May to fill up the post of Regional Secretary on account of transfer of Regional Secretary, Ambarish Kumar Singh. The RC after deliberations co-opted Abheesh Khare, ZO, Lucknow as Regional Secretary until the ensuing Regional General Body meeting.

- *Ambarish Kumar Singh, Regional Secretary*

Hassan

A meeting of the Regional Committee was held on Sunday, the 23rd May at Hassan.

Prasanna Kumar, Deputy Regional Secretary welcomed the members and invitees. The meeting was presided over by Regional Chairman, Sathyesha K.S.

B. P. Devaraj, Regional Secretary commenced the deliberations calling upon all the area Secretaries to make all out efforts to make the ensuing Regional Conference as well as the All India Conference a grand success.

The RC decided to elect Area Secretaries for the following Districts from the identified branches for effective functioning:

1. Shimoga Dist: 2 Area Secretaries one from Shimoga and another from Sagar / Thrithahalli
2. Chickmagalur Dist: 2 Areas Secretaries- One from Chickmagalur and another from Shivani/ Bukkambudhi
3. Hassan Dist: 2 Area Secretaries - one from Hassan and another from Banvase / Kandali
4. Madikeri District: 2 Area Secretaries: One from Madikeri and another from Virajpet
5. Mysore District: One Area Secretary from Mysore
6. Mandya / Chamrajpet Dist: One Area Secretary from Mandya

Regional Chairman, Sathyesha K.S. called upon the members to keep themselves abreast of guidelines issued by the Bank from time to time and adhere to the same in the interest of the Bank and that of self interest.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Ravi Srinivasan.

- *B. P. Devaraj, Regional Secretary*

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Chennai



Mr. B.N. Shenoy, General Manager, ZO Chennai delivering inaugural address



Mr. K. Ananda Kumar, General Secretary, IOBOA (3rd from right) addressing the gathering



A view of the gathering

Regional General Body meeting of Chennai Unit was held on 13th June. Mr. B. N. Shenoy, General Manager and Zonal head inaugurated the Conference. Mr. K. Ananda Kumar, General Secretary, Indian Overseas Bank Officers' Association and Vice President, AIBOC was the Guest of Honour. Raghunath Kodical, Dy. General Secretary and S S Salian, Secretary- Benevolent

Fund attended the meeting as central office observers.

B N Shenoy in his inaugural address emphasized the need for better customer service, business growth and clientele expansion. He expressed his concern in the area of retail advances, core deposits, asset quality, non-interest income and customer complaints. He thanked the Regional Unit for giving him an opportunity to share his thoughts.

Ananda Kumar in his address dealt with various issues that arose during salary revision and pension option and clarified the stand taken by AIBOC on various issues. He appealed to the officers to avail the golden chance to ensure social security by opting for pension scheme. He praised the contribution of CBOO to AIBOC especially the role played by Sri T R Bhat, our former Chairman.

Ragunath Kodical, in his address dealt with the relationship with the Management and also the role played by CBOO during the last 3 decades in the progress of the Bank and of officers' community. He called upon the members to develop skills to discharge their role effectively.

S S Salian speaking on the occasion stressed on members' active participation in organizational activities. He appealed to the members to attend 18th All India Conference to be held on 15th & 16th August in large numbers.

In the beginning, B Sridhar, Regional Secretary welcomed the gathering. Regional Chairman, R. Anbalagan also addressed.

In continuation of our tradition, Mr. Ambarish R. Angiras and Mr. Vasudevan Goplalan, retired members were felicitated and presented with mementos. They responded to the felicitations and shared their experiences.

During the business session, Regional Secretary, B Sridhar placed before the house his report for the triennial period 2007-10. The report was adopted after deliberations.

In the elections held for the next triennial period 2010-2013, the following members were elected to the RC:

Regional Chairman	:	V. Pichai, Chennai - G T branch
Regional Secretary	:	B. Sridhar, Chennai - Ashoknagar
Dy. Regional Secretary	:	K. Dilipan, Chennai - ZAO
Lady Representative	:	Ms. Anusha, Chennai- Mogaiippar
Areas Secretaries	:	V. S. Narayanan, Mylapore - Chennai R. Krishnaswamy, Chennai - Koyambedu R. Krishna Kumar, Nanganallur P. Subramanian, Chennai - Kellys' Corner B. Sampath Kumar, Vellore-Sankarapalayam Sundar Singh, Anniyur K. Chandrasekharan, Puducherry

Meeting ended with vote of thanks by Krishna Kumar, Areas Secretary.

- B Sridhar, Regional Secretary

Hassan

The Regional General Body meeting of Hassan Unit was held on 13th June at Kannada Sahitya Parishat Hall, Hassan.

Mr. Lakshminath Reddy, Deputy General Manager and Zonal Head attended the meeting as Chief Guest. K. Sheshappa, Vice President and D. Narahari Kumar, Dy. General Secretary attended the meeting as Central Office observers. The meeting was presided over by Regional Chairman, K. S. Sathyasha.

The function began with an invocation by Ms. Deepa, Officer, Shimoga Branch.

Devaraja B.P., Regional Secretary welcomed the dignitaries, invitees and members.

Lakshminath Reddy, Deputy General Manager inaugurated the Conference by lighting the lamp. In his inaugural address, he called upon the officers to develop their personality vis-a vis career. "Proper attention to health is very Important, since prevention is better than cure. For attaining Professional Competency, one must be energised by self-

motivation. If one is motivated and energised, the atmosphere will be lively at office” , he said. Before, concluding, he had a word of caution to the officers, especially the Branch Managers, to be prudent in credit decisions/lending and should not be reckless, as it will jeopardise not only their interest but also the interest of the Bank.

