

**Challenges and Opportunities in Indian Banking Sector**

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**Introduction**

The banking system in India should not only be hassle free but it should be able to meet the new challenges posed by the technology and any other external and internal factors. For the last three decades, India's banking system has several outstanding achievements to its credit. The banks are the main participants of the financial system in India. The Banking sector offers several facilities and opportunities to their customers. All the banks safeguard the money and valuables and provide loans, credit, and payment services, such as checking accounts, money orders, and cashier's cheques. The banks also offer investment and insurance products. As a variety of models for cooperation and integration among finance industries have emerged, some of the traditional distinctions between banks, insurance companies, and securities firms have diminished. In spite of these changes, banks continue to maintain and perform their primary role—accepting deposits and lending funds from these deposits.

**Objective**

The objective of this paper is to explain the changing banking scenario, to analyze the impact of liberalization, privatization & globalization and to study the challenges and opportunities of national and commercial banks in changing banking scenario. In addition to this, an attempt is made to understand the significance of banks in India.

**Methodology**

This paper is the outcome of a secondary data on Indian Banking Sector with special reference to Indian context. To complete this, annual reports, various books, journals and periodicals have been consulted, several reports on this particular area have been considered, and internet searching has also been done.

**Challenges And Opportunities**

The Indian banking sector is faced with multiple and concurrent challenges such as increased competition, rising customer expectations, and diminishing customer loyalty. The banking industry is also changing at a phenomenal speed. While at the one end, we have millions of savers and investors who still do not use a bank, another segment continues to bank with a physical branch and at the other end of the spectrum, the customers are becoming familiar with ATMs, e-banking, and cashless economy. This shows the immense potential for market expansion. The exponential growth for the industry comes from being able to handle as wide a range of this spectrum as possible. In this complex and fast changing environment, the only sustainable competitive advantage is to give the customer an optimum blend of technology and traditional service.

As banks develop their strategies for giving customers access to their accounts through various advanced services like e banking, mobile banking and net banking, they should also regard

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this emerging platform as a potential catalyst for generating operational efficiencies and as a vehicle for new revenue sources.

India's banking sector has made rapid strides in reforming and aligning itself to the new competitive business environment. The major challenges faced by banks today are as to how to cope with competitive forces and strengthen their balance sheet. Today, banks are groaning with burden of NPA's. It is rightly felt that these contaminated debts, if not recovered, will eat into the very vitals of the banks.

#### **Revolution of Information Technology**

Banks may have to go for mobile banking services for a cluster of villages. Alternatively technological institutions have to come out with low-cost, self-service solutions/ ATMs. The government and the RBI should actively support such research efforts. Here, it is worthwhile to mention that the adaptability of the Indian rural population to high-tech devices is one of the fastest in the world. A wider dissemination of information on technologies and products to the Indian banking industry by the research institutions could benefit the banking institutions. This cross-pollination of ideas would mutually enrich the banking and the technology development processes. The Indian banks are subject to tremendous pressures to perform as otherwise their very survival would be at stake. The application of IT and e-banking is becoming the order of the day with the banking system heading towards virtual banking.

#### **Industrial Development**

The developments in Indian industry and government and the integration of India with the global markets also offer innumerable opportunities to the banking sector. Companies and governments are increasingly seeking high-quality banking services to improve their own operating efficiency. Companies seek to offer better customer service and maximize shareholder returns and governments seek to improve the quality of public services. The internationalization of India offers banks the opportunity to service cross-border needs of Indian companies and India linked needs of multinationals.

#### **Knowledge Society**

Building knowledge-driven, learning organizations is important in the current scenario of rapidly evolving operating environments. Knowledge and assimilation of new ideas and trends are essential to keep the organization ahead on the curve. This is true for banking as it is for all other sectors. Banks must continuously seek to be aware of cutting edge practices in banking internationally and institutionalize this learning across the organization. This will prepare them for the future as Indian markets become more sophisticated and integrated into the global financial markets. Another critical area for the Indian banking sector is people. The ability to attract and retain talent is a key success factor for a people-oriented business like banking. Banks have to build organizations that are process driven yet innovative, stable yet flexible, and responsive to change.

#### **Intense Competition**

The RBI and Government of India kept banking industry open for the participants of private sector banks and foreign banks. The foreign banks were also permitted to set up shop in India either as branches or as subsidiaries. Due to this lowered entry barriers many new players have entered the market such as private banks, foreign banks, nonbanking finance companies, etc.



foreign banks and new private sector banks have spearhead the hi-tech revolution. For survival and growth in highly competitive environment banks have to follow the prompt and efficient customer service, which calls for appropriate customer centric policies and customer friendly procedures.

### Employees' Retention

The banking industry has transformed rapidly in the last ten years, shifting from transactional and customer service-oriented to an increasingly aggressive environment, where competition for revenue is on top priority. Long-time banking employees are becoming disenchanted with the industry and are often resistant to perform up to new expectations. The diminishing employee morale results in decreased revenue. Due to the intrinsically close ties between staff and clients, losing those employees completely can mean the loss of valuable customer relationships. There tail banking industry is concerned about employee retention from all levels: from tellers to executives to customer service representatives because competition is always moving in to hire them away.

### Financial inclusion

Financial inclusion has become a necessity in today's business environment. Whatever is produced by business houses that have to be under the check from various perspectives like environmental concerns, corporate governance, social and ethical issues. Apart from it to bridge the gap between rich and poor, the poor people of the country should be given proper attention to improve their economic condition. In India, RBI has initiated several measures to achieve greater financial inclusion, such as facilitating no-frills accounts and GCCs for small deposits and credit.

### Timely Technological up gradation

Already electronic transfers, clearings, settlements have reduced translation times. To face competition it is necessary for banks to absorb the technology and upgrade their services.

### Global banking

The impact of globalization becomes challenges for the domestic enterprises as they are bound to compete with global players. If we look at the Indian Banking Industry, then we find that there are 36 foreign banks operating in India, which becomes a major challenge for Nationalized and private sector banks.

### Conclusion

The pre and post liberalization era has witnessed various environmental changes which directly affects the aforesaid phenomena. It is evident that post liberalization era has spread new colours of growth in India, but simultaneously it has also posed some challenges. This article discusses the various challenges and opportunities like High transaction costs, IT revolution, timely technological up-gradation, intense competition, privacy & safety, global banking, financial inclusion. Banks are striving to combat the competition. The competition from global banks and technological innovation has compelled the banks to rethink their policies and strategies. Different products provided by foreign banks to Indian customers have forced the Indian banks to diversity and upgrade themselves so as to compete and survive in the market. The biggest challenge for banking industry is to serve the mass and huge market of India. Companies have become customer centric than product centric. The better we understand our customers, the more successful we will be in meeting their needs. In order to mitigate above



mentioned challenges Indian banks must cut their cost of their services. Another aspect to counter the challenges is product differentiation. Apart from traditional banking services, Indian banks must adopt some product innovation so that they can compete in gamut of competition. Technology up gradation is an inevitable aspect to face challenges. The level of consumer awareness is significantly higher as compared to previous years. Now-a-days they need internet banking, mobile banking and ATM services.

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