



State Banks' Staff Union (Chennai Circle)



State Banks' Staff Union, Chennai Circle, the great edifice which ensures the well being of its members is completing 75 years of its existence, creating history in the Trade Union arena. It has grown from strength to strength over the years and has a glorious past, filled with relentless struggles to achieve not only improved working conditions and wages but also to ensure dignity of labour. Our forefathers have continuously striven hard to protect the hard won rights and also endeavoured persistently to secure new rights and benefits. We are successfully making strides in the path laid by them while remembering them with gratitude to realise our vision & mission.

The undersigned is honoured and immensely pleased to hold the position of the General Secretary of this mighty Organisation at this significant moment. It is time to retrospect, since looking back is a way to sharpen the focus on the things we want to achieve. History is so much more than memorising dates and events and celebrating. It must also be kept in mind that the past is the foundation on which the present and the future are built. Unless we appreciate the selfless sacrifices, brave fights and unceasing hard work, our former leaders and valiant comrades have put in to achieve the enviable stature we possess today, we will not realise the true value of the benefits that they have secured for us. Therefore, it is more than appropriate to recollect few historical instances that have made indelible marks in the chequered history of our Union since its inception.

**EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK "MOMENTOUS MOVEMENT-GLIMPSES"
(PUBLISHED IN 1997) AUTHORED BY COM.V.GANESAN,
FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY OF SBSU (CC)**

PLIGHT OF BANK EMPLOYEES BEFORE FORMATION OF UNIONS

'In some of the Banks, the transactions go on even upto 4.00 or 5.00 p.m so that the day's accounts cannot even be taken up early during the day and so that closing of the accounts go on upto 10.00 p.m and sometimes even upto 12.00 midnight, until the cash balance is found correct'.

'It is pity that even the humblest day labourer or even the prisoners of gallows have a limit to the working hours and have allowances for extra work, but these unfortunate Clerks have none of these privileges. They are made to work like beasts of burden at the sweet will of their masters'.

'But it is a matter of deep regret that excepting a few reputed ones, none of the Banks have anything like a fixed scale of salary and increment, fixed working hours, leave rules, pension, provident fund etc. to offer to those who are rendering honest and sincere services'.

BIRTH OF UNIONS

'The birth of the 'Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Association' at Calcutta in the year 1920 and their marathon struggle for 46 days in 1946 opened the eyes of the Bank employees to fight for their rights in different parts of the country'.

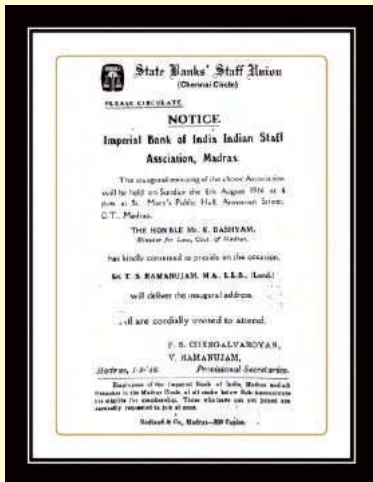
VISION

Empower staff and be their collective voice to gain rights in consonance with international standards and transform SBI as a better and inclusive workplace.

MISSION

To build a strong and powerful Union wholly committed to the membership and continuously promote, defend and protect the rights, well-being and interest of employees and secure fairness, safety and human rights.





'Thus, after the strike of 46 days by Bengal comrades, several awards governing the service conditions of different bank employees came into force'.

'In Madras Circle till the middle of 1946, no Union could be formed here. Lack of collective activity and want of an Union caused them dearly. The employees in the Madras Circle were the worst sufferers in the matter of wages and service conditions. It was then, owing to the pioneering efforts of the two valiant



comrades P.S.Chengalvarayan and V.Ramanujam and a few of their close associates, an Union was formed at Madras under the name and style "Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Association, Madras Circle" on 4th August 1946'.