Mr. S.P. Haridas, retired Chief Manager, was felicitated on the occasion and presented with a memento by the Organisation in continuing its tradition.

K. Shehsappa, Vice President in his address recalled at length the struggles launched by the Organisation in the past, the collaborative approach adopted by some of the past Chairmen and the morale of the officers in those days vis-à-vis the choking atmosphere that was prevailing since a year. Quoting the statement made by former Dy. Governor in her address at HO, he said that the systems and procedures in the Bank are good enough to guide everyone at various levels and the officers continue to contribute their very best for the Bank. He thanked the members who had come from far off remote places for the Conference. He recalled the contribution of Mr. Lakshminatha Reddy to CBOO as its functionary in Udupi Unit and as the Regional Chairman of the Head Office Unit and also in conducting coaching classes for the promotion aspirants.



Mr. Lakshminath Reddy, Deputy General Manager, ZO, Hassan inaugurating the Conference by lighting the lamp



D. Narahari Kumar, Deputy General Secretary felicitating retired member, Mr. S.P. Haridas by presenting a memento

ADDRESSING THE GATHERING:



Mr. Lakshminath Reddy
DGM, ZO, Hassan



K. Sheshappa
Vice - President



K. Sathyesha
Regional Chairman



B. P. Devaraj
Regional Secretary

Trust your own instinct. Your mistake might be as well be your own, instead of someone elses. - Billy Wilder

K. S. Sathysha, Regional Chairman in his address reminded the 37 years of history of CBOO which has endeavoured to build a collaborative culture. Management is aware of the consequences of not taking the Organisation and its members in to confidence, he said. He called upon the Management to have a long range plan than going by ad-hoc arrangements.

The Inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks by B.N. Prasanna Kumar, Dy. Regional Secretary.

The business session commenced with observance of a minute's silence as a mark of respect to late Gopal Ramachandra Padaki, who died in service on 2nd January 2010.

Thereafter, the Regional Secretary presented his report before the members and the report was adopted.

D. Narahari Kumar, Dy. General Secretary in his address, called upon all the members to contribute their best for the cause of the Organisation. He requested the younger officers to come forward to shoulder organizational responsibilities so that the movement could be carried forward. He also urged them that they must dedicate at least 3 to 5 years of their service in the cause of the Organisation, to strengthen the Organisation and make it more vibrant.

Thereafter, elections were conducted for the posts in the Regional Committee for the next triennial. Radhakrishna, Chief Manager, Mysore - Main Branch and Kameshwar Rao, Senior Manager, Channarayapatna were election officers.

The following members were elected unanimously:

Regional Chairman	: K S Sathysha, ZO - Hassan
Regional Secretary	: B P Devaraj, ZO - Hassan
Dy. Regional Secretary	: Adi Subramanya, Mysore - Main
Lady Representative	: Mrs. Ambika H R, Retail Asset Hub- Hassan
Area Secretaries	: Krishna Kumar Pai, Shimoga Main Chandrasekhar V Bhat, Sagar Main

Area Secretaries

B N Prasanna Kumar,
Shivani
Pete Ajay Kumar,
Chickmagalur
B. Madhava Pai,
Sravanabelagola
M P Prasanna,
ZO-Hassan
Rajakrishna, Madikeri
P. Balakrishna Prabhu,
Virajpet Main
R. Shekhar,
Mysore - Nivedita Nagar
Nagaraj, Mandya

The newly elected Dy. Regional Secretary, Adi Subramanya thanked the Central Officer bearers and the members for successful conduct of the Conference.

- *B P Devaraj, Regional Secretary*

Kolkata

Triennial Regional Conference of Kolkata Unit was held on 20th June at the West Bengal Pollution Control Board Auditorium at Salt Lake - Kolkata. Kaushik Kumar Ghosh, General Secretary graced the occasion as Central Office observer. Mr. Y.S. Jain, General Manager and Zonal Head, Kolkata Zone inaugurated the conference. Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee, Secretary, AIBOC - West Bengal State Unit and Dy. General Secretary, United Bank Officers' Association was the Chief Guest.

The conference began with an invocation by Uday Kumar, ZCC -Kolkata. Ambarish Kumar Singh, ZO-Kolkata welcomed the dignitaries, guests and all the members. The conference was inaugurated by Mr. Y.S.Jain by lighting the lamp. In his inaugural address, Mr. Jain stressed the role of the trade union in the development of the Bank and the present economic scene in the country in general and specifically in our Bank and Zone. He requested one and all to give their hundred percent to reach the steep target of Rs.10,000 cr. business by March 2011 for the Zone.

In the key note address, Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee explained the intricacies of the 9th bipartite settlement and the events leading to the 2nd option

for pension and the load of 17.5%. He touched upon the history of the trade union movement internationally with a specific reference to the same at the national level and the role of AIBOC and CBOO in this movement. He acknowledged the sacrifice made by the leaders like Mr. T.R.Bhat and others for the benefit of all the officers in the banking industry.

The Regional Committee felicitated Kaushik Ghosh on his appointment as Officer Director by offering a bouquet by Hemant Kumar Pradhan and a shawl by Amit Sen.

Continuing our tradition, retired members were felicitated by Kaushik Kumar Ghosh. The retired members present expressed their feelings and gratitude to CBOO for the good work done for the officers' community in Corporation Bank.

Ghosh, in his short address in the inaugural session explained the present situation in the Bank and wished a happy and healthy retired life to the retired members. The inaugural program ended with a vote of thanks by Ganesh Prasad Nath, Deputy Regional Secretary.

