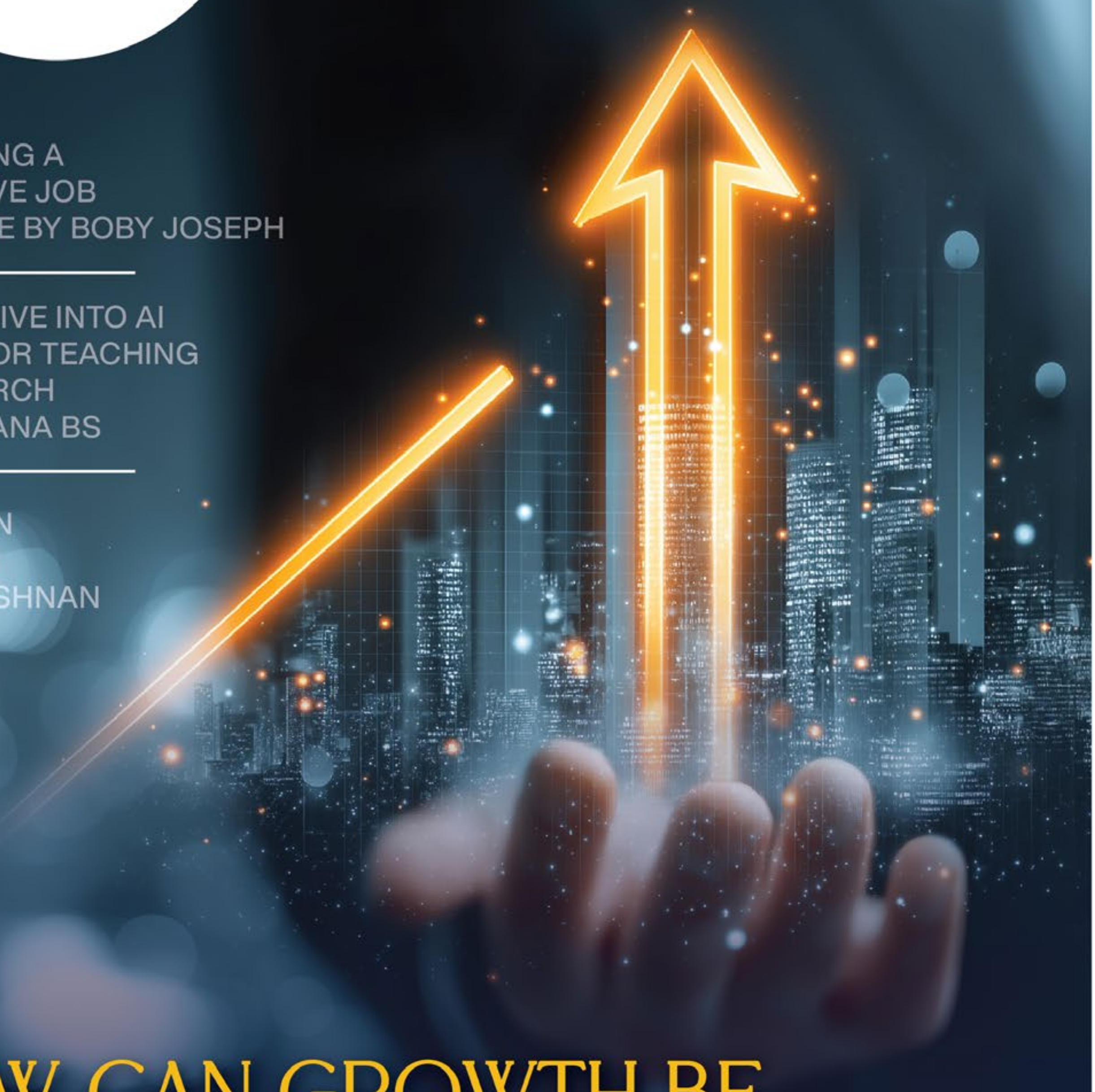
JANUARY 2026 EDITION

UQuest

IS BANKING A LUCRATIVE JOB ANYMORE BY BOBY JOSEPH

A DEEP DIVE INTO AI TOOLS FOR TEACHING & RESEARCH BY CHETANA BS

HUMOR IN BANKING BY M KRISHNAN



HOW CAN GROWTH BE SUSTAINABLE THROUGH INNOVATION

INSIGHTS, INNOVATIONS & MILESTONES FROM UNEXT MANIPAL ACADEMY OF BFSI

Editor's Note

Dear readers,
It is with immense pleasure that we present the highly anticipated third edition of our in-house magazine, U-Quest! This edition marks another significant milestone in our journey, reinforcing our commitment to fostering intellectual curiosity and celebrating the diverse expertise within our institution.

Our faculty members have once again stepped forward, contributing a rich tapestry of articles covering crucial domains of Banking, and Economics & activities on CSR. Inside, you will find thought-provoking articles, insightful research, and engaging discussions on contemporary subjects that shape our professional world. The magazine is still evolving & we take the feedback & try to incorporate new ideas that we get from all of you. We are introducing a new section- Employee spotlight where we highlight the accomplishments of our employees.

Beyond the serious stuff, we haven't forgotten the importance of a well-rounded perspective. Don't miss the lighter side of our profession in the dedicated articles on Humour in Banking—a testament to the fact that even complex fields have room for wit. In Trivia, we highlight the "Imposter syndrome" & in U-quest in classroom we discuss "Liquidity coverage ratio". And of course, the ever-popular Campus Buzz section keeps you updated on the latest happenings and achievements that make our campus vibrant.

Many thanks to all our contributors for sharing your knowledge & passion. Many thanks to the other contributors too whose articles could not make it to this edition. Be rest assured that these are kept in the articles bank & would be carried in our subsequent editions. We hope this edition of U-Quest serves as both an educational resource and an enjoyable read.

Happy Reading!

Vasant Hegde

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Trust and Training:
The Twin Pillars of a Resilient BFSI Future

- Ann Mary

A Breach That Changed Everything

In 2023, India's top medical institution, AIIMS, was brought to its knees by a ransomware attack. Doctors reverted to pen and paper, patient data was locked, and systems were paralysed for days. Fast forward to 2025, and India has logged over two million cybersecurity incidents, ranking among the top five countries globally hit by ransomware.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has responded with urgency. In its 2025 Financial Stability Report, the RBI declared:

"The expanding scale of digital financial services, cloud-based infrastructure and interconnected systems across sectors has exponentially increased the cyberattack surface."

This isn't just a tech problem. It's a trust problem.

From Handshakes to Hashes: The Evolution of Trust in BFSI

Trust in India's Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector has transformed. What once depended on a handshake across a branch counter now rests on the invisible security of digital systems. Today, trust means strong cybersecurity, responsible data use, and transparency at every step.

With digital banking, AI, and cloud platforms now running the show, customers and regulators expect proof, not promises. The RBI's push for Zero Trust Architecture and AI-aware defence strategies reflects this shift. Every digital interaction must inspire the same confidence that a face-to-face exchange once did.

Regulation as Design, Not Afterthought

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2023 has set a new benchmark for transparency, consent, and accountability. Compliance can no longer be a checkbox; it must be part of the design process.
The RBI's 2025 mandates go further, requiring:

- Continuous threat monitoring
- Micro-segmentation of networks
- Board-level accountability for cybersecurity

The real leaders will be those who treat regulation as a foundation, not a finish line.

Training: The Human Firewall

But here's the truth: policies and systems alone can't create trust. People do.

To keep up with fast-changing risks, BFSI professionals need:

- Deep understanding of digital tools
- Strong ethical judgment
- Solid grasp of data protection laws
- Empathy and clear communication

Even in a digital world, trust still depends on human connection.

Training isn't a one-time project; it's a continuous process. It starts by identifying skill gaps in areas such as cybersecurity, AI, and regulatory awareness, and then closing them through focused, ongoing learning.

When employees understand both technology and regulation, they make faster, smarter, and more ethical decisions. That's what builds confidence among customers, colleagues, and regulators alike.

The Future: Innovation with Integrity

The next generation of BFSI leaders will be those who balance innovation with responsibility. Customers will trust institutions that move quickly but never cut corners. And that trust will be built by people who are trained, aware, and adaptable.

In the end, the strength of the BFSI sector won't come from technology alone. It will come from people who keep learning, and who understand that integrity and skill go hand in hand.

Trust and training aren't side priorities. They are what hold the entire system together.

Case Study: EQUIPPP's PPP Initiative – Bridging the BFSI Skill Gap

In response to the growing skill gap in India's BFSI sector, EQUIPPP launched a pioneering Public-Private Partnership (PPP) initiative aimed at transforming how fresh graduates are trained and placed in financial institutions.

Faced with high attrition rates and a shortage of job-ready talent, a consortium of C-level executives from leading firms like HSBC, JPMorgan, State Street, and MassMutual collaborated with EQUIPPP to design a scalable solution. The result was a multi-layered training ecosystem powered by technology and outcome-based funding.

Key highlights of the initiative:

- AI-Enabled BFSI Hire Portal: Developed by EQUIPPP 3.0 Labs, this platform matches trained candidates with job openings using skill analytics and employer requirements.
- Outcome-Based Funding Model: EQUIPPP DESI set up a revolving fund to cover training costs, making the program accessible to students from Tier II and III cities.
- Impact Assessment via EQUIPPP IX: This platform tracks training outcomes and provides transparency for CSR funders and stakeholders.
- CSR-Driven Expansion: EQUIPPP's Book Building platform helped secure corporate funding by showcasing measurable impact and success stories.

The initiative not only improved placement efficiency but also created a pipeline of digitally skilled, regulation-aware professionals ready to meet the evolving demands of the BFSI sector.

The success of Equippp underscores a powerful truth: when training is strategic, inclusive, and tech-enabled, it becomes the foundation of trust and transformation.

Four Burner Theory

- Bindu Giridhar

Last week, chatting with a colleague over coffee, we were wondering how some people manage to work till late in the night (yes, late in the night) and still turn up fresh and energetic to work the next day. Makes me wonder if these people have superhuman powers like Scarlett Johnson in the movie "Lucy". There are instances where people on leave send emails at late hours because it is important. The same colleague (who is an ex-banker herself) told me that this "zero pendency" discipline comes from working in banks. Especially at the managerial level, where a delay in reply has a domino effect on the speed of work of the people reporting to them. Makes total sense why these people reach where they are.

The respect and awe I feel for these people turn inward, becoming introspection: the struggle to meet a deadline; a house that always needs cleaning; the silent cursing in traffic jams; the lethargy that keeps you from exercising; hitting the snooze button for five more minutes of sleep — and feeling guilty at the same time. These are the common things that define the quiet and everyday struggles of an average person, while others seem to have transcended them.

The quintessential question being: how do some people manage to hold it all together while others are perpetually dousing fires just to make it through the day? In my search for an answer to this predicament, I stumbled upon an article by James Clear "The four-burner theory". In his article, he uses this metaphor to categorise priorities in life. So, imagine you have a four-burner stove. The four burners being: Family, Work, Health and Friends.

Family: This refers to our Parents, spouse, children and siblings. The part that keeps us grounded.

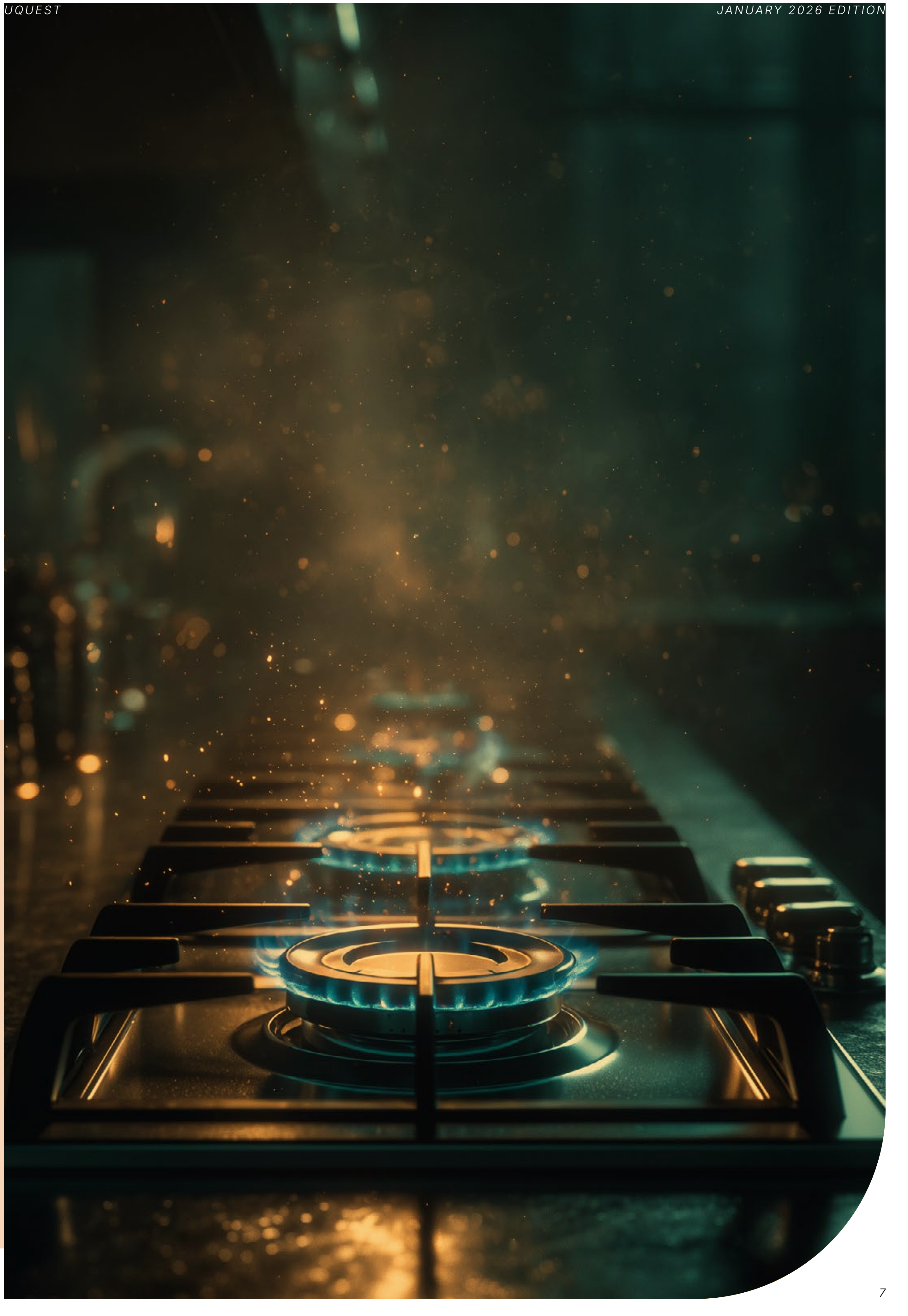
Work: This is obviously the job/ career/ ambition, the one that ensures financial stability.

