

34 /2013
17.07.2013

The Chief General Manager
State Bank of India
Local Head Office
No.16, College Lane
Chennai 600 006.

Madam,

SEVEN DAY BANKING

Our attention has been drawn to instructions issued by the controllers for introduction of Seven day banking in Kilpauk, West Mambalam, Ashok Nagar and Poonamallee High Road branches. Few other branches have been given oral instructions for introducing of seven day banking. We are shocked and surprised at the decision that is implemented without any discussion with the Association, though it affects the service conditions of Officers substantially. You are fully aware that the issue of seven day banking lead to Nationwide demonstration and the charge sheet issued to the Circle President and General Secretary have been quashed by the Honourable Madras High Court Bench. Moreover, during the Mediation proceedings held at the Corporate Centre during January 2013, the top Management of the Bank had assured that introduction of seven day banking will be discussed with the Association/Federation and will be tried only at select residence area branches with a minimum complement of 4 officers and 6 Award staff. However the present instructions to keep open the Kilpauk, PH Road and other branches at Chennai Circle for seven days goes against this assurance since many of these branches do not have the adequate staff strength. It is pertinent to point out that a few years back when the concept of seven day banking was introduced in the Circle, the matter was discussed with the Association and we extended all cooperation after arriving at a formula for compensatory off. All these seven day banking branches were once again made six day banking branches because of non viability and lack of patronage from customers.

Now, in reality with the technological advancements that have taken place in the banks and round the clock service available to the customers through various alternate channels to put through their banking transactions, there is a need to reduce the present pressure on the workforce by having a 5 days' week. This is more so in our Circle in view of the acute shortage of officers at the Circle and the prolific use of technology by customers in the Circle in a better manner than many other circles.

It is also very disturbing that the Officers at these Branches have been continuously working for more than 15 days without any weekly off for two weeks now. This has completely sapped the physical and emotional strengths of the Officers concerned. The effect of working without any weekly off does not augur well for the individuals and the Bank.

Before introducing the seven day banking, the Management has to look into all aspects including the working hours, the weekly off, compensation etc., and should discuss with the Circle Association and arrive at a mutually acceptable proposition rather than hurriedly announcing the introduction of seven day banking at branches even if it is at select branches.

As for payment of appropriate compensation, the provision available to the Officers as per the Service Conditions is, "if an Officer is called upon to work on a Sunday/holiday, he should be granted compensatory off during the week following the Sunday/holiday on which he has been required to work. Such compensatory off is to be availed of, as far as possible, by the Officers who are eligible for casual leave". As of now, the Bank is not in a position to implement this service condition due to acute shortage of Officers. The cash compensation is not a substitute to compensatory off and it is only to be paid in addition to compensatory off. It has been an agreed principle that Officers being supervisors should be paid 150% of the compensation paid to the Award Staff whom they supervise.

Consequently, the issues affecting the members due to continuous deprivation of holidays and extracting continuous work for extended hours from our Officers without considering the hardships Officers face need to be addressed. Here we would like to bring to your notice that as per the ILO convention No. 14(1921) AND NO 106(1957) require that each worker has atleast 24 hours of uninterrupted rest every seven days. Whenever possible, the rest day(s) should be simultaneous for all employees of an undertaking and correspond with the traditions and customs of the country.

In view of the above, we request you to initiate proper discussion in the matter to address the issues arising out of introduction of seven day banking at select branches in the Circle.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(D. THOMAS FRANCO RAJENDRA DEV)
GENERAL SECRETARY

Copy to: The Circle Development Officer, SBI, LHO, Chennai

GENERAL SECRETARY