The program was aptly compered by Ms. Rudrani Chattorji and Amit Sen.

The business session began with address by Kaushik Ghosh. In his address he briefed the members about the present situation in the industry and in our bank, the 9th bipartite settlement, expectations of members and the expectation of CBOO from the members, the role of the functionaries etc.

Sanjay Bagchi, Regional Secretary presented his report for 2007-10 and the same was adopted by the house after discussion. The business session ended with the vote of thanks proposed by Alok Kumar Paul.

Thereafter election of the posts in the Regional Committee for 2010-13 was conducted by Ghosh with the help of retired members, Mr. Prabhakar Panda and Mr. Apurba Bhattacharya. The following members were elected:

Regional Chairman	:	Ambarish Kumar Sing, ZO-Kolkata
Regional Secretary	:	Ganesh Prasad Nath, ZCC- Kolkata
Dy. Regional Secretary	:	Alok Kumar Paul, ZO-Kolkata
Lady Representative	:	Ms. Anjana Das, Barasat
Area Secretaries	:	Partha Sarathy Roy Gupta, NUJS - Kolkata Nibir Kanti Sen, Gariahat - Kolkata Digvijay Singh, ZO-Kolkata Krishnendu Sengupta, Howrah Main Norbu Tshering, Darjeeling Sunandan Baruah, Mini Caps-Guwahati Shashidhar Kumar, Durgapur Muralidhar Sahoo, Cuttack -Kacheri Road Samiran Roy Choudhury, Ranchi Main Munna Raja, Mini Caps- Patna

- G. P. Nath, Dy. Regional Secretary

EASY QUESTION

A seven year old boy did very well in his school test. When his father heard from his mother how well he'd done he asked his son what sort of questions he'd had to answer.

"Oh, they weren't hard at all, dad," was the reply, "You could have answered them too."

GOOD MANNERS

Willis was three when his elder brother helped him take down something from one of the higher shelves in the cupboard.

"Where's the thank you?" remarked his brother trying to teach him good manners.

"I can't find it", came the "witty" reply. His brother however, wouldn't leave it at that and threatened him in a formal way: "Say thank you or I'll bite you."

To which the cornered Willis replied, "thank you for not biting me!".

BANKING ROUND UP

O.P. Bhatt elected IBA Chairman

State Bank of India Chairman, Mr. O. P. Bhatt, has been appointed as the Chairman of Indian Banks' Association. Mr. Bhatt, who was elected in the managing committee meeting, takes over from Mr. M.V. Nair, Chairman and Managing Director of Union Bank. The Committee also elected Mr. Aditya Puri, Managing Director, HDFC Bank; Mr. M. D. Mallya, Chairman and Managing Director, Bank of Baroda; and Mr. A.C. Mahajan, Chairman and Managing Director, Canara Bank as Deputy Chairmen. Mr. Rana Kapoor, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, YES Bank was elected as Honorary Secretary

- *Financial Express, 09-06-2010*

RBI cuts SLR to give banks headroom

RBI reduced Statutory Liquidity Ratio [SLR], the share of bank's incremental investments which must be compulsorily invested in Government paper, by 0.5% from 25.0%. The move comes after surplus funds with banks collapsed from a high of nearly Rs.50,000 crores to about Rs.4000 crore per day. The RBI measure will give headroom to banks to offer additional credit to telecom companies which need the sum to pay for 3G spectrum and for payment of advance tax by corporates next week.

- *The Financial Express, 27-05-10*

Banks need okay to deal with politically-exposed people

The Reserve bank of India (RBI) has said , banks should obtain senior management approval to continue business relationship with an existing customer who has subsequently become a politically - exposed person and that banks should conduct customer due diligence (CDD) on politically exposed people (PEP).

The Baks should apply enhanced CDD to customers who are close relatives of PEPs and accounts of which a PEP is the ultimate beneficial owner.

In a circular, RBI has reiterated its stand that banks have to conduct proper KYC to avoid being used for

money laundering and financing of terrorism.

RBI has defined politically exposed persons as those individuals who are or have been entrusted with prominent public functions in a foreign country such as heads of States or of Governments, senior politicians, senior Government or Judicial or Military officers, senior executives of state-owned corporations or important political party officials.

RBI has advised banks to gather information on any person of this category desiring to do business with the bank and check all the information available on the person in the public domain.

RBI had also told banks that they should verify the identity of the person and seek information about the sources of funds, before accepting them as a customer. Further, banks were told closely to monitor such accounts and accounts of family members or close relatives.

RBI has reiterated that the banks should not open accounts where it is unable to apply proper customer due diligence measures. RBI has even advised banks to close down account of such customers, if it exists.

RBI has added that if the Bank is not satisfied with the true identity of the account holder, it should notify financial intelligence unit about the same.

- *Economic Times, 12-06-10*

Damodaran Panel to review bank services

The Reserve Bank of India [RBI] has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of M. Damodaran, former Chairman of SEBI, to look into banking services rendered to retail and small customers, including pensioners.

The Committee will also look into the system of grievance redressal mechanism prevalent in banks, its structure and efficacy and suggest measures for expeditious resolution of complaints. The Committee may also lay down suitable time frame for disposal of complaints, including last escalation point within that time frame and will examine the functioning of Banking Ombudsman Scheme - its structure, legal framework and recommend steps to make it more effective and responsive.

The panel will examine the possible methods of

leveraging technology for better customer service with proper safeguards, including legal aspects in the light of increasing use of Internet and IT for bank products and services and recommend measures to enhance consumer protection.