Health: not just physical, but mental health too. Paying attention to nutrition, exercising regularly, and keeping one stress-free all count when it comes to keeping a person healthy.

Friends: The social circle. The people who make us happy, outside of our family. I think of this as the "Self-Actualisation" in Maslow's Need Hierarchy. This means different things for different people. While for some, this means scaling a mountain or running a marathon, for others, this could be reading a book in a quiet corner with a cup of coffee. So do not judge the Gen Z for their nights of Netflix and Chill, for all you know, it could be their form of self-actualisation, a fleeting peace for the restless soul chasing the YOLO/FOMO what not.

Anybody who has a four-burner stove will tell you that it is not possible to keep all four burners running at full flame. To be successful in any one field, the easiest way is to turn down the flame of the other burners. Success, it seems, is often born of sacrifice. There is a middle path too: You could either keep any two flames up and keep the other two on simmer mode. Or maybe, burn three moderately and let one simmer. The truth is, we are all walking a tightrope, believing we can balance every flame. Yet once we learn to choose, to prioritise, the rope steadies beneath our feet, and what once felt like a perilous act, almost miraculously begins to feel like grace.

Balance, after all, is not a fixed destination to reach, but a rhythm to be built. When one is young, the tendency is to focus on work and Friends. There comes a time when friends take a back seat, and we need to focus on family. The aches and pains draw attention to health. There is no need for perfect harmony. Just the art of adjustment. Perhaps the secret is not in doing it all, but in knowing which light you're willing to keep alive tonight.



Is Banking a **Lucrative Job Anymore?**

- Boby Joseph

The article examines the evolving nature of banking as a career in India and globally, tracing its transformation from a traditionally stable and prestigious occupation to a dynamic, technology-driven sector. Drawing from contemporary trends, it analyzes the advantages, challenges, and changing definitions of what makes banking 'lucrative' today. While job security and social respect continue to attract professionals, new pressures — including sales targets, automation, and fintech competition — have reshaped the employment landscape. The discussion further compares the banking sector with IT and fintech industries, concluding that the lucrativeness of banking now depends on individual preferences, adaptability, and readiness for technological change.

Introduction

The banking sector in India and worldwide has long been considered one of the most prestigious and rewarding career options. From the days when bank jobs symbolized stability and respect to today's fast-paced, tech-driven financial environment, the question naturally arises — is banking still a lucrative career?

A banking job's "goodness" depends on individual priorities, offering advantages like job security, steady growth, and respectable social status, but also presenting challenges such as high work pressure and customer-facing roles. Public sector banks are known for stability and respect, while private banks may offer higher salaries and global exposure but with more stress and less job security. High attrition in the banking sector is driven by intense sales targets, poor work–life balance, and competition from other banks and NBFCs.

The Traditional Appeal of Banking

Historically, banking jobs were highly sought-after, especially in India. Public sector banks offered:

- Job security unmatched by private companies.
- Steady income with structured pay scales.
- Perks such as housing loans, medical coverage, and pensions.
- Social prestige, with a banker's role considered respectable and influential.

For decades, this made banking one of the most lucrative and aspirational career choices, particularly for middle-class families.

Why Banking Remains Lucrative Today

Financial Stability: Public sector banks still offer strong job security and retirement benefits, while private and global banks provide competitive salaries and bonuses.

Diverse Career Opportunities: The industry now covers retail, corporate, SME, investment, and digital banking, offering varied and lucrative specializations.

Global Opportunities: Banking skills are globally transferable, opening doors to careers in hubs like Singapore, London, or Dubai.

Prestige and Professional Growth: Despite disruptions, banking remains respected and offers structured career paths through certifications and promotions.

Challenges that Make Banking Less Attractive

Work Pressure and Stress: Employees, especially in private banks, face stringent sales targets, long hours, and close monitoring.

Technology and Automation: Digital transformation has reduced many traditional roles.

Slow Salary Growth in PSUs: Salary increments are modest compared to IT or consulting firms.

Competition from Fintechs: Fintechs attract young professionals with innovation and higher pay.

Work–Life Balance: Private and foreign banks often demand long hours, affecting well-being.

A Balanced Perspective

The sector has evolved from a "safe government job" to a demanding yet dynamic career. Whether it remains lucrative depends on personal goals:

- Public Sector Banks: Ideal for those valuing job security and steady growth.
- Private/Foreign Banks: Suited for ambitious professionals seeking rapid advancement and higher earnings.
- Specialized Areas (Investment Banking, Risk, Treasury, Fintech): Highly rewarding for skilled professionals.

Banking remains lucrative but in a redefined sense — for those who can handle pressure, adapt to technology, and specialize in high-demand areas.

Career Comparison: Banking vs IT vs Fintech

Aspect	*Banking (PSU + Private)*	*IT Sector*	*Fintech Companies*
Salary Potential	PSU: steady, moderate; Private: high with bonuses	Competitive in MNCs	High for niche roles
Job Security	PSU: very high; Private: moderate	Moderate	Low–moderate
Work Pressure	PSU: moderate; Private: high	Moderate	High, fast-paced
Career Growth	Structured in PSU; fast in private	Rapid for skilled roles	Very fast for top performers
Prestige / Social Status	Still high	Growing	Increasing
Work–Life Balance	PSU: good; Private: poor	Generally better	Often poor
Learning & Skills	Finance, risk, compliance	Coding, digital skills	Tech-finance blend
Future Outlook	Stable in PSU; shifting in private	Strong demand	High growth, volatile

The Future of Banking Jobs in India

Future banking careers will be shaped by technology. Automation will reduce clerical roles, but opportunities will grow in data analytics, AI, blockchain, and customer experience. Success will depend on digital literacy, adaptability, and collaboration with technology. Those who upskill will remain competitive and thrive in the evolving financial ecosystem

A Big Shift: Indians Are Moving Their Savings from Banks to Mutual Funds

Introduction

Indians are changing how they save. Instead of letting their money sit idle in bank accounts, more people are now putting it into mutual funds. This shift gained momentum after the pandemic, as savers sought better returns, gained confidence in investing, and adopted new financial habits. What we're seeing is a significant transformation in how Indian households approach wealth creation and financial planning.

The Divergence Widens

As of June 2024, bank deposits grew at just 11.1% year-on-year while credit growth surged to 17.4%, marking what experts call "the worst deposit crunch in two decades." Meanwhile, mutual fund inflows reached ₹3.94 lakh crore in 2024, more than doubling from ₹1.61 lakh crore in 2023.

The numbers tell the story clearly. Mutual fund assets under management (AUM) jumped from ₹50.78 lakh crore in December 2023 to ₹75 lakh crore by October 2025, an increase of nearly 50 %. In comparison, bank deposits were INR 240 lakh crores. Indian households are clearly rebalancing their financial portfolios.

Structural Shift in Household Savings

For years, bank deposits dominated household savings, accounting for about half between 2005 and 2015. That share has since dropped to around 35%. At the same time, mutual fund assets have multiplied fivefold in the last decade, as millions of new investors entered the equity markets.

The rise of SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) exemplifies this shift. Monthly SIP inflows rose from ₹17,610 crore in December 2023 to ₹25,320 crore in November 2024, representing 48% year-on-year growth. The number of SIP accounts reached 10.23 crore in November 2024, demonstrating mass adoption of disciplined, long-term investing.

What's Driving the Migration

1. Better Returns

The bull market in equities has delivered returns far exceeding fixed deposit rates of 6-7.5%. Equity funds captured 58.97% of India's mutual fund market share in 2024, reflecting investor appetite for wealth creation over capital preservation.

2. Tax Advantages

The 2024 tax reforms raised the long-term capital gains exemption threshold while maintaining a rate of 12.5%, thereby enhancing the post-tax appeal of mutual funds over bank deposits, where interest is taxed annually.

3. Digital Accessibility

Mobile app-enabled UPI micro-SIPs have revolutionised onboarding for first-time investors, making mutual fund investments as convenient as online banking.

4. Demographic Momentum

Younger salaried professionals in higher tax brackets find mutual funds particularly attractive, driving sustained inflows even during market volatility.

Sectoral Performance and Preferences

Sectoral and thematic funds witnessed 79% AUM growth in 2024, rising from ₹2.58 lakh crore to ₹4.61 lakh crore. Small-cap and mid-cap funds also experienced remarkable traction, with small-cap AUM reaching ₹3.26 lakh crore and mid-cap AUM hitting ₹3.89 lakh crore by November 2024.

Passive investing gained momentum with index funds and ETFs witnessing 23% AUM growth to approximately ₹11 lakh crore, driven by 116 new passive fund launches by November.

Banking Sector Challenges

The banking sector faces significant challenges as deposits migrate to higher-yielding investment options. This shift has created liquidity pressures for banks, prompting them to compete more aggressively for deposits by offering higher interest rates. The widening gap between credit growth and deposit growth raises concerns about banks' ability to meet lending demand without compromising their asset-liability management.

Conclusion

The migration of household savings from bank deposits to mutual funds represents more than just a temporary trend—it signals a maturing investment culture in India. As financial literacy improves and digital platforms make investing more accessible, this shift is likely to continue. For investors, this means greater emphasis on portfolio diversification and long-term wealth creation. For the banking sector, it necessitates innovation in product offerings and a reassessment of traditional deposit-gathering strategies.

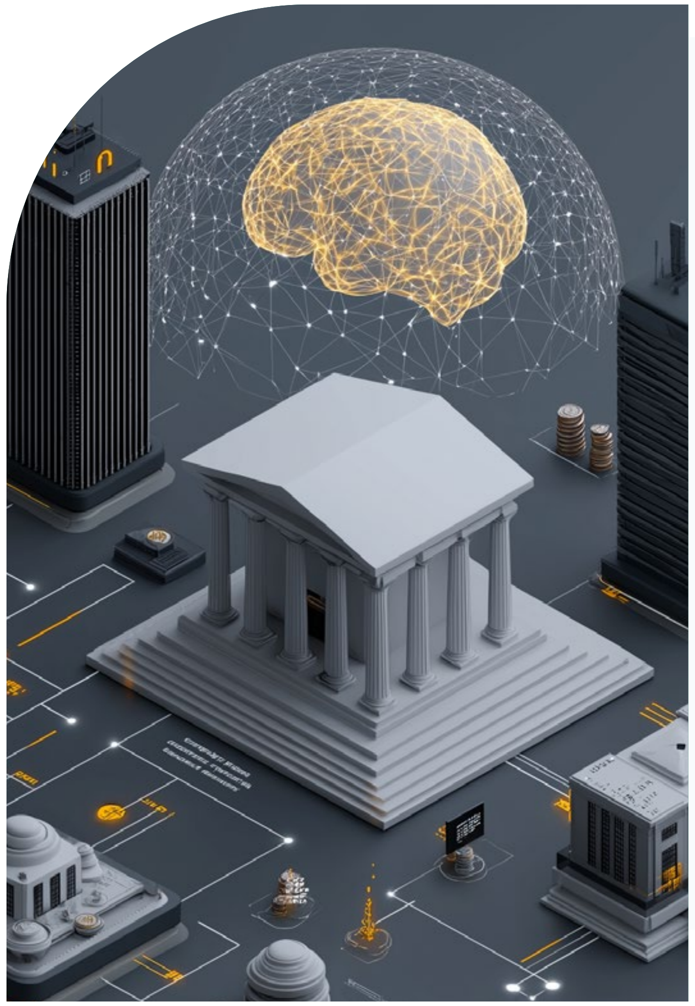
- Chandrashekhar K

How can Growth be **Sustained Through Innovations?**

This year's Nobel Prize for Economics was awarded to Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, and Peter Howitt for their profound & seminal contributions to explaining how innovations & disruptions can fuel sustained economic growth. While half of the prize of a total of 11 million Swedish Kronor went to Joel Mokyr, an Economic historian of Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA, Eitan Berglas School of Economics, Tel Aviv University, Israel for " having identified the prerequisites for sustained growth through technological progress" the other half was shared by Philippe Aghion of College de France & INSEAD, France, The London School of Economics & Peter Howitt of Brown University, USA for the "theory of sustained growth through creative destruction."

Their research provides a comprehensive framework, spanning economic history and modern mathematical modelling, to understand how societies move from stagnation to sustained, long-term prosperity driven by technological progress.

Dutch-born Mokyr's work addresses one of the most fundamental questions in economics: why did economic growth remain stagnant for thousands of years, only to explode into a sustained, self-generating process after the Industrial Revolution? Mokyr's analysis centres on the crucial role of useful knowledge, which he divides into two categories: prescriptive knowledge, or knowing how to do something, which is the practical recipe or instruction & propositional knowledge, or knowing why something works, which is the scientific explanation. Mokyr states that many innovations were based on prescriptive knowledge prior to the Industrial Revolution. Although valuable, these inventions often faded because without an understanding of the underlying science, it was difficult to improve upon them, share the knowledge widely, or build upon them to create the next generation of technology. The shift to a system where technological innovation was increasingly underpinned by propositional knowledge—a scientific understanding of principles — allowed progress to become cumulative and self-sustaining.



Furthermore, Mokyr emphasises the crucial role of a society's openness to new ideas, academic freedom, and a culture that is willing to embrace change and experimentation. His work demonstrates that technological progress is not just a matter of isolated genius, but a function of the entire intellectual and institutional environment that permits knowledge to grow and innovation to lead to growth in some societies more than others. Countries like the USA, which embraced innovation, grew faster than countries like Greece, Rome, or China in the pre-industrial era, whereas others stagnated. The same explains why China has grown faster in the last few decades after shedding its image of xenophobia.