Shri P.S. CHENGALVARAYAN
 Founder Secretary of
 State Banks' Staff Union
 (Madras Circle)

'When the Bank employees were labouring from dawn to dusk for a pittance of wages with the Damocles'Sword of job insecurity and official repression constantly hanging over their heads, a few dedicated and determined workers of the former Imperial Bank of India chose to challenge the powerful fortress of the Bank Management by lighting the torch of Trade Union conscience in their colleagues and fostering unity amongst themselves. It is the endeavours of these pioneers fifty years ago that resulted in the emergence of a strong Trade Union in the Madras Circle of the Bank at Madras'.

'These developments and discriminations against its own brethren willed the Madras Circle Union to think in terms of the larger perspective and long term prospects. They realised that their salvation lay not in isolated existence but in the fusion of all Circle Associations into a Federal Structure. So they immediately contacted their Bengal Circle counterparts and offered to host an all India Conference of Imperial Bank Employees at Madras for the purpose. The Bengal Circle Association, who were already having a like mind, lost no time in seizing this opportunity. It was thus the first All India Conference of Imperial Bank employees came to be convened at St.Mary's Hall, Madras on the 23rd October 1947. It was at this conference today's All India State Bank of India Staff Federation was born assuming the modest name "The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Federation" as a bulwark against injustice and imperialistic tyranny, against oppression and arbitrariness'.

HEROIC STRIKE OF SBI EMPLOYEES

'The struggle of the State Bank employees throughout the country has added a glorious chapter in the history of trade Union movement and the successful 21 days struggle in March 1960 will ever be remembered and cherished by all our members and by prosperity'.

The above excerpts clearly elucidate what the working condition of the Bank employees was prior to formation of Union, how the Union and the Federation came into being and what the Union could dare do in the year as early as 1960. Though the Union was run for State Bank employees, there were outside

political forces operating in the Union from the leadership positions. Under the stewardship of the trio, Com. T.V.Loganathan, Com. V.Ganesan and Com. C.L.Rajaratnam, the political forces were eschewed from the Union in 1961 and the Union was run thereafter by serving employees only.

Our Union has waged many battles ever since inception in the form of agitational programs and strikes for the cause of its members and on few occasions, for social causes also. Every time, with the

The Triumphant Trio



committed participation and support of the members, the Union has emerged victorious. The Indefinite Strike of 2006 which lasted for 6 days over the issue regarding review of pension ceiling, made the powers that be, to come to terms and it was yet another jewel in the crown. But for the dogged will of the leaders and the unflinching loyalty of the members, we would not have weathered many a storm during these years. Also, there has never been any dearth of leaders and the mantle of leadership has been passed on from generation to generation in a smooth manner, creating a unique legacy for the Union.

From the year 2008, the strength of younger generation comrades in the membership has been increasing steadily. With regular recruitment in clerical cadre since 2008, coupled with mass retirement of senior comrades in the recent times, the percentage of younger comrades has been increasing considerably and now it stands at nearly 70% of the total membership. To keep pace with them, an imperative need was felt to progressively change our style of functioning to suit their expectations. With this view, a website for the Union was launched in 2011 to keep the members abreast of the current developments. We have also developed an application (App) called SBSU VOICE to enable the members to be in touch with the Union virtually and voice their concerns for remedial measures.

In a few years from now, almost all the senior comrades in the Union will retire and the responsibility of steering the Union forward will be in the hands of younger comrades. Keeping this in view, we have already inducted some of them in our Central Committee and we have also formed a Youth-Wing in 2019 comprising vibrant young comrades with the intent to identify, nurture and train future leaders for the Union. Further, to cope with the digital era and the issues relating to it, an IT-Wing consisting of comrades who are well versed in the field has also been put in place. Thus, we have been constantly

updating ourselves in tune with the changing scenario in the banking industry in general and State Bank of India in particular.

We can advance our journey only when we have a well defined goal. Though, the members' welfare has always been our sole objective, it was thought fit that the Union should have explicit objectives and a vision that defines our desired future. Accordingly, our official Vision and Mission statements were formulated and released in August 2019, which clearly define our purpose, goals and values. We are confident that our incredible journey will continue with this vision and mission in times to come.

PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS ON 4TH AUGUST 2021

The Platinum Jubilee of our mighty Union could not be celebrated in a befitting manner because of the restrictions in force on account of the pandemic situation. Nevertheless, we observed the momentous occasion by organising various events throughout our Circle with the active participation of our members in a jubilant mood.

The day started with dedicating COM. V.GANESAN RESIDENCY, a property we have purchased at Ambattur, Chennai, to the membership for their future use by our Federation General Secretary, **Com. S.K.Bandlish** by cutting the ribbon, in the presence of Former Senior Vice-President, AISBISF **Com. D.Venugopal Reddy**. Former General Secretary, Com. V.R.Udayashankar, Former Presidents Com. P.V.Inbasekaran and Com. R.Baskaran of SBSU (CC) along with a few veteran leaders graced the occasion by their august presence. A galaxy of our Central Committee Members was also present.

COM. V. GANESAN RESIDENCY



Thereafter, to commemorate the platinum jubilee of our edifice, the Chief General Manager of our Circle Shri R. Radhakrishna and Com. S.K. Bandlish planted tree saplings in our LHO campus.



75 memorial tree saplings were also planted at various prime locations in all our modules to remain as physical reminders of our legacy.



Madurai

Tiruchirapalli

Salem

Coimbatore

Chennai

Various competitions were conducted to bring out the talents and our members participated in them in large numbers with utmost enthusiasm. The care for our fellow human beings was well exhibited by our Madurai module comrades by their participation in blood donation camp.



Our enthused members added colour and flavour to the celebration by cutting cakes and sharing the joy with all in the units.

Salem Module



Madurai Module



Tiruchirappalli Module



Coimbatore Module



In the evening Com.Bandlish was given a rousing welcome at the Head Quarters of our Union. An informal meeting was organised in the Union in which Com.Bandlish unveiled portraits of NOTICE of the inaugural meeting of the Union which marked the birth of our Union on 4th Aug 1946 and the Platinum Jubilee LOGO. It was followed by donating sewing machines to seven destitute women by all the leaders present.



A short film was also released on the occasion which detailed our splendid journey during the past 75 years. Com.Bandlish distributed prizes to the winners of the competitions. He also released the laminated 'Letter of Appreciation', a new initiative, to be given to our members on their retirement from Bank's service. The Deputy General Secretaries of Chennai North received the letter of appreciation from Com.Bandlish on behalf of the first recipient, Com.S Vijayakumar, former DGS (Brs), Chennai North. The meeting was concluded by cutting a cake.

Platinum Jubilee Cake Cutting

Prize Distribution for the Winners by Com. S.K. Bandlish



On this memorable occasion, prominent leaders from fraternal organisations greeted us. Com.C.H.Venkatachalam, General Secretary-AIBEA, Com.S.C.Balaji, President-NCBE & General Secretary IOBEU Chennai, Com. Rajagopal, General Secretary, BEFI Tamilnadu, Com.R.Balaji, General Secretary, SBIOA, Chennai Circle, Com.P.Nallaperumal Pillai, President, SBIOA Chennai Circle and Com.D.Thomas Franco, General Secretary, SBIPA, Chennai along with other dignitaries came in person to extend their best wishes. We take this opportunity to thank all of them for having honoured us by their personal visit to our office amidst their busy routine.

It is time to express our gratitude to all our veteran leaders and the comrades of the past who shed their blood and sweat to form, grow and protect this Union to espouse the cause of our members. At this juncture, we salute each and every one of them and gratefully acknowledge their invaluable contributions to the growth of our Organisation. We take this opportunity to thank the Bank also for all that it has done for the welfare of the employees on our demand. We also thank the entire rank and file, from whom we derive strength to move forward with renewed vigour, for their consistent support.

With warm greetings,

(G. KRIPAKARAN)
GENERAL SECRETARY