The Committee will also review the role of the Board of Directors of banks and the role of regulators in customer service matter.

Some of the other members of the Committee are Indian Banks' Association Chairman, M V Nair, National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission former member, P. Rajyalakshmi Rao, All India Depositors' Association Secretary, Ashok Rawat and Banking Codes & Standards Board of India Chief Executive Officer, B M Mittal.

The panel will submit its report within a period of four months from its first meeting.

- *Financial Express, 04-06-10*

MISCELLANY

I T Exemption limit for gratuity

The Government raised the Income Tax exemption limit on gratuity from Rs.3.50 lakhs to Rs.10.00 lakhs with effect from May 24. "Employees who retire, become incapacitated, terminated or die on or after May 24, 2010 will get I-T exemption for gratuity upto Rs.10.00 lakhs, a Finance Ministry official said.

- *Economic Times, 12-06-10*

K G Balakrishnan is new NHRC Chairman

Justice K G Balkrishnan was appointed chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) - three weeks after retiring as the Chief Justice of India.

He will take charge as the sixth chairperson of the commission. He will have tenure of five years.

The post has been lying vacant since May 2009 after retirement of Justice Rajendra Babu. Justice G P Mathur, a membr of the commission had been functioning as its acting chairperson since then.

— *Financial Express, 04-06-10*

Honda suffers second China strike in a month

Honda suffered its second strike in China in less than a month as workers at plant partly owned by affiliate Yutaka Giken Co walked out demanding higher pay, forcing the parts maker to close the factory. Employees at Foshan Fengfu Autoparts Co in Foshan, Guangdong province began their strike on 6th June .

Demands for higher wages are fast becoming an issue in China and companies need to get used to it, said Deutsche Bank Economist Jun Ma.

"If you don't meet the demands of the workers, social stability will be threatened," Ma said

- *Business Standard, 09-06-10*

Foxconn workers in China say 'meaningless' life sparks suicides

Ah Wei has an explanation for Foxconn Technology Group Chairman Terry Gou as to why some of his workers are committing suicides at the company's factory near the Southern Chinese city of Shenzhen.

"Life is meaningless," said Ah Wei, his fingernails stained black with the dust from the hundreds of mobile phones he has burnished over the course of a 12-hour overnight shift. "Everyday, I repeat the same work I did yesterday. We get yelled at all the time. It is very tough around here."

Conversation on the production line is forbidden, bathroom breaks are kept to a 10 minutes every two hours and constant noise from the factory washes past his ear plugs, damaging his hearing, Ah Wei said.

At least 10 employees at Taipei-based Foxconn have taken their lives this year, half of them in May, according to the company also known as Hon Hai Group. 86% of workers at Foxconn's Longhua complex outside Shenzhen , are under 25 year old. They live in white dormitories with 8 to 10 people sleeping in the room. The living quarters have stairs running for outside walls and the company has begun covering them with nets to prevent people from jumping.

- *Business Standard, 04-06-10*

CLASS ROOM

VIABILITY GAP FUNDING

What is viability gap funding?

There are many projects with high economic returns, but the financial returns may not be adequate for a profit-seeking investor. For instance, a rural road connecting several villages to the nearby town. This would yield huge economic benefits by integrating these villages with the market economy, but because of low incomes it may not be possible to charge user fee. In such a situation, the project is unlikely to get private investment. In such cases, the government can pitch in and meet a portion of the cost, making the project viable. This method is known as viability gap funding.

How does the scheme work?

VGF is typically provided in competitively bid projects. Under VGF, the central government meets up to 20% of capital cost of a project being implemented in public private partnership (PPP) mode by a central ministry, state government, statutory entity or a local body. The state government, sponsoring ministry or the project authority can pitch in with another 20% of the project cost to make the projects even more attractive for the investors. Potential investors bid for these projects on the basis of VGF needed. Those needing the least VGF support will be awarded the project. The scheme is administered by the Ministry of Finance.

Which are the eligible sectors?

Projects in a number of sectors such as roads, ports, airports, railways, inland waterways, urban transport, power, water supply, other physical infrastructure in urban areas, infrastructure projects in special economic zones, tourism infrastructure projects are generally eligible for viability gap funding. The government now proposes to add social sectors such as education and health to the list.

How does the government benefit?

The government has limited resources. It can use those funds to build everything on its own, but such public funding will take years to create the infrastructure that is needed to achieve higher growth. Through viability gap funding, the same amount of funds can be used to execute many more projects through private participation. VGF is, in that sense, a force multiplier, enabling government to leverage its re-sources more effectively.

What has been the success rate?

The government has so far approved 199 VGF-supported projects involving investment of Rs.70,651 crore by the end of December 2009.

[Source: Economic Times, 25-03-2010]

THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID MARKET

Consider the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) within the broad developing country opportunity. The domain assumption is that the poor do not have money to spend and therefore, are not a viable market. Certainly, the buying power for those earning less than \$2 per day cannot be compared with the purchasing power of individuals in the developed nations. However, by virtue of their numbers, the poor represent a significant latent purchasing power that must be unlocked. For example, all too often, the poor tend to reside in high-cost eco systems even within developing countries.

In the shanty town of Dharavi, outside Mumbai, the poor pay a premium for everything from rice to credit. Compare the cost of everyday items of consumption between Dharavi and Warden Road

(now redesigned B Desai Road), a higher-income neighbourhood in Mumbai. The poverty penalty in Dharavi can be as 5 to 25 times what the rich pay for the same services. Research indicates that this poverty penalty is universal, although the magnitude differs by country. The penalty is the result of local monopolies, inadequate access, poor distribution, and strong traditional intermediaries. For example, the poor in Dharavi pay 600 - 1000% interest for credit from local moneylenders. A bank with access to this market can do well for itself by offering credit at 25%. Although 25% interest might look excessive to a casual observer, from the point of view of the BOP consumer, access to a bank decreases the cost of credit from 600% to 25%.