Paris-born Philippe Aghion and Canada-born Peter Howitt shared the other half of the prize for formalising the theory of sustained growth through creative destruction. Drawing inspiration from the work of economist Joseph Schumpeter, Aghion and Howitt built a rigorous mathematical model—known as endogenous growth theory—that explains how continuous innovation is a prerequisite for sustained growth.

Their model captures the dynamic, sometimes painful, process of creative destruction. In this cycle, an innovation (a new and better product or method) is introduced by an upstart firm, which is the creative aspect. This new technology displaces, or renders obsolete, the older products and the established firms that produce them, which is the destructive aspect.

Creative destruction was a concept that the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter explained in his book titled "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy" in 1942. Schumpeter argued that the creative-destructive forces unleashed by capitalism would eventually lead to its death as a system. Companies constantly strive to innovate to stay relevant & stay competitive. There is a clear message for our country & the corporates as well- "do not take growth for granted". Look inward, invest more in research, and innovate to achieve sustained economic growth and reach the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047. The need to innovate & embrace change becomes even more imminent in the wake of tariffs imposed by the US on our goods.

The work of the trio highlights the potential for conflicts. Established firms, fearing destruction, may attempt to block innovations through lobbying, mergers, or by suppressing competition.

Aghion and Howitt's models contend that a government's role is to manage this conflict constructively. Policies must encourage innovation while simultaneously fostering competition through anti-trust and regulation to ensure that incumbent monopolies don't stifle the creative process. While Mokyr provides the historical and institutional foundation, Aghion and Howitt provide the modern theoretical machinery.

In the final analysis, this year's Nobel laureates have given a wake-up call to the policymakers & reminded them that, to avoid returning to historical stagnation, they should not stifle innovation in their societies & should be open to new ideas and academic freedom & support technology, especially when AI is causing so much disruption in our lives.

- Vasant Hegde

When **Shelter** Becomes a **Struggle**

- Chetan B P

We were at a resort for a team outing—laughing, relaxing, enjoying a break from work. Just then, my phone buzzed. I casually checked the message.

"From April, the rent will be ₹25,000. If not okay, you may vacate."

One simple message—and everything changed.

Till then, ₹18,000 felt like a fair price for our small 2BHK in Bangalore. It was more than a flat. My wife had recently got a job nearby. I had found a good school for my little son, who would soon begin learning his first ABCDs. We had made this place our home.

Now, we had to start all over again.

The Silent Pressure of Renting

What hurt the most was not just the rent hike, but how it came. No call. No discussion. Just a message with two choices: pay more or leave.

Sadly, this isn't new. In my area, rent seems to go up based on what brokers, watchmen, or other landlords decide. There's no clear rule. No proper system. It's almost as if there's an unspoken network that controls everything.

This is what many of us face—quiet pressure, little support, and rising costs.

The House Hunt Maze

We thought we'd find a new place easily. There are websites, apps, and people saying it's simple.

But here's what really happens:

- Flats that disappear as soon as you call.
- Landlords with endless conditions—no bachelors, no kids, no cooking.
- Small houses with huge rents.
- Brokers showing the same flat again and again, each time with a new price.

It's not a house hunt—it's a test of patience.

Should We Just Buy?

We thought of buying a house. But that brings its own worries.

We'd have to withdraw money from our investments for the down payment. The EMI is almost double the rent. And what if we need to sell the house later? Will we even get a good price? Also, the paperwork is scary—A Khata, B Khata, approvals, and missing documents. One small mistake can cause big trouble. Buying a home should give peace of mind—not sleepless nights.

What Needs to Change?

There should be some simple rules to protect renters. Something that stops sudden hikes and unfair practices.

And for buyers, we need clear pricing, clean paperwork, and honest builders. People should feel safe about investing their savings in a home, not worried.

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The Final Thought

- This rent hike wasn't just about money. It made me realise how unstable city life can be.
- When even having a roof over your head feels uncertain, how can you feel settled?
- We don't need luxury. We just need fairness. A house to stay in peace. And a system that doesn't turn shelter into a struggle.

ABYB Zero food waste drive

In alignment with our unwavering commitment to environmental responsibility, Axis Bank Young Bankers Program (ABYBP) launched the Zero Food Wastage Drive at Axis Vertical in October 2024. This campaign is a continuous and conscious movement toward sustainability, aimed at reducing food waste and fostering mindful consumption within our campus community.

Food waste is not just a cafeteria issue—it's a global challenge. Every morsel wasted represents depleted resources, unnecessary energy consumption, and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Recognising this, we decided to start where we could make an immediate impact: Axis Vertical Dining Hall / Mess.

The Journey Toward Zero Waste

Awareness from Day One

Every Young Banker is introduced to the initiative during batch orientation, embedding the principle of mindful consumption early in their journey.

Creative Engagement

We made sustainability engaging through mimes, slogans, placards, and interactive sessions, ensuring the message resonates in memorable ways.

#EveryBiteCounts | Manipal Academy of BFSI initiative

Faculty-led Counselling

Faculty members, on a rotational basis, actively monitor the cafeteria during lunch. Beyond observation, they counsel trainees on the importance of taking only what they can consume, reinforcing responsibility.

Behavioural Nudges

Gentle reminders, peer motivation, reward systems, and impact stories encourage trainees to take ownership of their conscious choices.

Zero Food Waste

The Impact

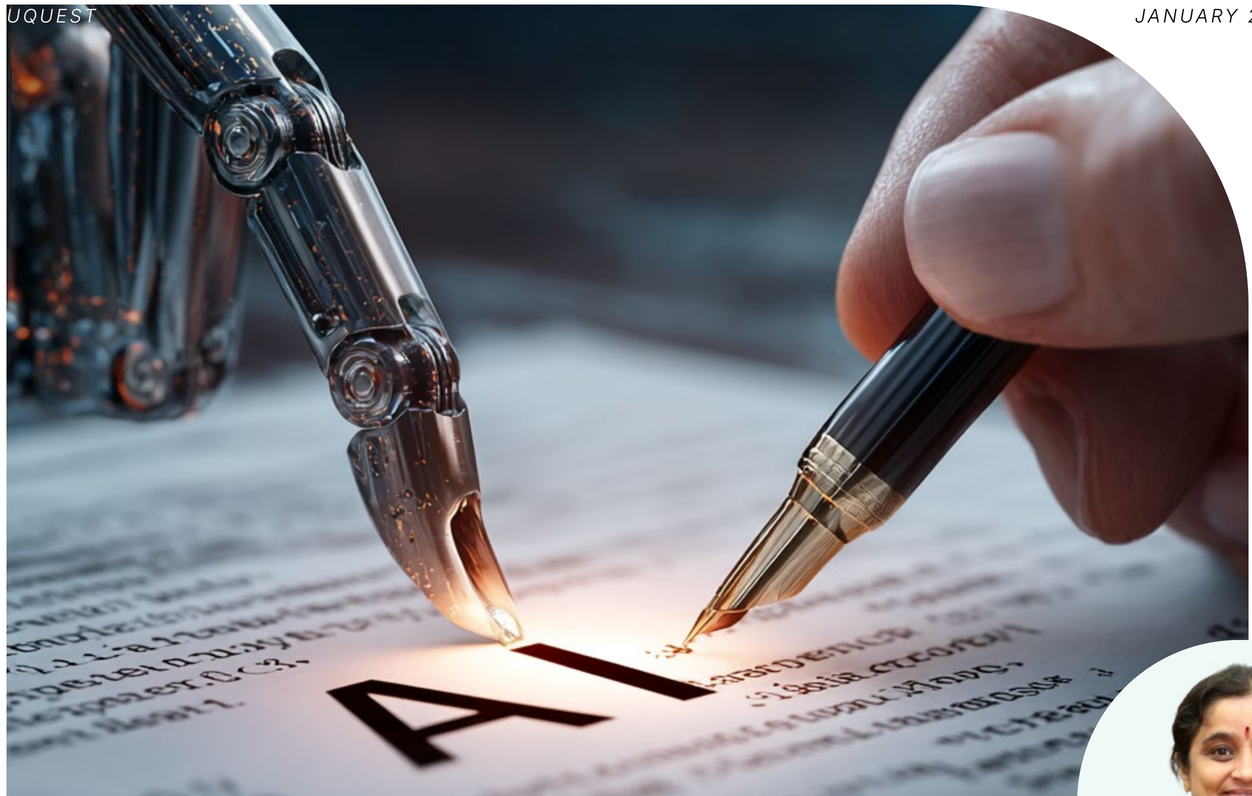
We've proudly reduced food wastage from an average of 65–75 kg per lunch to just a few hundred grams. This remarkable shift reflects consistent effort, creative communication, and community involvement.

But the impact goes beyond numbers. This drive has nurtured mindfulness, responsibility, and environmental consciousness among our Young Bankers. It's a testament to how small, sustained actions can lead to meaningful change.

More Than a Drive—A Culture

Through this initiative, we're not just reducing food wastage—we're cultivating a culture of respect for resources. In its truest sense, this is what 'Going Green' looks like.

- Sarika Hegde



AI for Empowering Educators: A Deep Dive into AI Tools for Teaching and Research

- Chetana BS

In an era where artificial intelligence is reshaping every industry, education stands at a pivotal crossroads. A comprehensive Faculty Development Program- EDGE 2025 was organised by MABFSI and Ms. Harpreet Gill demonstrated how educators can harness AI tools to enhance their teaching methodologies and research workflows—without requiring any technical expertise. The extract of the FDP is shared herewith for the benefit of Academic community.

Beyond the Fear: AI as an Educational Ally

The session began by addressing the elephant in the room: many educators view AI with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension. The central message was clear—AI isn't here to replace educators; it's here to assist educators in delivering better educational experiences and conducting more efficient research.

Navigating the AI Landscape

Understanding which AI tool to use for specific tasks is crucial. The following frontier models, each with distinct strengths can be considered by Educators.

1. ChatGPT emerged as the versatile generalist, ideal for brainstorming and general-purpose tasks. Educators can customize it extensively, creating Custom GPTs for repetitive academic tasks like generating lesson plans, quiz questions, and slide outlines. ChatGPT's agent mode can automate routine workflows, such as browsing the web daily to deliver AI news summaries at scheduled times or creating organized Google sheets with research paper links. With recent integrations, ChatGPT can now connect with Canva for creating class presentations, google suit and Coursera for recommending learning materials—all within a single interface. ChatGPT Go is free for one year from 4th November 2025.
2. Claude has exceptional ability to handle large documents and assist with both qualitative and quantitative research. Educators can upload Excel datasets to generate graphs and identify trends or synthesize literature from multiple PDFs—a game-changer for research assistance.
3. Gemini integrated with Google's ecosystem, offers unique advantages for educators already using Google Workspace. When paired with NotebookLM, it becomes a powerful tool for converting complex research papers into digestible formats: mind maps, quizzes, and even podcast summaries. The free access for students and educators makes it particularly valuable for classroom applications.
4. Perplexity stands out for fact-checking and academic research, providing citation-backed search results that ensure credibility—essential for scholarly work. Currently, Perplexity is open for all airtel subscribers.

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The Art of Effective Prompting

The most valuable session highlight was on prompt engineering. Using frameworks like COACH and RTF, educators were demonstrated on how to transform vague questions into structured, actionable prompts that yield reliable, context-rich responses. Tools like Prompt Genie were demonstrated to help faculty members craft better prompts without needing to become technical experts.

The concept of "magic keywords" proved particularly popular. Simple commands like "QuizGPT" can instantly generate multiple-choice questions from any text block, while "ELI5" (Explain Like I'm 5) can simplify complex concepts for younger audiences. "TL;DR" provides quick summaries, and "Humanise" can transform technical jargon into conversational, relatable content—perfect for engaging students on platforms like LinkedIn.

Specialized Tools for Modern Teaching:

- Heygen enables educators to create AI avatars for video lectures, offering flexibility in content delivery.
- Eleven Labs provides voice cloning capabilities, allowing teachers to produce consistent audio content for lessons.
- Napkin AI converts abstract ideas into clean, professional diagrams—ideal for visual learners.
- For educators juggling multiple responsibilities, Wispr Flow offers hands-free dictation for notes and research prompts, while Gamma simplifies the creation of professional presentations through AI-powered design.
- The resources like TAAFT (There's An AI For That), An AI tool directory will help educators to find the Right AI Tool For Any Task.

The Path Forward

The faculty development program successfully demystified AI for educators, proving that these tools are accessible, practical, and transformative. By focusing on non-technical applications and real classroom scenarios, the session equipped faculty members with immediately applicable skills.

The key takeaway resonated clearly: AI in education is not about automation or replacement—it's about augmentation and empowerment. When educators embrace these tools thoughtfully, they can spend less time on administrative tasks and more time doing what they do best: inspiring and guiding students toward meaningful learning experiences.

Intensive drive to clear **Unclaimed Bank Deposits**

> ***"Unclaimed deposits are not mere entries on paper; they represent the hard-earned savings of ordinary families"***
>
> \- Union Finance Minister

Unclaimed bank deposits are an often-overlooked pool of citizens' savings — funds left idle in inoperative accounts, unclaimed matured fixed deposits, or accounts of deceased depositors whose heirs haven't come forward to claim the money. Recognising both the social injustice and the avoidable leakage of household resources, the Finance Ministry has launched an intensive, nationwide programme to trace and return these funds to their rightful owners, while improving processes to prevent the problem from recurring. Tżhe campaign — framed around awareness, accessibility and action — was unveiled by the Finance Minister as part of a broader push to make public money tangible and retrievable for ordinary families.

- Dhananjay Rai

Main elements of the Program:

The initiative combines the following three complementary strands:

1. A concentrated public awareness campaign to alert citizens about dormant and unclaimed assets and how to check them
2. Operational changes and incentives for banks to accelerate pay-out and simplify claim procedures
3. Digital and field-level access points so claimants can reactivate accounts or claim amounts without prohibitive friction.

The authorities have emphasised an easy "check-and-claim" route - including use of the RBI's UDGAM (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access Information) portal, video-KYC and assistance from bank branches or business correspondents — to cut red tape for small depositors.

https://ddnews.gov.in/en/fm-nirmala-sitharaman-to-launch-nationwide-awareness-drive-on-unclaimed-financial-assets-from-gandhinagar-on-oct-4/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Regulatory and operational measures:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reinforced those efforts with a targeted, time-bound scheme that encourages banks to prioritise payout of inoperative accounts and unclaimed deposits. The one-year facilitation scheme, which came into effect on October 1, 2025 and runs through September 30, 2026, sets out simplified processes for activation of dormant accounts, modalities for transferring long-unclaimed funds to the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEAF) where applicable, and incentives for outreach and verification. Banks are required to improve reporting, transfer long-standing unclaimed amounts as per RBI directions, and assist depositors more proactively in claiming their money.