- Prof. C. K. Prahlad, Management Guru

CIRCULAR ROUND UP

1.0 TDS - GUIDELINES FOR STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

[FMD- HO Cir. No. 448/2010 dt. 25-05-10]

1. With effect from 1st April 2010, if valid PAN is not furnished, TDS to be deducted @ 20% or rate in force, whichever is higher.
2. With effect from 1st April if valid PAN is not furnished along with Form No.15-G/ 15-H, TDS to be deducted @20%.
3. **With effect from 1st July 2010**, the threshold limit for payment without deduction of tax has been raised in the following cases:

IT Act Section	Nature of Payment	Threshold Limit	
		Existing	Revised [w.e.f. 01-07-2010]
194 -C	Payment to contractors	Rs.20,000/- (for single transaction) Rs.50,000/- (for aggregate of transactions during the financial year)	Rs.30,000/- (for single transaction) Rs.75,000/- (for aggregate of transactions during the financial year)
194-H	Commission OR Brokerage	Rs.2500/-	Rs.5000/-
194 - I	Rent	Rs.1,20,000/-	Rs.1,80,000/-
194-J	Fees for professional or technical services	Rs.20,000 (for aggregate of transactions during the financial year)	Rs.30,000/- (for aggregate of transactions during the financial year)

2.0 Effective enforcement of Security Interest Act

[LSD-HO Cir No.486/2010 dt. 09-06-10]

The delegated powers of various authorities for initiating actions under SARFAESI Act have been revised.

It should be ensured that the decision taken by the Bank on the representation / objection of the borrower to the notice issued under Sec.13(2) is communicated to the borrower within the statutory period of 7 days. Failure on the part of the Bank in complying with the said statutory obligation makes the entire proceeding liable to be quashed.

3.0 Policy guidelines for waiver / elimination of Non-recovered service charges held in queue by CBS

[CSD - HO Cir. No.484/2010 dt. 08-06-10]

Branches shall regularly generate statement of the amount held in queue and make efforts to recover it through constant follow-up.

Despite follow-up if the amount held in queue cannot be recovered even after a period of 3 years, the Branch shall seek permission of ZO to delete such amount from the queue by submitting a proposal in the prescribed format.

On getting approval from ZO the amount, the branch should take steps to close such accounts by issuing a notice to the account holder in the prescribed

format. **These guidelines are applicable only to service charges in queue for over 3 years as on 31st March 2010.**

The guidelines are not applicable for "TOD Interest" held in queue.

The power to waive the "service charges" in queue shall be vested with Zonal Head only.

4.0 Persisting irregularities in classification of Bank Deposits

[RMD HO Cir. No. 206/2010 dt. 18-06-10]

It is noticed that Branches are seeking approval for rectification of wrongly classified deposit of earlier years.

Branch Heads may note that this would result in revision of earlier achieved targets by them in the previous years which will be viewed seriously. Further, any benefits accrued / derived on account of such achievements will have to be reversed / taken back. Branch Heads are advised to take care and ensure that no such wrong classification take place at their branches.

It is reiterated that concerned officials at the Branches will be held responsible for wrong classification of Bank deposits and vice-versa for any financial loss thereof to the Bank.

TOO SMALL IS 'TOO BIG' TO FAIL

• S. Gurumurthy

“PIGS in Muck” - this was how, using the acronym ‘PIGS’ for Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, the Financial Times London had titled an edit on August 31, 2008. Contrasting the decline of the ‘PIGS’ with the rise of the ‘BRICs’ (Brazil, Russia, India, China) the Financial Times, London, wrote that the acronym, PIGS was pejorative, meaning negative, ‘but one with much truth’. The Portuguese Finance Minister angrily denounced this comment as ‘racist’. Yet this acronym that originated in 1997 as a collective reference to the four Southern European states is now part of the global financial literature.

The PIGS have many things in common. Like Greece, the others too have high, unsustainable, levels of public debts and foreign loans.

NOT JUST GREECE

If Greece looks like Lehman Brothers, the other PIGS constituents look no different. If Greece’s public debt rated to GDP is risky at over 125 per cent, Italy (over 115) is as bad. If Greek’s external debt to GDP is bad at 187 per cent, Portugal (218) and Spain (229) are far worse. If the unemployment in Greece (9.8 per cent) is dangerous, it is worse in Spain (20.5) Portugal (10.5), and nearly as bad in Italy (8.6). If the fiscal deficit of Greece (12.7 per cent) is high, it is no different in Spain (11.4) with Portugal (9.3) not far behind. In per capita income, Greece (\$32,100) scores over Portugal (\$21,700) and Spain (\$22,486) by a wide margin.

In inflation, all in the PIGS except Spain are in the band of 0.5-1.0 per cent. And if just one in 50 Greeks is poor, every fifth Portuguese - and Spanish - is poor. In external deficit as a proportion of GDP, Greece (13 per cent) does fare badly; but Spain (11) is no better; Portugal (7.6) is better but

still bad. Yet Greek’s overall external debt rated to GDP is better than that of both Spain and Portugal.

Why then did Greece faint, and first? Because it did what others did not. By a process of elimination, it is the guilt of fudging of its national books that singled out Greece as a sinner. This sin, a decade old, was first committed by Greece on the advice of Goldman Sachs, to gain entry into EU. The infamous banker taught the ancient country how to use modern derivatives to understate its deficits and debts.

What Greece did there was almost similar to what Ramalinga Raju did here to cook Satyam’s books. And again Greece, like Raju, confessed to its guilt in 2004. But, unlike Raju, Greece continued to fudge its books. It confessed, for a second time in 2009, that its true fiscal deficit is four times the normative 3 per cent! It is this total loss of credibility that did Greece in, not just bad numbers.

Unlike in 2008, now it is no more just PIGS that drag the EU down. The PIGS club has now expanded, with Ireland first, and ironically, Great Britain next, as the newly qualified members of the PIGS, making it PIIGGS (adding another ‘I’, for Ireland and another ‘G’, for Great Britain).

See how the new entrants qualify. Ireland’s external debt is \$1.841 trillion - some 960 per cent of its GDP; its public debt is above 62 per cent; its current fiscal deficit is almost 15 per cent. Great Britain’s public debt is almost 70 per cent of the GDP; its fiscal deficit is over 11 per cent; its gross external debt is \$9.191 trillion (365 per cent of GDP). The two new entrants eminently qualify to rank as part of the “PIIGGS in Muck”.

EURO IN DANGER

The financial packages in 2008 were devised to protect the economic actors who were 'too big to fail', to save the system. But Greece is too small an actor in comparison, specifically as compared to the size of the EU economy. Its GDP is just 2 per cent of EU's; its stock market-cap, just 1.25 per cent; its public debt only 3.95 per cent; its private debt, a measly 0.81 per cent; its total debt, just 1.76 per cent; its bank assets, a mere 1.11 per cent!

Greece, a spot in the EU, is a dot in the world. Yet, this tiny dot is threatening to cause a global crisis. How? The tiny Greece is a symbol of the larger PIIGGS. The share of PIIGGS in the GDP of EU is large, about 40 per cent; its share in the total EU debts is over 50 per cent! Its debt to GDP ratio is 62.4 per cent.

So Greece is just the starter, as what happens to Greece today would envelop PIIGGS tomorrow. That will devour the EU and Euro Area the day after. That may well be the end of the euro. Look at just two numbers. One, according to the IMF report on Global Financial Stability (April 2010) out of the total capital flows of \$24.8 trillion up to 2009, contracts for \$12.4 trillion - over 50 per cent - have been inked in the euro.

Two, the Bank of International Settlement says that the outstanding derivative contracts valued at over \$180 trillion stand transacted in the euro. Does it need a seer to say that the end of the euro could well be the end of the global financial system? The euro is suspect because it has no Godfather to defend it. The US Fed will defend the dollar to its last drop of blood. Who will die to defend the euro like that? Angela Merkel seems to have already written the last cheque in Euro's defence.

That such a thing - so anything - can happen is what the Modern Greece's Tragedy 2010 reveals. That the too-small Greece has now become 'too

big to fail' testifies to how the global financial system is on the edge.

That the West now perceives such a marginal actor as such a fatal threat when the West just laughed off the collapse of much larger Asian economies in 1997 as just crony capitalism meeting its fate, speaks volumes. The reason for its fears today is self-evident.

FRAGILE FINANCIAL SYSTEM

The world financial system, say insiders, is now heavily leveraged - estimated at \$17 trillion. Leverage, in simple words, means controlling a large asset or handling a big debt by risking small real money, like buying an option to acquire shares of Rs.100 lakh in value by risking just Rs.5 lakh as premium. Or the world's outstanding derivatives of over \$600 trillion is backed by just some \$25 trillion (4.2 per cent) of real money. The heavily leveraged world of modern finance is like a pyramid of cards, which the fall of a tiny Greece can blow to smithereens.

As an expert put it, 'the last thing the drunk should be given is another drink'. Yet that is precisely what the West does now by issuing more paper monies to solve the crisis created by excess paper monies that have turned toxic. Adding further toxin will only add to toxicity; it will not detoxify.

This realisation will come only when much of the financial economics taught in the last three decades is, as the Nobel Laureate Dr. Paul Krugman said bluntly, trashed as "useless at best and positively harmful at best". That is a subject by itself.

(The author is a corporate adviser. The above article appeared in The Hindu Business Line, 26-05-2010)

HEALTH WATCH

NATURAL HELP FOR FIBROMYALGIA

- Debra Fulghum Bruce

We all get tired. Most of us have experienced sadness or mild depression at times. And who doesn't feel sore, achy and stiff, especially after a weekend of recreational sports or heavy gardening? But for those with Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS), these debilitating symptoms occur daily for months to years on and are relentless, causing poor quality of life.

What is Fibromyalgia Syndrome?

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) is a complex rheumatic-type disorder characterized by widespread pain, decreased pain threshold or tender points and incapacitating fatigue. In fact, women are 10 times more likely to get this disease than men. While there is no specific laboratory test or abnormal X-ray finding to diagnose fibromyalgia, the symptoms of the disease can be successfully treated once a proper diagnosis is made by your Physician.

Years ago, it became apparent to doctors that patients, usually women, who told of having muscle pain, achiness, fatigue, disordered sleep, anxiety and depression were harboring a distinct syndrome, or collection of symptoms, that make a disease. Yet in test after test the results were always normal. Even 10 years ago doctors sent these patients home with few answers, as we could treat only the symptoms.