Why is this important?

The financial scale of the problem is large. Multiple official and media estimates unclaimed and inoperative deposits together at tens of thousands of crores of rupees. As of mid-2025, the commonly quoted figures range from roughly ₹67,000 crore of unclaimed deposits (reported around June 2025) to over ₹75,000–78,000 crore. Some analyses add a further stock of inoperative balances that have yet to be moved to DEAF, taking the total "sleeping" public money even higher. In many districts and localities, the problem is visible on the ground — for example, local campaigns have identified hundreds of crores in single districts where thousands of accounts remain dormant. These numbers underline both the social importance and the practical payoff of an effective recovery drive.

Practical benefits and expected outcomes:

For individuals and families, reclaiming unclaimed deposits can finance urgent needs - education, healthcare, or closing short-term liquidity gaps. For the financial system, clearing inactive accounts reduces operational cost, fraud risk and customer-service backlogs. The public push, coupled with easier KYC (including video KYC) and promised incentives for banks, is expected to accelerate claims, reduce the stock of funds that languish in limbo, and improve data quality across banking ledgers. Local campaigns - for instance, district-level drives running alongside the national awareness push - will help reach elderly account holders and families of deceased depositors.

Challenges and safeguards:

Despite the positive thrust, challenges remain: locating beneficiaries, verifying identity (especially for deceased-account claims), and preventing misuse by intermediaries. The authorities have therefore stressed transparent channels (official portals like UDGAM, bank branches and documented KYC), time-stamping of transfers to DEAF, and clear public guidance on documentation required to claim amounts.

Conclusion:

The intensive programme to clear unclaimed deposits is a timely mix of public awareness, regulatory nudges and operational simplifications that targets a substantial pool of citizen savings - conservatively estimated in the tens of thousands of crores of rupees. Success will depend on rigorous implementation at the bank branch level, sustained outreach to vulnerable groups, and continued transparency so that reclaimed funds reach rightful owners, not paperwork. If the early months of the drive reduce even a fraction of the current stock of unclaimed balances, the social and economic payoff will be significant.

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Tech Update from the **Eye of a Millennial**

- Kavita Sinha

Technology. Digital transformation. AI revolution. Blockchain. Metaverse.

If you're not overwhelmed by these buzzwords yet, congratulations—you're probably lying. Everyone's talking about the digital boom, and honestly? It's both exciting and utterly exhausting.

Before we go further, quick intro—I'm a younger millennial. Why does this matter? Because I'm part of that unique generation that remembers life before email addresses were mandatory and mobile phones weren't attached to our palms like extra limbs.

To access information, I actually walked to a library. I'd flip through dusty books, scribble notes, then years later, Google arrived and suddenly everything shifted online. Remember those summer holiday gatherings with cousins where we'd quiz each other for hours? "What's the capital of Assam?" "Who's the president of the US?" Whoever answered the most questions was crowned the genius of the family.

But now, I find myself confused—is this "knowledge" or just "memory"? Because in 2025, do you really need to remember these things? ChatGPT, Gemini, and Perplexity are ready to answer anything faster than you can type.

Are AI Tools Making Life Easy or Becoming Our Competitors?

This question keeps me up at night. Here's a relatable example for professors: students used to go home with doubts, check textbooks, and discuss them the next day. Now? They fact-check your mid-lecture with information from research papers published hours ago.

The Memory Debate

Our grandparents remembered dozens of phone numbers. Our parents navigated cities without GPS. We millennials bridge both worlds—remember some things, Google the rest. Gen Z? They've never known life without instant answers.

Scientists refer to this as "cognitive offloading. Some say we're freeing our brains for creativity and higher thinking. Why memorise facts when you can synthesise information? Truth is, we're not getting dumber—just redistributing our mental resources.

Technology in Banking: Convenience Meets Confusion

This is huge in banking. Remember physically going to banks, standing in queues, waiting days for transactions? Now we have UPI, digital wallets, neobanks, and cryptocurrency—all on our phones.

India's UPI revolution has been incredible. Splitting bills, paying vendors, transferring money—done in seconds. However, here's the catch: transactions have become easier, but financial literacy has become more complex.

Banking apps use AI to predict spending, suggest savings, and detect fraud. CRED gamifies credit card payments. Super convenient—until something breaks and you realise you don't fully understand the system holding your savings.

Digital fraud has evolved, too. Phishing, fake payment apps, SIM swapping—the threats are real. We trust apps downloaded five minutes ago with our life savings, yet we're sceptical of bank managers we've known for years. We've traded human trust for algorithmic trust without fully understanding these systems.

So, Is Technology a Boon or a Bane?

Frustratingly, both. Technology democratized information, education, and financial services. Farmers check market prices digitally. Small-town students access world-class education online. Transformative stuff.

But it's also shortened attention spans, increased anxiety, created fraud avenues, and made us dependent on systems we don't understand. More connected yet lonely. More informed yet confused.

The Thrill of Staying Updated

Here's my takeaway: you need to continually upgrade yourself and stay current with technology. Resisting won't help. And honestly? There's a genuine thrill in staying up-to-date with the latest trends and adapting to new tools.

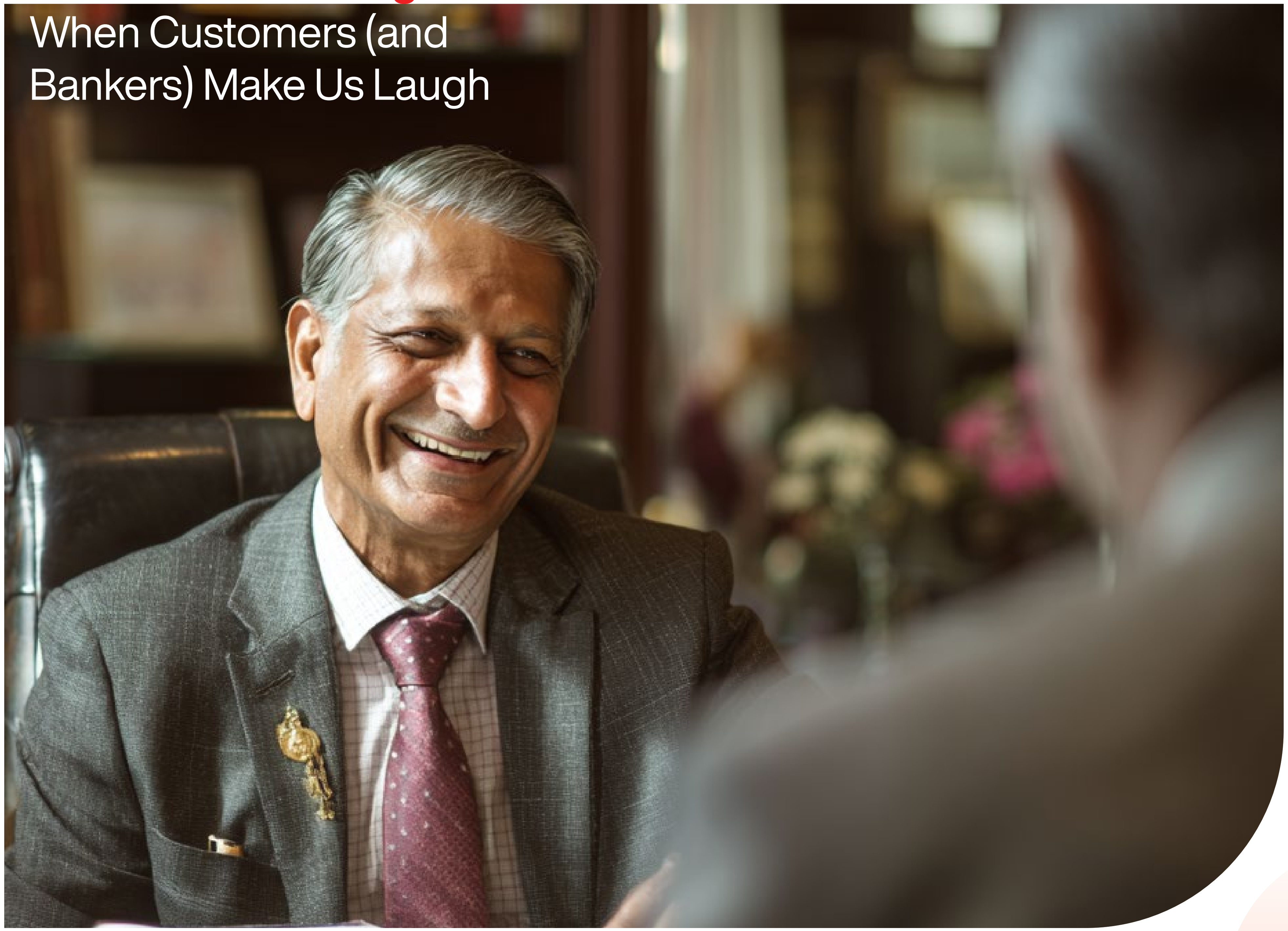
When you're first in your circle to discover that game-changing app, or you understand new tech well enough to explain it—that's satisfying. Mastering new payment systems and catching trends early gives you an edge and makes life interesting.

Those who evolve aren't just surviving—they're thriving. They seamlessly switch between banking apps, leverage technology for productivity, and adapt to innovations without fear.

So yes, technology can indeed be overwhelming. Yes, it's both a boon and a bane. But ultimately, the excitement of being part of this digital revolution, of continuously learning and adapting—that's what makes being a millennial in this era genuinely exhilarating.

Stay curious, stay updated, and embrace the change. In this fast-paced digital world, those who continue to learn are the ones who continue to win. And honestly? I'm okay with that. Though I do still remember that Dispur is the capital of Assam, just in case the internet ever goes down.

Humour in Banking:
When Customers (and Bankers) Make Us Laugh



Banking is often viewed as a serious business — one full of numbers, compliance, and deadlines. Yet, those who've spent even a few months in a branch know that humour walks in with every customer. From funny forms to unexpected replies, the banking floor can sometimes feel like a stage for comedy sketches.

After all, when money meets human emotion, the result can be truly entertaining!

1. The Curious Case of the Signature

One of the most common sources of humour in any branch is — without a doubt — the signature.

A customer once insisted that his cheque wasn't cleared because "the ink was too honest to match." When the banker politely explained that the signature didn't match the specimen, the gentleman sighed and said, "Oh, that must be my weekend signature!"

Another customer, a retired teacher, continued to practice his signature before signing the form. When the banker suggested he could take his time, he smiled and said, "I'm not signing for the bank; I'm signing for my pension. It deserves a little respect!"

2. The Loan Confusion

Loan queries often bring a special brand of laughter.

A young man once walked into a branch and asked confidently, "Sir, I need a personal loan."
"Sure," replied the banker, "what's the purpose?"
The customer leaned forward and whispered, "It's personal, sir."

On another occasion, a customer requested a "loan against property." When asked for ownership proof, he said, "It's in my mother-in-law's name. She doesn't know yet, but she'll be very proud once it's sanctioned!"

Sometimes, the simplest misunderstanding makes the whole day brighter.

3. Digital Banking Drama

With mobile apps and net banking taking over, the fun has moved online, too.

A customer once called the helpline, furious:
"Your app is cheating me!"
The executive, alarmed, asked, "What happened, sir?"
"Every time I type my password, it changes to dots!"

Another classic moment came when a customer visited the branch after trying online KYC. "Your system rejected my photo," he complained. "But sir, did you take a clear picture?" the banker asked. "Of course!" he replied indignantly. "It was my passport-size photo — I just took a photo of that photo with my phone!"

Technology changes fast, but human creativity changes faster.

- M Krishnan

Overworked, Not Inefficient: The Real Story of India's Public Sector Bank Employees

- Lalan Mishra

Many people believe public sector bank jobs are easy, but the reality is entirely different. With the rapid growth of digital banking, new government schemes, rising competition, and stricter rules, public bank staff now face heavier workloads and increased accountability.

This study compares the State Bank of India (a public bank) and HDFC Bank (a private bank) using data from the RBI and other trusted sources. It examines customer load, deposits per employee, profit, and workload. The findings show that public bank employees work under high pressure yet remain efficient, skilled, and loyal.

Public banks also play a crucial role in reaching rural areas and promoting financial inclusion, as well as government programs. The study concludes that SBI staff are overworked—not inefficient—and that improving technology, training, and people-friendly policies can boost performance and reduce stress.

Numbers Tell the Story

Bank	Employees	Branches	Customers	Deposits per Employee
SBI (Public)	2.36 lakh	22,640	55 crores	₹ 2.3 crore
HDFC (Private)	2.15 lakh	9,143	10 crores	₹ 1.2 crore

Each SBI employee handles five times more customers and twice the deposits of a private bank employee.

Why PSB Employees Work Harder

- More Branches to Manage: SBI staff manage more than twice the number of branches.
- Higher Customer Load: Each SBI employee serves around 238 customers daily, compared to about 48 in HDFC.
- Manual Work: Many rural branches still rely on paper-based processes.
- Government Schemes: Programs like PMJDY and PMEGP add work beyond regular banking.

Picture a small-town SBI branch: one employee may spend the day opening accounts, linking mobile numbers, and explaining government schemes to hundreds of villagers. In contrast, a private bank in the same town usually serves fewer customers, most of whom use digital channels.

Key Point: PSB "slowness" is not inefficiency—it reflects the sheer volume and complexity of their work.

Technology Gap Adds Pressure

Private banks have long used modern digital tools for payments, transfers, and onboarding. Many public banks, especially in rural areas, still rely on outdated systems, which increases employee workload. But this gap is narrowing fast. With tools like UPI 2.0, AI-based credit checks, chatbots, and digital onboarding, PSBs are entering a smarter, faster era of banking. These technologies reduce repetitive work, improve accuracy, and enable employees to focus on delivering real customer service and financial awareness.

Stable Staff vs. High Attrition

- PSBs: Low attrition ensures consistent service and long-term customer relationships.
- Private Banks: High attrition (~25% in 2024) adds training pressure and operational challenges.

ESG and Awareness Initiatives: The Hidden Workload

Beyond banking, PSBs shoulder a social mission. They organise financial literacy camps, digital awareness drives, and ESG-linked programs across rural and semi-urban India. These activities empower citizens and promote sustainable finance, but also add to staff workload. Each initiative extends the social impact of PSBs while demanding extra time and effort from their teams.

Quick Stats Recap

Metric	SBI (PSB)	HDFC (Private)
Customer load per employee	238	48
Deposits per employee	₹ 2.3 crore	₹ 1.2 crore
Branch coverage	22,640	9,143
Employee attrition	Low	≈25%

How to Support PSB Staff

- Invest in Technology: Reduce manual work and speed up operations.
- Rethink Performance Metrics: Include social impact and outreach, not just profits.
- Training & Development: Skilled staff handle complex tasks faster
- Plan Branch Networks Smartly: Consolidate overlapping urban branches without hurting service

Conclusion: Overworked, Not Inefficient

Public sector banks are not inefficient—they are simply overworked. SBI staff handle a larger number of customers, branches, and deposits, while also managing social and government responsibilities. Private banks may appear faster and more profitable, but PSBs remain the foundation of financial inclusion and economic stability. With modern technology, strong policy support, and fair recognition of their work, PSBs can remain efficient, motivated, and inclusive, thereby powering India's growth across every region.

Vision 2030: The Road Ahead

By 2030, India's public banks aim to be digitally strong, customer-friendly, and sustainability-driven. Through AI-enabled operations, green finance, and deep rural outreach, PSBs will combine innovation with their mission of serving every citizen while driving national growth.

RRR in Banking

Banking has always occupied a unique and powerful position in every economy. It is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, touching every sector and every segment of society. Without a robust banking system, it is impossible to envision sustainable economic growth. With the rise of digital tools, banking has become faster and more convenient for customers, while also reducing the operational load on bankers.

However, this has created a new challenge: How can banks strengthen business growth and customer engagement when footfall is reducing in the branches? As digital adoption widens, the physical distance between customers and bankers increases, making relationship-building more difficult.

In this context, the concept of RRR becomes crucial. Though the acronym has multiple interpretations in banking, it can be meaningfully applied across five key areas: Customer Delight, Customer Satisfaction, Product Sales, Regulatory Directives, and Customer Service. Together, they form a practical framework for strengthening trust, improving business, and enhancing customer experience.

1. RRR for Customer Delight

Customer Delight goes beyond satisfaction. It reflects moments when a customer feels truly valued. For this, bankers must focus on:

Rhythm

Bankers must match their rhythm with the customer's expectations. Understanding the customer's needs through profiling, analysis, and careful listening ensures the right product is matched to the right requirement. When service is in sync with the customer's life situation, trust deepens.

Rigor

Rigor means adopting a disciplined and systematic approach to customer service. It involves maintaining transparency, consistency, and professionalism across all interactions. When rigor becomes a habit, customers experience predictability and reliability.

Real

Customers expect 100% clarity in banking transactions—there is no room for ambiguity. Realness means honesty, transparency, and full disclosure. Trust acts as the bridge between the banker and the customer, and this trust must be nurtured through authentic communication.

2. RRR for Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction is about meeting expectations, whereas delight comes from exceeding them. Here, the RRR approach helps bankers build stronger relationships:

Respectful

Customers must be treated with dignity regardless of account balance or status. A banker should offer the same respect they would expect when they visit another bank. Mutual respect builds long-lasting relationships.

Receptive

Bankers should listen with openness. Customer suggestions shared during branch visits or Customer Service Committee meetings can lead to meaningful improvements. A good listener becomes a better advisor, and a better advisor becomes a successful seller.

Real

This refers to the dedication and devotion bankers must show in serving customers. Courteous behaviour, sincerity, and genuine interest can turn customers into ambassadors of the bank. When customers trust the brand and the banker, loyalty naturally increases.

3. RRR for Product Sales

Sales is often seen as challenging, but when approached ethically and intelligently, it becomes an opportunity to solve real problems.

Right Product

Bankers must fully understand product features, benefits, and suitability. Product knowledge is essential to identify what truly fits the customer's needs. Mis-selling creates long-term damage and erodes trust.

Right Customer

Profiling helps identify who the product is intended for. For example, lockers are suitable for households with valuables, not for an 18-year-old; similarly, a two-wheeler loan is irrelevant for a senior citizen.

Right Time

The timing of a sales conversation is critical. By engaging with customers regularly, bankers can identify the right moments when financial solutions are most relevant.

4. RRR for Regulatory Directives

Regulatory compliance is the backbone of banking stability. The three Rs reinforce responsible and ethical operations.

Rational

The Reserve Bank of India issues guidelines to protect depositors and ensure smooth operations. Rationality means understanding the purpose behind regulations and applying them consistently to safeguard the banking system.

Rules

Rules must be followed by both bankers and customers. For example, customers must maintain minimum balances, and banks may levy charges when rules are not followed. Though some rules may seem rigorous, they exist to maintain financial discipline and protect interests.

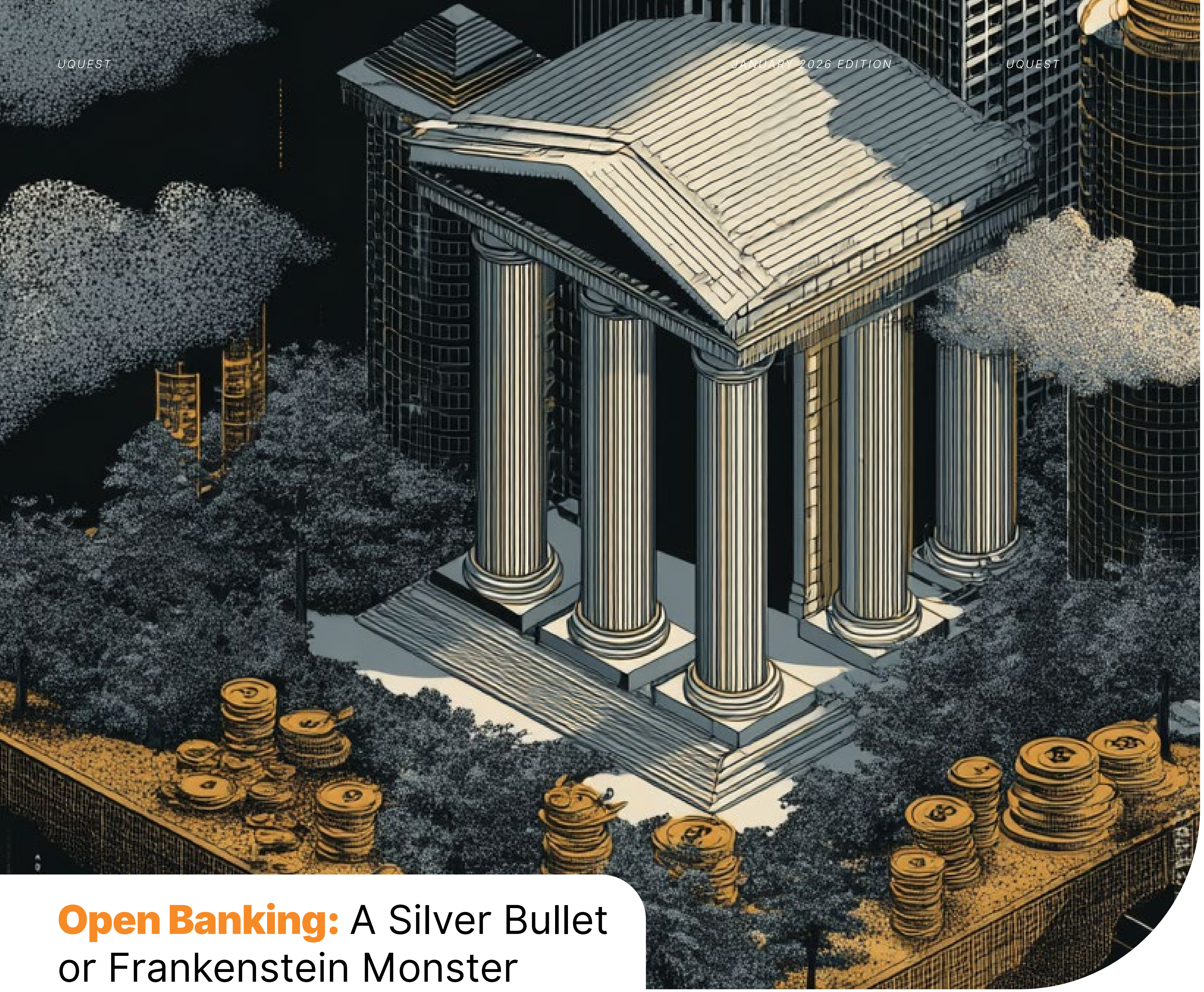
Regulations

Regulations such as KYC and AML are critical for preventing fraud and money laundering. Due diligence is non-negotiable.

Conclusion

The banker–customer relationship follows the timeless principle: as you sow, so you reap. Customers depend on banks for financial growth; banks depend on customers for business growth. Together, they uphold the financial health of the economy.
By adopting the RRR framework, bankers can strengthen trust, drive sustainable growth, and uphold the true spirit of modern banking.

- Pradeep Naidu



Open Banking: A Silver Bullet or Frankenstein Monster

In folklore, a Silver Bullet was a magical weapon, associated with hunting supernatural beings like vampires or zombies, while Frankenstein Monster, refers to a creature from gothic fiction, wherein the creature turned against its creator 'Frankenstein', seeking revenge, by killing all of Frankenstein's loved ones. While multiple novellas have been written and movies produced around the themes of silver bullet and Frankenstein monster, as a reader, one might be left wondering, as to why I am referring to these mythical creatures. Right since my childhood, I was fascinated by the supernatural and same has been my relationship with banking and financial services.

Let us understand 'OPEN BANKING' in layman terms. Open banking is a system where banks and other financial institutions open up their data for secure sharing with third-party developers and service providers, typically via application programming interfaces (APIs).To simplify things lets, take a slow-motion view of the definition and understand these APIs as digital bridges — rulebooks that allow two different software systems to communicate safely. Imagine one system saying, "Here's the data you can use," and the other responding, "Here's how I'll use it, according to your rules." This interaction, when done securely, enables customers to access a far richer ecosystem of financial services — from budgeting tools and investment platforms to loan comparison apps — without stepping inside a bank branch.

The Rise of Open Banking

The idea of open banking did not appear overnight. While India, in the early 2000s was experimenting cautiously from protectionism toward liberalization, the West was already reimagining finance for the digital era. Henry Chesbrough's 2003 theory of "open innovation" championed collaboration over isolation. The concept took regulatory form in 2015, when the European Parliament passed the Second Payment Services Directive (PSD2), compelling banks to share data with authorized third parties securely. It marked a radical shift — from banks guarding data to banks empowering customers through it.

THE YIN: The Silver Bullet of Change

Supporters of open banking see it as the ultimate democratizer — a silver bullet aimed at the heart of financial exclusion. It shifts ownership of financial data from institutions to individuals, allowing customers to choose how, when, and with whom to share their information. By enabling innovation and competition, open banking could help customers access better deals on loans, insurance, payments, and wealth management from any provider .

In theory, its motives are noble. It promises transparency, customer empowerment, cost-efficient financial products, and a vibrant environment that encourages fintech start-ups to challenge traditional players. For a country like India, this promise holds exceptional appeal. Despite decades of reforms — from bank nationalization to liberalization, followed by ambitious financial inclusion programs like Jan Dhan Yojana — financial access remains uneven like the immortal vampire. For those who don't have a bank account, and many others who have accounts but limited access to credit and investment products. For them, open banking could be the silver bullet that finally kills the monster of financial exclusion.

THE YANG: The Shadow of the Monster

But what's a good story if it does not have a good climax and a super villain? So, to play the devil's advocate, one may argue that with open banking, banks open their APIs to third-party fintech companies, which may come with security risks. Hackers can target third-party apps and excessive access privileges could be taken, for their own personal gains. Also, scrupulous actors may be able to trick banking customers and third-party companies with phishing scams. Further, in a country like India, where financial literacy is a challenge, are we not opening a large section of our citizenry to financial subterfuge and digital colonialism? Additionally, data and personal information of fellow citizens can be social engineered, thereby creating a 'Frankenstein Monster' that gobbles its own creator. For a country, that was once colonised for 300 odd years, this monster has the potential for financially and digitally colonising us for many future generations and hence careful consideration is needed.

I wish I had an answer to this monstrous problem. As they say in the world of fables- "Best Stories are those, which are open to interpretation and direction. My whole idea behind writing this article was to seek answers and get clarity as well as viewpoint from the esteemed readers of this magazine. I am reminded of the quote from spider-man- "With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility".

- Pralay Dey

ACE Bankers:

Powering TMB's Journey Beyond Boundaries

- Lata U B

A new chapter of transformation unfolded as Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB), in partnership with UNext Manipal Academy of BFSI, inaugurated its **ACE Bankers Program** - a flagship initiative to nurture future-ready banking professionals on **29th October 2025**. The event marked not just the beginning of a training journey, but a strategic step in TMB's mission to modernize, expand, and strengthen its national presence.

Leading the Change: MD & CEO's Vision

In his address, **Mr. Salee S. Nair, MD & CEO**, shared an inspiring roadmap for TMB's next phase of growth. He emphasized that the bank is **entering a new era of transformation** - investing in technology, modernization, and **expansion beyond Tamil Nadu**, where currently 25% of its branches operate. Over the next three years, TMB plans to grow to 800 branches, with 35% outside Tamil Nadu, and achieve 13% growth in deposits and 14–15% in advances this year.

He underscored that the **ACE Bankers Program**, designed and delivered in partnership with Manipal Academy of BFSI will be instrumental in bridging the performance gap between branches within and outside Tamil Nadu.

"Our Head Office may not always know what the market truly needs. But you- our ACE Bankers, will be the eyes, ears, and voice of TMB on the ground," he said. "Be a sponge- absorb every skill, every value, every learning."