Today doctors know differently. Years of comprehensive studies done on this enigmatic syndrome confirm that fibromyalgia is very real, and although the symptoms vary from patient to patient, they are not imaginary. For rheumatologists, fibromyalgia is one of the most common diseases. Yet in primary care practices it is vastly underreported. That's why seeking an accurate diagnosis for fibromyalgia is very important; even though evasive, it can be successfully treated once diagnosed.

What you might feel : Signs and Symptoms

Fibromyalgia causes you literally to ache all over. You may have symptoms of crippling fatigue, even on arising, specific trigger points on the body that are painful to touch, swelling, disturbances in deep-level or restful sleep and mood disturbances or depression. Your muscles may feel as if they have been overworked or pulled, without exercising or

other cause. Sometimes your muscles twitch, burn or have deep stabbing pain. Some women have pain and aches around the joints in the neck, shoulders, back and hips, making it difficult to sleep or exercise.

What Causes It ?

At this time the causes of fibromyalgia are virtually unknown. Investigators have been looking at hormonal disturbances and chemical imbalances that affect nerve signaling. While just speculation, it may be that lower levels of serotonin in the blood of patients lead to lowered pain thresholds. (Serotonin, a neurotransmitter in the brain, is associated with a calming, anxiety-reducing reaction). This is thought to be caused by the reduced effectiveness of the body's natural endorphin painkillers and the increased presence of substance P, which increases pain perception. Still, these theories are merely speculative.

Some researchers theorize that stress and poor physical conditioning are both major actors in the cause of fibromyalgia. Other researchers believe that because fibromyalgia is accompanied by low-grade depression, there may be a link between the two illnesses. Another theory states that fibromyalgia is caused by biochemical changes in the body and may be related to hormonal changes or menopause. Still other studies reveal that fibromyalgia may result from sudden trauma to the central nervous system.

How is it Diagnosed?

Although today's high-tech medicine usually has a specific test to help doctors arrive at a diagnosis, there is no laboratory test or X-ray that can diagnose fibromyalgia. That's why a comprehensive physical examination and your medical history are both important, as well as a diagnosis of exclusion, ruling out other diagnoses that can be causing similar symptoms.

Your doctor will run some specific blood tests, such as a complete blood count (CBC), a test that measures hemoglobin levels and gives a count of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. This will let your doctor rule out blood disorders, such as anemia, that may cause fatigue. The blood chemistries will tell how your kidneys and liver are functioning and will give your cholesterol numbers. Tests of other chemicals,

such as glucose, that can create similar problems to those of fibromyalgia will be done, as well as thyroid tests. An under-active thyroid (hypothyroidism), caused by reduced hormone production by the thyroid gland, can cause similar problems to those of fibromyalgia, with the fatigue, muscle aches, weakness and depression.

Although fibromyalgia does not cause changes that show up on X-rays, your doctor may still want to rule out more serious causes of pain by taking routine X-rays or even ordering an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging).

What's the Treatment ?

There is no accurate way to diagnose FMS, and there is also no known cure. However, many experts are finding success with a multifaceted treatment program that includes a combination of natural therapies to reduce the pain, anxiety, depression and fatigue, while increasing healing sleep.

Hydrotherapy Helps to Boost Blood Flow to the Painful Site.

Many FMS patients find relief with hydrotherapy, either hot or cold water to ease the discomfort. In fact, balneotherapy, or the use of hot baths or spas to alleviate pain, is a centuries -old therapy that helps to increase muscle relaxation boost blood supply to the site, and relieve rigidity and spasms in the muscles of patients with fibromyalgia.

Soothing Foods high in Complex Carbohydrates help to Reduce Anxiety

.When serotonin levels are increased in the brain, it is associated with a calming, anxiety-reducing effect and, in some cases, with a drowsiness effect. Also, a stable serotonin level in the brain is associated with a positive mood state or feeling good over a period of time. Finding foods that relieve a depressed state relies on a personal trial-and-error approach.

Foods High in Tyrosine Help to Increase Alertness

Studies show that people are more alert when the brain is producing the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine. Foods rich in protein help to increase the amino acid tyrosine, which boosts the levels of dopamine and norepinephrine. This, in turn, creates a feeling of alertness and improves our concentration. Try the following foods to see which ones boost stamina and alertness for you.

Foods to Increase Alertness

- a. Legumes
- b. Soya products

Exercise can tone Muscles and Alleviate Pain.

Lack of exercise and inactivity can aggravate low serotonin levels. Not only does exercise act as nature's tranquilizer, helping to boost serotonin in the brain, but studies have shown that exercise also triggers the release of norepinephrine. For those with fibromyalgia who feel stressed out frequently, exercise can help to desensitize the body to stress.

Destressing can reduce Anxiety and Increase Healing Sleep.

There are many ways to destress. For those with fibromyalgia, support groups may be of particular benefit. Within these groups you can share how FMS affects your life - what you feel, the frustrations you face, the therapies that are helpful and how the illness impacts your relationships and work.

Herbal Therapies work for many.

Some FMS patients find benefit from herbal therapies, particularly those herbs that act as anti-inflammatories that help reduce muscle pain, headache, PMS, and menstrual pain, among other common symptoms.

While herbs are natural, they still can have a negative effect on the body. Hemlock was natural, and remember what it did to Socrates! Always play it safe and check with your doctor before using a herb, to make sure it will benefit your health and not interact negatively with medications you are taking.

Increasing Healing Sleep can help Resolve Pain.

Disturbed sleep and the resulting exhaustion you feel cause reduced physical fitness and the establishment of a vicious cycle of inactivity and sleep disturbance with physical and mood-related symptoms. Because patients with fibromyalgia have a specific type of disordered sleep, including insomnia, that may lead to the feelings of achiness and fatigue, it's important to take time before going to bed to create a restful atmosphere and reduce feelings of wakefulness.