Looking forward, he envisioned TMB doubling its business from ₹1 lakh crore today to the next **₹1 lakh crore by FY2030**, and contributing to India's vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**. "With the energy of our young ACE Bankers, we aim to become a **₹25-lakh-crore bank by 2047**," he asserted.

The Human Edge in the Digital Era

Addressing the budding bankers, **Mr. Vincent M. Devassy, Executive Director**, reflected on how banking has evolved, with **over 95% of transactions now happening digitally.** "What, then, is the role of people in branches?" he asked. "It is to **connect emotionally with customers,** reach out rather than wait for them, and build trust."
He emphasised that **product knowledge**, conviction, and service excellence remain the heart of banking.

"Today's banker must blend IQ with EQ. Technology may make processes faster, but only empathy builds relationships," he said.

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Legacy, Loyalty, and Leadership

Mr. Ramesh D, EVP–HR, highlighted TMB's **104-year legacy**, rooted in community development and entrepreneurship. He spoke about the bank's **recent launch of the Global NRI Centre**, and emphasized the vital role of employees in shaping the bank's digital future.

"You are our star opening batsmen in this innings of digital transformation," he said. "For TMB, people are not employees—they are family, human capital and our greatest strength."

The ACE Promise

Mr. Ramesh D, EVP–HR, highlighted TMB's 104-year legacy, rooted in community development and entrepreneurship. He spoke about the bank's recent launch of the Global NRI Centre, and emphasized the vital role of employees in shaping the bank's digital future.

"You are our star opening batsmen in this innings of digital transformation," he said. "For TMB, people are not employees—they are family, human capital and our greatest strength."

Quotes:

"Be a sponge - absorb every skill, every value, every learning."
— MD & CEO, TMB

"Blend IQ with EQ - that's the winning formula for modern banking."
— Executive Director, TMB

"Our employees are our family - the real strength behind TMB's growth."
— EVP–HR, TMB

The Great Pen Robbery: Unsolved Mystery

Even in this Digital era, some mysteries remain unsolved or rather pen-ding!

Let me take you to a situation – feel that every bank has its mysteries — maybe it's a missing voucher or a forgotten login password, or the Billion-Dollar question: Who took the pen?

Now I want to tell you that, yes, even in 2025, when everything from KYC, E-KYC to customer feedback has gone digital, one poor instrument continues to escape logic and security: the Branch Pen. It disappears faster than an interest rate change by the RBI, and the best part is that no one ever sees it again.

If anyone ever decided to make a movie about it, it would surely be titled "Banker and the Missing Pen" — starring James Bond as the honest teller, Late Amrish Puri Saab as the customer, and Jennifer Lopez as the brilliant auditor determined to deal with the case.

The Monday Morning Mystery

It all began like any other huddle, weaker target achievements, and a brand-new Red pen proudly tied to the customer service area.

And by lunchtime, the pen vanished. The ribbon swung helplessly, like a left-out clue in a crime thriller.

Somebody said, "Might be the CCTV has something!" in a half-joking, half-serious mode.

But, of course, the camera was pointed everywhere except at the customer service area.

There was laughter in the room -someone laughed, "Let's call ACP Pradyuman from CID — he will surely help us.

And that's how the most entertaining investigation of the year began — Operation GAZE.

Operation GAZE

The Branch Manager, harnessing his inner Byomkesh Bakshi, declared dramatically,

"Yeh pen chori bank ki izzat ka sawaal hai!"

Within minutes, the branch transformed into a crime investigation arena. The Teller or cashier examined the stationery, register, drawers, and voucher pads, with a focus on Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019). The Branch Operations Head began conducting interrogations, like that of ACP Pradyuman from CID.

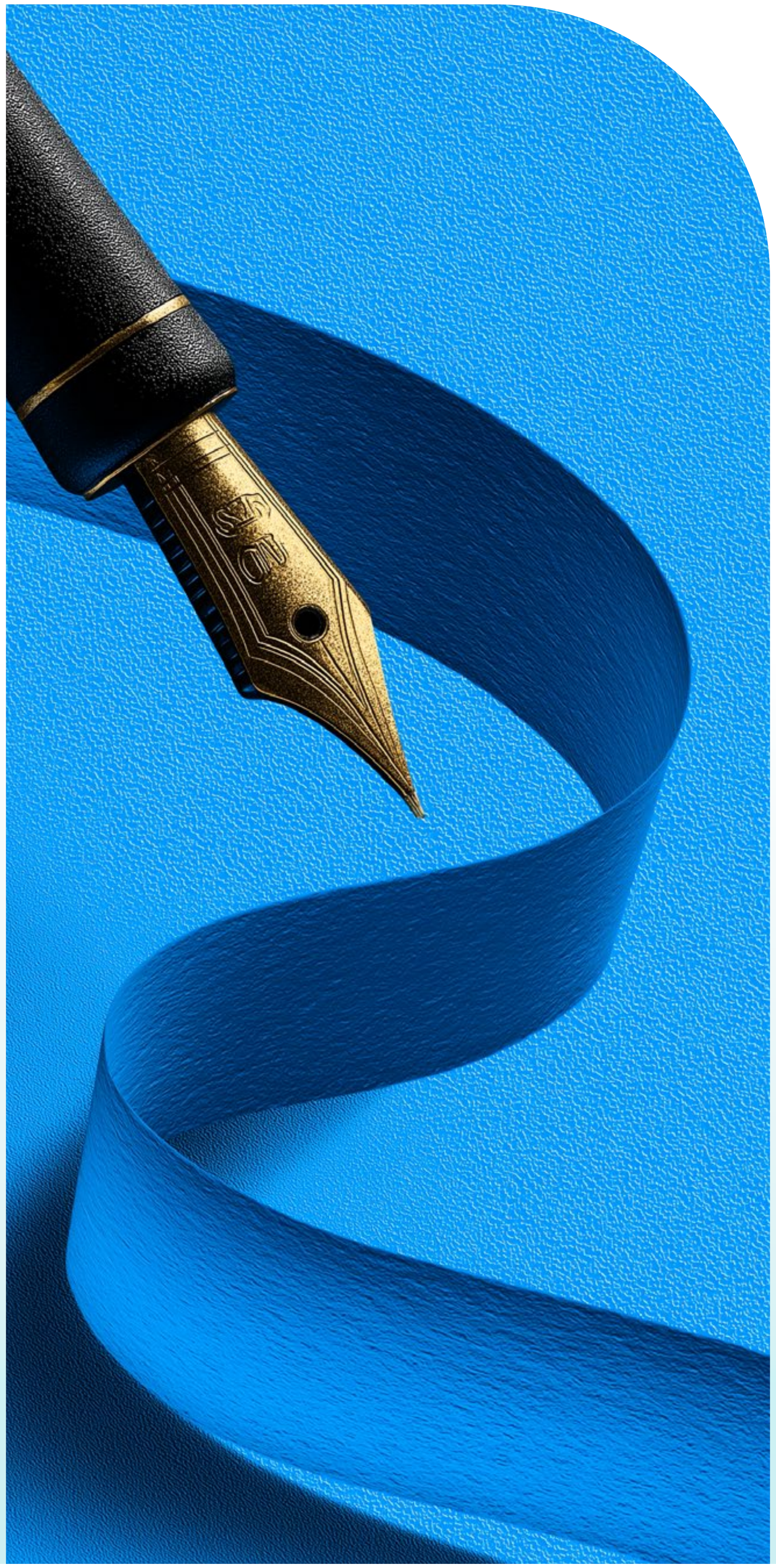
The Boss (BM) also instructed the creation of a WhatsApp group called "Operation GAZE 2.0."

By EOD or evening, there were multiple suspects, endless case studies, and theories, but not a single clue. The pen was gone — again.

Jugaad Junction

Now, to end this crisis, the entire Branch team decided to get more creative.

- One teller brought a green glitter pen, hoping no one would dare steal it. It vanished in two hours.
- Another Customer Service Officer - tied the pen with such a short string that customers had to perform Pranayama poses just to sign a Pay in Slip.
- The Relationship Officer installed a pen stand shaped like Shaktimaan's Mask, with the hope that some superhero magic would surely protect it.



The Witness Statements

When the Bank officers gently asked customers about the pen, the responses were the height of comedy.

Chacha – The elderly Man (Sr Citizen) -chuckled, "Beta, pens have legs. They might have walked away when they felt ignored.
A young student confessed, "Madam, I thought it was a freebie, like your desk chocolates.

And one ETB Customer, clearly inspired by Nawazuddin, smiled and said,

"Main bura aadmi nahi hoon saab, bas mere ideas thode illegal hain."

Hearing this, all the Branch staff started laughing and looking at each other.

Clicks vs. Signatures

Then came the digital revolution at the Bank — tablets, e-KYC, and paperless forms, such as E-Forms, etc.
Then, finally," announced by BM Saab, "no more pens now!"

The concept worked for a while. The counters looked fantastic and digitalised. But then, suddenly, the biometric device stopped working, the printer machine jammed, and to a great surprise, the paper forms made a Gala Entry.

Also, with them returned the Timeless Writing Instrument – The Pen — only to disappear again by peak hours.

Our Little lesson in laughter

Like these days, weeks and months passed, and the Bank branch finally stopped – Operation Gaze.

Though the culprit was never caught, the laughter remained. The "Operation Gaze - Pen Case" was added to the branch history.

Someone in the Branch joked, "If this were a Bollywood movie, it would be a comedy blockbuster called 'Pen Milega Dobara!"

We've automated transactions, digitised forms, and trained AI bots — yet no one has figured out where the pens go.

So the next time you borrow a pen at the branch, treat it like evidence.
You never know when it'll be part of Operation Gaze 3.0: The Case Reopened, and the mystery is still Pen-ding.

- Rajnish Pandey

All that you wanted to know about the **Banking Ombudsman**

- Roshni

When things go wrong at your bank, it can feel like you're stuck in a maze with no exit. You may find yourself holding a confusing bank statement while the branch manager gives you a polite smile that says, "This is not my problem." Your frustration rises, and you start questioning whether storing cash under a mattress is a better option.

Fortunately, the banking world has its own guardian angel—the Banking Ombudsman.

The Banking Ombudsman is an independent authority appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to help customers resolve complaints against banks. Introduced in 1995, the scheme provides a free, fair, and accessible way for customers to get their grievances addressed without needing a lawyer, connections, or a crash course in legal jargon.

Think of the Ombudsman as the neutral referee in a conflict: knowledgeable, unbiased, and committed to ensuring fair play between banks and customers.

When Should You Approach the Ombudsman?

The Ombudsman can intervene when customers face service failures, delays, or disputes that banks fail to resolve. Common issues include:

ATM & Debit Card Issues

- Cash not dispensed but amount debited
- ATM retaining the customer's card
- Incorrect debits

Credit Card Problems

- Unauthorized transactions
- Excessive charges or incorrect billing
- Failure to close or issue cards properly

Loan-Related Complaints

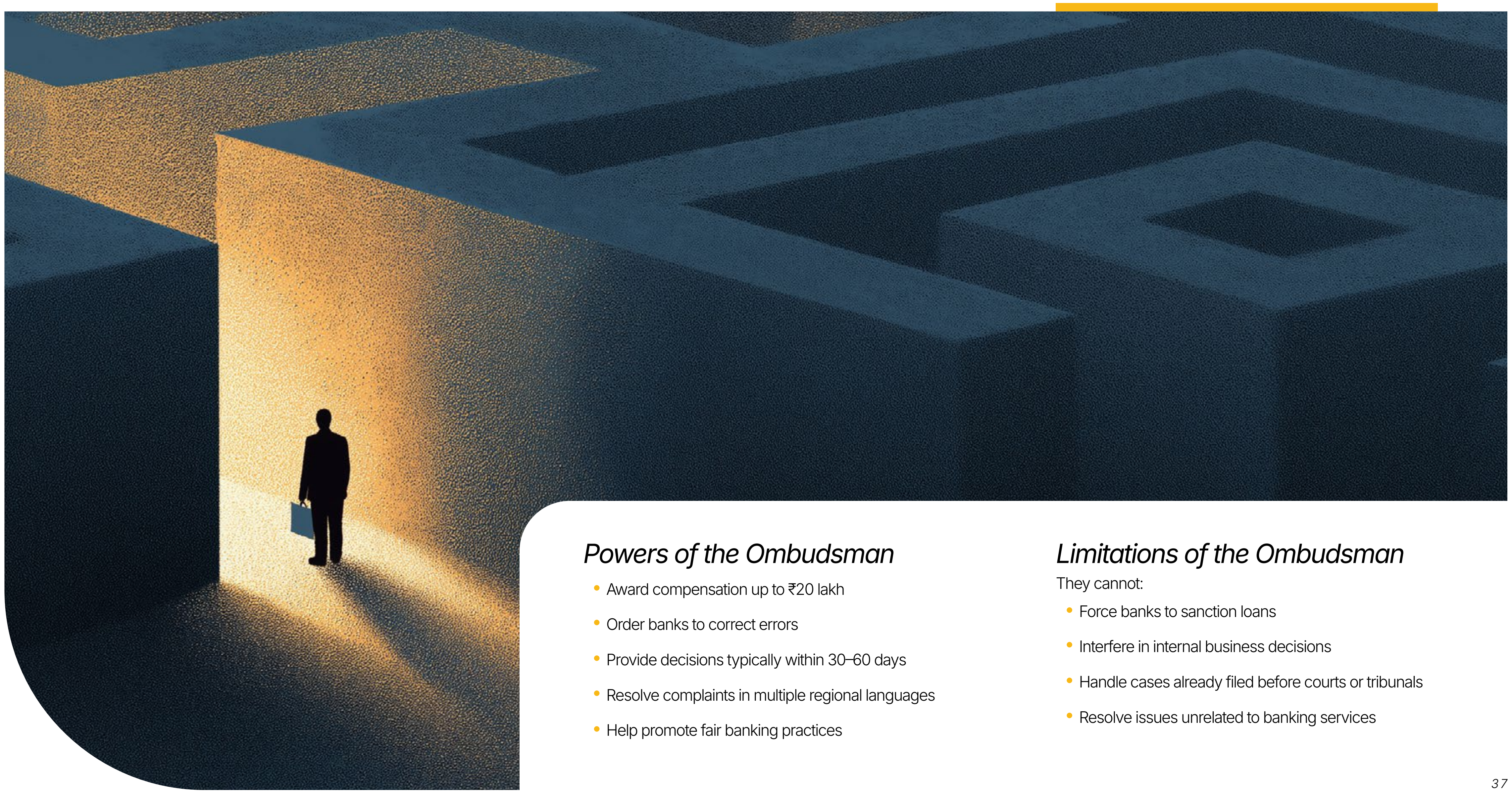
- Unreasonable delays in processing
- Failure to sanction or disburse loans despite eligibility
- Misrepresentation of loan terms

Cheque & Deposit Issues

- Cheques bounced despite sufficient balance
- Errors in deposit accounts or delayed settlements

Internet & Mobile Banking Failures

- Unauthorized online transactions
- Failed transactions not reversed
- Technical errors resulting in financial loss



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Before Filing a Complaint: *Follow the Mandatory Steps*

The Banking Ombudsman is a second-level remedy. Before approaching them, customers must:

Step 1: *Submit a Written Complaint to the Bank*

Letters, emails, or online complaint forms are acceptable.

Step 2: *Wait for 30 Days*

The bank gets one month to respond.

Step 3: *If Unsatisfied, Approach Ombudsman*

You may file a complaint if the bank:

- Does not reply within 30 days
- Provides an unsatisfactory response
- Gives contradictory or incomplete answers

Step 4: *File Within the Prescribed Timeline*

Your complaint must be filed within one year of the bank's reply (or within one year and 30 days if the bank does not respond). There are no fees for filing a complaint with the Banking Ombudsman.

Powers of the Ombudsman

- Award compensation up to ₹20 lakh
- Order banks to correct errors
- Provide decisions typically within 30–60 days
- Resolve complaints in multiple regional languages
- Help promote fair banking practices

Limitations of the Ombudsman

They cannot:

- Force banks to sanction loans
- Interfere in internal business decisions
- Handle cases already filed before courts or tribunals
- Resolve issues unrelated to banking services

Does the System Really Work?

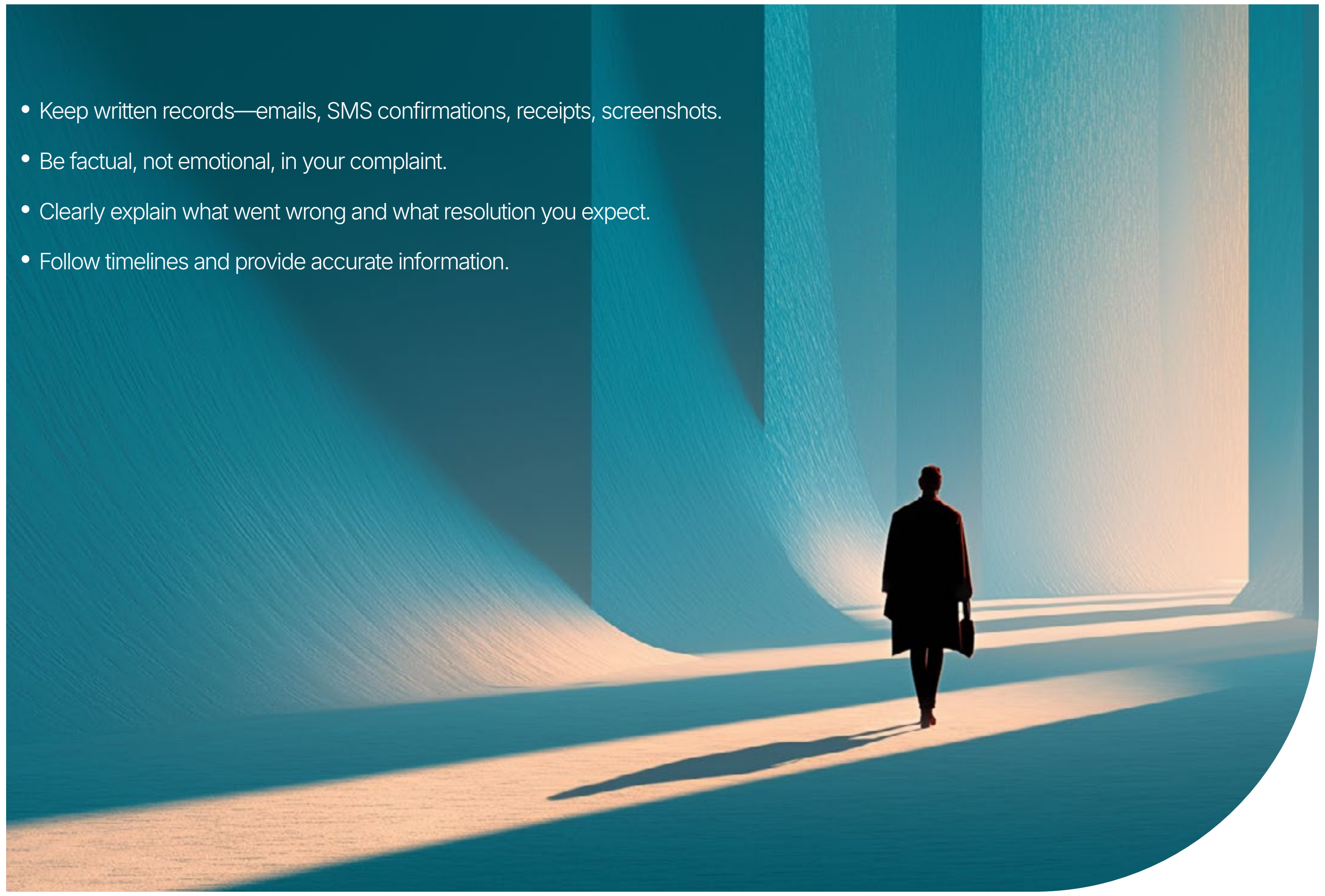
Yes—quite effectively. Thousands of cases are resolved every year through this mechanism. Banks prefer addressing issues at the Ombudsman level because unresolved cases can attract regulatory scrutiny from RBI.

The usual resolution time of 30–60 days is remarkably fast by Indian banking standards. Many customers report a smoother experience compared to navigating traditional branch visits or customer care channels.

How to File a Complaint

Customers can file complaints through the RBI Complaint Management System (CMS) available online. The process is simple, user-friendly, and accessible from anywhere. Complaints can also be submitted physically at any of the 22 Ombudsman offices across India.

A Few Practical Tips



- Keep written records—emails, SMS confirmations, receipts, screenshots.
- Be factual, not emotional, in your complaint.
- Clearly explain what went wrong and what resolution you expect.
- Follow timelines and provide accurate information.

Think of yourself as documenting a case file—the stronger your evidence, the faster the resolution.

Conclusion

The Banking Ombudsman is a powerful ally for customers who often feel helpless against deficiency in service in banks. It ensures that banks maintain accountability and treat customers fairly. So the next time your bank behaves like a polite brick wall, remember ,you have rights, and you have recourse.

New Launches

Ignite Equitas BDO Program

"Ignite Equitas BDO Program" marked the launch of the bank's first-ever capability-building journey for Business Development Officers, aimed at shaping confident, customer-centric branch professionals. The program focused on cultivating a strong sales mindset, overcoming the fear of rejection, and nurturing the ability to offer the right solutions to the right customers — ultimately building better bankers and responsible financial advisors. The inauguration was graced by distinguished leaders, including Mr. Tushar Dev Srivastav – VP & Talent Acquisition Head COE, Mr. Prashant Subramanian – Zonal Training Manager, and Mr. Shankar D – Regional HR Business Partner, BENJAMIN DEVADAS J-REGIONAL HR - TALENT ACQUISITION. Esteemed facilitators from MABFSI — Ms. Smita Venugopal, Mr. Sampath Sarathy, Mr. Harikrishnan, and faculty team — delivered impactful and immersive learning experiences, setting a strong foundation for on-ground success.

Genesis

Genesis – Federal Bank's flagship onboarding journey ignited the professional aspirations of newly inducted Associate Officers (Sales), preparing them to thrive in the competitive world of modern banking. The program centred on building sharp sales acumen, nurturing meaningful customer relationships, and developing the confidence to turn every opportunity into trust. Participants were immersed in dynamic sessions, real-world simulations, and values-driven learning experiences that emphasized responsible banking and long-term customer delight.

Guided by inspiring Federal Bank leaders Mr. Rajanarayanan N - EVP & CHRO, Mr. Eqbal Manoj - EVP & Head Branch Banking, Mr Dileep B - Senior Vice President & Zonal Head, Mr Rajesh K G, Vice President & National Sales Head – Branch Banking, Mr Nijil James-Head- HR Talent Development & Training, Mr Joyal George – Zonal Sales Head, and passionately facilitated by the expert MABFSI team — Dr. Soumyadip Roy – VP & In charge Director-MABFSI, Mr. Elanchezhiyan Ganesan, Ms. Smita Venugopal, Mr. Sampath Sarathy, Mr. Harikrishnan, Mr Joseph Roy — Genesis empowered young bankers to step into branches with purpose, professionalism, and a winning mindset.

Right Of Appropriation And **The Rule In Clayton's Case**

- Sridhara

On a day when the entire Bank has come to a standstill on account of some connectivity/internet issues, the branches are struggling hard to attend to the needs of the customers. One customer has come to your branch and, observing the huddle, handed over a few thousand rupees to you and requested you to credit his account when the internet problem is resolved.

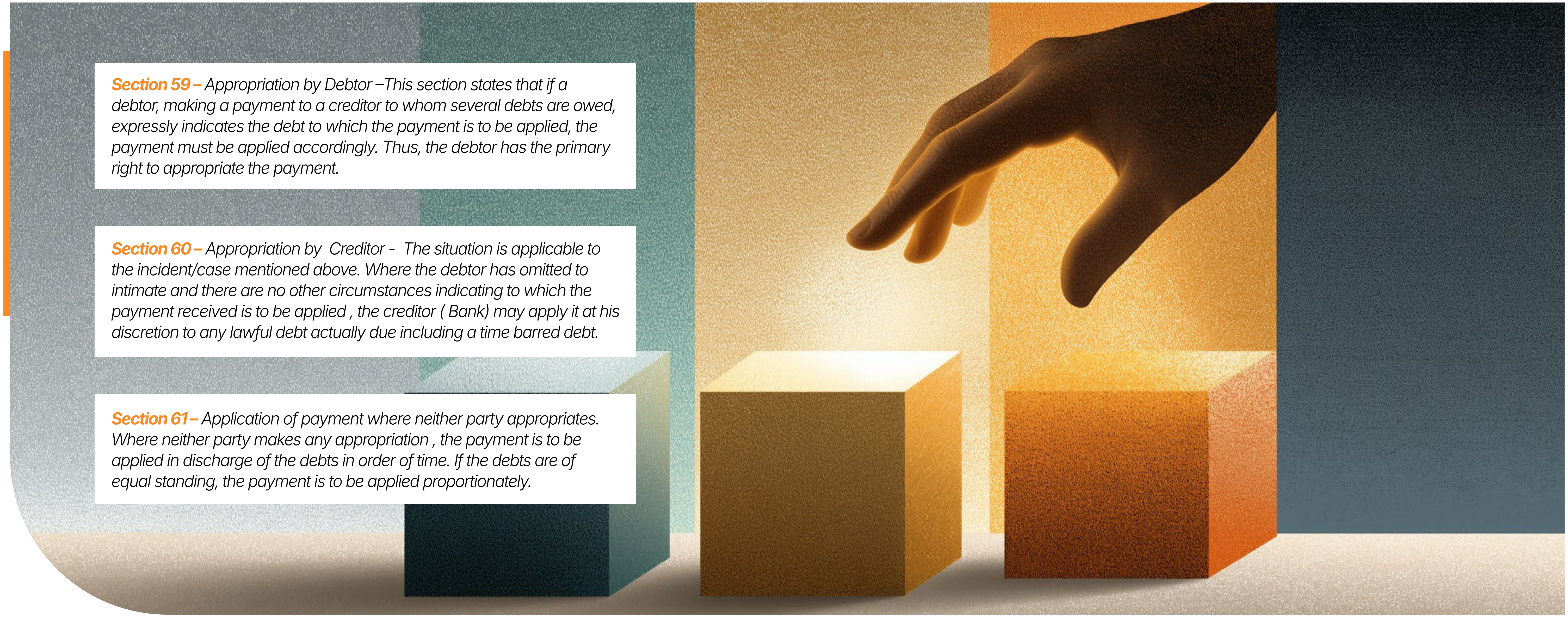
You have accepted the cash after counting the same. When the internet issue is settled, you observe that the subject customer has forgotten to write the account number. You also found that the customer has three accounts: a Home loan, a Personal loan and a Savings Account. You are now in a dilemma as to which account the amount received in the morning is to be credited. Your efforts to reach out to the customer over the phone were in vain.

The answer to your problem lies in the Indian Contract Act, 1872. Sections 59, 60 & 61 of the IC Act deal with appropriation of payments. Appropriation means the application of payments.

Section 59 – *Appropriation by Debtor –This section states that if a debtor, making a payment to a creditor to whom several debts are owed, expressly indicates the debt to which the payment is to be applied, the payment must be applied accordingly. Thus, the debtor has the primary right to appropriate the payment.*

Section 60 – *Appropriation by Creditor - The situation is applicable to the incident/case mentioned above. Where the debtor has omitted to intimate and there are no other circumstances indicating to which the payment received is to be applied , the creditor (Bank) may apply it at his discretion to any lawful debt actually due including a time barred debt.*

Section 61 – *Application of payment where neither party appropriates. Where neither party makes any appropriation , the payment is to be applied in discharge of the debts in order of time. If the debts are of equal standing, the payment is to be applied proportionately.*



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Clayton's Case (1816) Devaynes v. Noble's Case

In Devaynes v. Noble's Case, a partner in a banking firm died. The firm continued to operate, and a customer with a running account made subsequent deposits and withdrawals. The question arose as to how the payments made after the partner's death should be appropriated against the debts incurred before and after his death.

The learned Judge has laid down the principle that in a running account, where there is a continuous series of transactions, payments are presumed to have been appropriated towards the earliest debts in the account. This is often summarised as "first in, first out" (FIFO). The rationale was that it is the most natural and equitable way to deal with such running accounts when no specific appropriation by either party is impossible to presume.

Application and Implications:

Clayton's Rule, as reflected in Section 61 of the Indian Contract Act, provides a default mechanism for the appropriation of payments in running accounts when neither party exercises their right under Sections 59 and 60. This rule offers clarity and predictability in ongoing financial relationships.