Massage Therapies can relieve Aching Muscles.

Bodywork and massage therapies can give great relief to those with fibromyalgia as muscle tension is relieved. These therapies also help you distress and relax tight muscles.

[Debra Fulghum Bruce writes on health issues from Atlanta, Georgia. The above article appeared in Herald of Health, November, 2009]

THE PLAINSPEAK

THE 1984 CALL FROM BHOPAL

In early December 1984, we in CBOO Central Office received a call from the then manager Murthy of our Bhopal branch. On hearing his voice we felt greatly relieved. He was completely shaken by the disastrous gas leak in his city the previous day. Its dimensions were yet to be known to the world when he called but as a man on the scene the gravity of the tragedy was beyond his words. To our relief he said, "Sir, with God's grace everyone in the branch is safe."

Last month (June) saw an intense countrywide debate on the aftermath of the judgment of a court in that infamous Bhopal gas tragedy. As already known, that tragedy which occurred on the night of December 3-4, 1984 in the Union Carbide Corporation's pesticide's factory in Bhopal killed over 20,000 people, maimed or incapacitated countless thousands, to become the worst ever industrial disaster in the world. At midnight, the deadly methyl isocyanate gas started leaking from the factory and started engulfing the nearby thickly populated area and later spread to the city. By sunrise thousands were dead without knowing what had happened to them. Those who ran for life were not spared by the fast moving gas. Most of them were workers or low income group citizens.

While the punishment imposed on the officials of UCC by the judge and the failure to fix accountability on the then CEO Warren Anderson will continue to be matters of dispute, the lessons to us as ordinary citizens should not be lost sight of. In the present situation those of us living in the industrialized cities and fast growing industrial hubs are vulnerable to different kinds of dangers arising from the industries. Take for example: according to the Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index prepared by Central Environmental Pollution Control Board jointly with Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi several of our cities are critically polluted due to the industries. Mangalore, Vishakhapatnam, Ghaziabad, Coimbatore, Vellore, Noida, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Howrah and Ahmedabad are a few of the 43 clusters which have a score of 70 plus index. In these centres air, water and land are critically polluted. Another

32 clusters have a score between 60 and 70 which means severely polluted.

The Ministry Environment has prescribed that large polluting chemical factories should not come up within a radius of 25 km from a city with population of one million. This is often circumvented by different methods.

As citizens what do we do? Keeping quiet is one option but then we or our children may have to face Bhopals in future. Despite their claims, many oil MNCs in western countries are guilty of oil spills, accidents in their refineries and leakage of gas or chemicals. (We all know the damage the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is causing due to BP Company's negligence.) But there penalties are quicker and do not take 26 years (!). When it comes to India the large corporates have least concern for the environment and the people around. They get licence to set up the units through the elected representatives of the people. With the clout they wield they get away with the wrongs they do.

What is the option before us? Join the various people's movements in our areas, movements which are transparent and led by people of impeccable commitment to the cause. You may not be able to go to the meetings and protest actions every day but here are certain minimum that you can do:

- Keep yourselves informed of the developments
- Study the literature brought out by reliable NGOs
- Attend their seminars, lectures and discussions on related issues
- If there are non-political protest actions on atrocities by the State against citizens, join such actions (because it may happen to you tomorrow)

Ignoring these realities may expose to risks far too serious for us to bear. Our children will not condone our failure in safeguarding their interests.

—TRB

(The views are personal; for a change I thought an issue of larger concern needs to be focused. Hence this piece. Will appreciate members' reactions.)



DIALEMMA

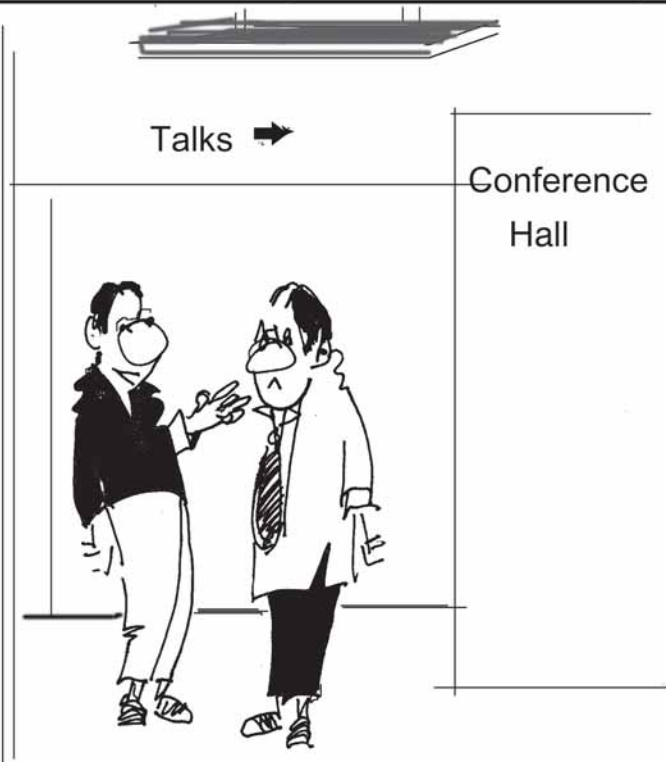
H S Vishwanath



**Sir... He says he is sent on deputation.....
We had only asked for a clerk..... !!!!**



**He has been allotted a job now...
to allott work to others.....!!!!**



**You should not have told 'No' to everything
Sir... One of them had asked for a cup of
water....!!!**

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