As a banker, one should be careful while dealing with accounts such as OD, CC, CA and other running accounts. Usually, banks tend to close the accounts under such circumstances to determine the exact liability of the deceased customer/ dissolution of the entity.

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U-Quest in classroom

Liquidity Coverage Ratio

The Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) is a critical international banking standard that ensures banks maintain a sufficient stock of High-Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA) to survive a significant liquidity stress scenario lasting 30 calendar days.

It was introduced as part of the Basel III reforms following the 2008 global financial crisis to promote the short-term resilience of the banking sector and prevent systemic crises caused by sudden liquidity shortages. This measure is vital for shielding the financial system from sudden liquidity crises, bolstering market confidence, and reducing systemic risk.

The LCR is calculated as the ratio of a bank's stock of HQLA to its total net cash outflows over the next 30 days under a supervisory-defined stress scenario. In India, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mandates that the minimum LCR requirements for scheduled commercial banks will be 100 %.

High-Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA) - The Numerator

HQLA are assets that can be easily and immediately converted into cash with little or no loss in value, even in a stressed market. These assets serve as the bank's liquidity buffer. HQLA is categorized into three levels:

- **Level 1 Assets:** Include cash, central bank reserves, and government securities (like Indian Government Bonds/G-Secs) that are counted at full value (0% haircut).
- **Level 2A Assets:** Include highly-rated corporate bonds and certain public sector entity bonds, counted at 85% of their value (15% haircut).
- **Level 2B Assets:** Include certain corporate debt, certain equities, etc., which have higher haircuts (e.g., 50%).

Total Net Cash Outflows - The Denominator

This represents the total amount of cash a bank is projected to lose over the 30-day stress period. It is calculated as:

Net Cash Outflows = Expected Gross Cash Outflows -Expected Cash Inflows (capped at 75 % of outflows)

Trivia

Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome, is a persistent psychological pattern where high-achieving individuals doubt their skills, talents, and accomplishments, feeling like an intellectual fraud.

Despite external evidence of their competence or abilities—such as academic success, promotions, or awards—people experiencing this phenomenon cannot internalize their success. They often attribute achievements to luck, timing, or deceiving others, and harbour a chronic, internalized fear of being exposed as inadequate.

This self-doubt is a pervasive sense of phoniness that can lead to anxiety, burnout, and perfectionism. For instance, a person might over-prepare or procrastinate or constantly set impossibly high standards for himself. While not a formal medical diagnosis, Imposter Syndrome is a common experience, which may affect many of us at some point in our life.

Addressing the problem involves:

- Involves breaking the silence, recognizing the fact that feelings (I am not good enough) are separate from objective facts,(I am in this position because of my accomplishments & track record) , learning to attribute success to one's own efforts and abilities.
- Recognizing the fact that making mistakes and struggling are a normal, necessary part of growth and learning, not proof of inadequacy.
- Acknowledge that effort and learning are just as valuable as innate talent or perfect results.

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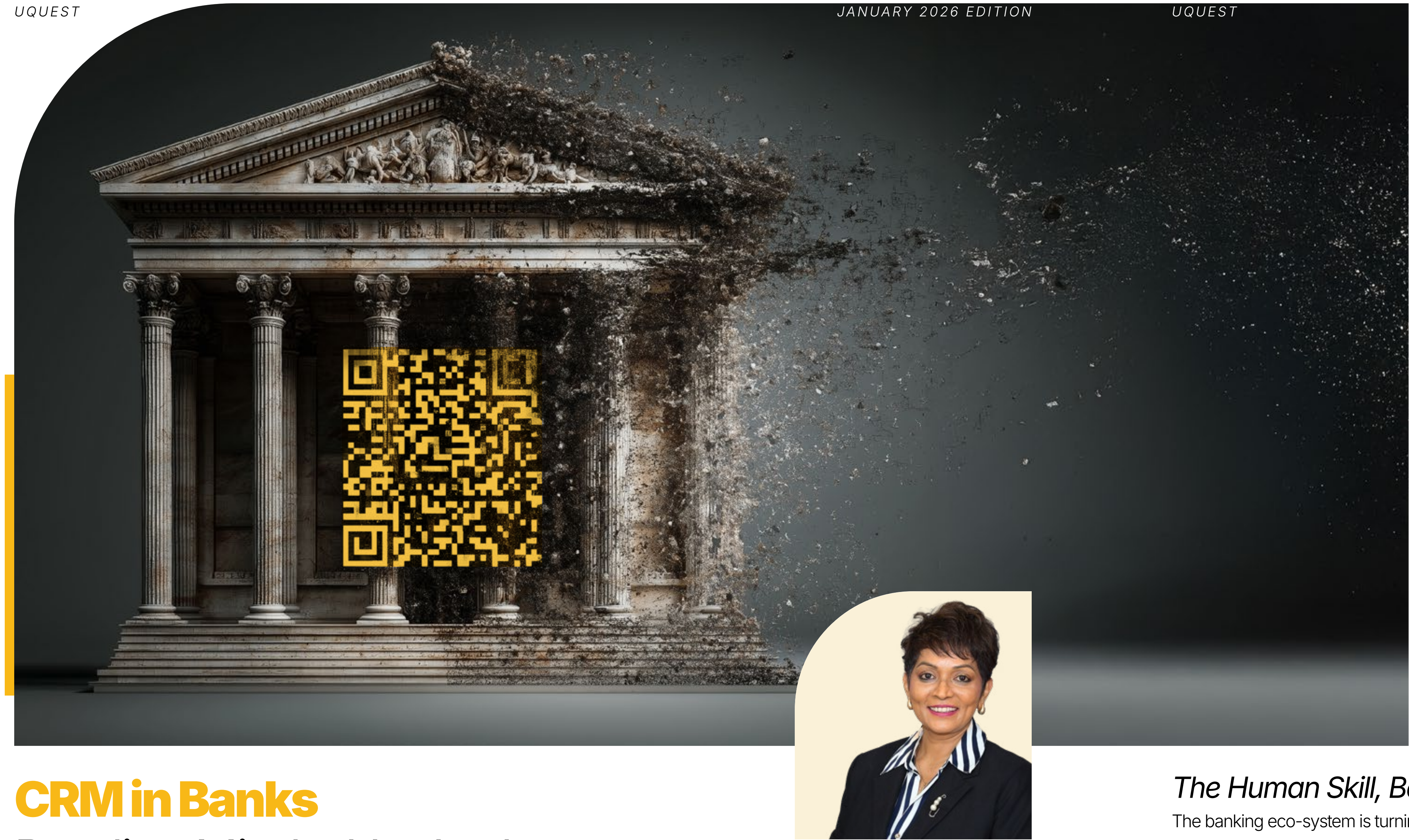
Campus Chatter

Beyond academics, students engaged in a variety of **co-curricular activities and campus parades**, showcasing creativity, teamwork, and leadership.

These initiatives exemplify Manipal Academy of BFSI's holistic approach to learning—where professional excellence is complemented by personal growth, social responsibility, and a vibrant campus culture.

The Manipal Academy of BFSI campuses have been abuzz with activity, celebrating milestones and meaningful initiatives alike. **The HDFC Future Bankers 2.0 program** reached a significant achievement, successfully training **3,000 aspiring professionals**, reinforcing the Academy's commitment to shaping industry-ready talent for the BFSI sector.

In collaboration with **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank**, the Academy observed **Founder's Day** through a series of purpose-driven activities, including a **plantation drive** promoting environmental sustainability and a **charity initiative** that reflected the spirit of giving back to society.



CRM in Banks
Reading Minds, Not Ledgers

- Susan John

Over the last decade, Indian bank quietly built a digital foundation and leapfrogged to a level to envy the world can't resist the attention — Aadhaar, UPI, CBDC, UPI-Lending so on so forth. The enormity of digital infrastructure has paved the way for an agile nervous system based on reflexes, instincts, interpretations.

Banking no longer remains a system meeting universal financial needs, but it is redefining gently into shaping these needs. The breakout moment is not a dramatic overnight shift, but operating like a stiletto, in a clandestine way through nudges, prompts a life cycle journey that depicts anything other than the traditional way of understanding banking behaviour.

Every click of "Submit", every buy and each dip in your cash flow are turning into signals and triggers for someone to read and analyse your financial behaviour. Banks aren't just tracking what you do with your money—they label and outline, your identity and how frequently you use it.

Arguably, your credit score won't just measure your promptness about bills payment, but It'll gauge your social and personal traits based.

The Rise of Behavioural Banking

The neobanks or more commonly digital banks in India are like petri dish for new wave of mixing money with social psychology:

- Neo tracks spending, then recommends travel or forex options before you even realize it to solicit.
- Jupiter turns saving into a game—challenges, nudges, gentle prods—so you build a habit, not just tick a box.
- Fi Money throws in a little humour, keeps things conversational, and those "nudges" make budgeting feel less like a chore, more like a rhythm you fall into.

These apps don't just move your money around. They study your hesitation, your routines, your risk appetite, even how long you'll pay attention to micro details. They're not just tools any longer but they're converting itself into mirroring financial personality.
Traditional banking is transforming itself into recommendation engines through apps and AI Bots, testing out pre-approved loans, making credit calls, loan collection, prompting expenses behaviour and recommending alternative way of financial discipline that blend numbers with latent behaviour.

Where Ethics Meets Algorithm

The idea of open banking did not appear overnight. While India, in the early 2000s was experimenting cautiously from protectionism toward liberalization, the West was already reimagining finance for the digital era. Henry Chesbrough's 2003 theory of "open innovation" championed collaboration over isolation. The concept took regulatory form in 2015, when the European Parliament passed the Second a The alchemy of money and psychology has created a challenging time for regulators to foresee and control the rapid changes taking place. Regulators are busy and invested heavily to monitor that consent can't just be a box you tick but protecting it is of utmost critical. Banks must think about the extent they use your info, not just for sale of next based product. It marked a radical shift — from banks guarding data to banks empowering customers through it.

Europe's GDPR put rules around profiling and automated decisions, In India, the DPDP Act 2023 has enumerated the digital data use. RBI is already having tough conversations about ethical and responsible use of AI and data.

So, the logical question isn't, **"Is my data safe?"** anymore.

The real question is, **"Am I still making my own choices?"**

When a system gets your impulses better than you do, "permission" will turn into real awareness. "Compliance" will become conscience for a financial institution.

The Human Skill, Banks Can't Automate

The banking eco-system is turning itself from distribution of products to understand people as deeply as any algorithm.

Retail giants like Amazon and Flipkart figured out and implemented it at large scale quite earlier. Banking needs to replicate it in more pronounced way with two to tango i.e strengthen your financial health, and consultative service.

The rapid and mass scale change based on AI has disrupted the way a banker should think to ensure that they are:

- Trained to spot behavioural cues
- Grounded in solid ethics
- Skilled in judgment
- Ready to question the machine, not just operate it

Banks need real world simulations, debates, ethical standards to take the future challenges that builds judgment and nudging powerful tool.

A clarion Call to Action

This revolution isn't going to show up with fireworks.

It'll sneak in, little by little—a tip here, a suggestion there—until one day you realise the system didn't just respond to your behaviour, and when that day comes, the most valuable banking skill won't be code or models.

Therefore, it is quite imperative to conclude that banks that invest in ethical intelligence and not only artificial intelligence will lead the way.

In a world of intelligent machines, human wisdom becomes premium currency

Customer Satisfaction an Angle of Human Touch Banker's perspective

- Venkitakrishnan H

When we look into various businesses, the paramount focus will be on their customers. Of course, we all know that the customer is the king of any business. Our father of nation Sri Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote:

"A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him."

clearly elucidate the relevance of customer service.

Factual

When a senior citizen customer visits the branch and request for a Demand Draft, the counter staff directs him to take the challan and fill it. Instead, if the staff had gone there, greeted and helped the customer in completing the process it would really make the customer feel delighted.

Even though it is not possible to serve every customer in the same fashion, rather showing directly a polite conversation would have made a huge difference. A wholistic approach is required for all types of customers while offering products or services. Senior Citizen deposits contribute around 20% of the total deposits as of March 2025 (Schedule Bank's total Deposits are at Rs. 234 lakh Crore).

Present Scenario

The bank offers lots of products and services to cater to the needs of the customers but are generally sold to them in a pushing without a human touch or concern. The products or services offered with human touch (RM Concept) always have good and stable balances in the liability accounts.

Moreover, in consumer-based products like women account, minor account balances are increasing with the awareness among them for financial discipline in life. It is a "sine qua non" for the banks to ensure that superior quality services are being provided to all the segments/ categories of loyal customers to create a wider base.

The bandwagon effect will be visible if we provide digitalized products with a personal touch. Different theories and studies like Cognitive Dissonance, Value Percept, Gen AI enabled CRM models & so on helps to understand the needs of the customer.

Gen Z & Gen Alpha Customers

We are seeing a paradigm shift in consumer behavior; the generation gap (every 5 years now) is shrinking as the clock ticks. While interacting with some of the Gen next people, they opined that 40% human touch & 60% of digitalization is useful when they bank products and other services.

While dealing with unfamiliar financial products it's better to have a personal touch. The median age of Indian population is less than 30 years, and it has been a conundrum for banks to make out the preferences of Gen-next people, as their expectations are dynamic and short lived.

Product adoption and Ongoing support for Sustainability

Digital onboarding is happening on a large scale and it's good, lesser footfalls in the branches, where we miss the connectivity. Bank always tries to sell the right product for the right customer. The reasons for pushing the products could be:

a) Not able to identify the right customers

b) Lack of customer engagement after onboarding & focusing only on Cross Selling

c) Not Checking satisfaction levels at regular intervals in person (Net Promoter Score or Customer Retention Rate model etc.)

Especially for financial products,individual customers' behaviour generally depends on their earning capacity, savings & spending & lifestyle needs. For Corporate clients, it's based on ease of transactions & funding assistance.

Redefinition of Loyal Customers:

Nowadays brands are considering someone as customers when they buy or use their products regularly and frequently. One-time or two-time buyers are now treated as potential customers, as the market is highly competitive. Banks should see that the customers are hooked to at least six to seven products , so that long-term connectivity is built & nurtured.

Suggested Action Plans

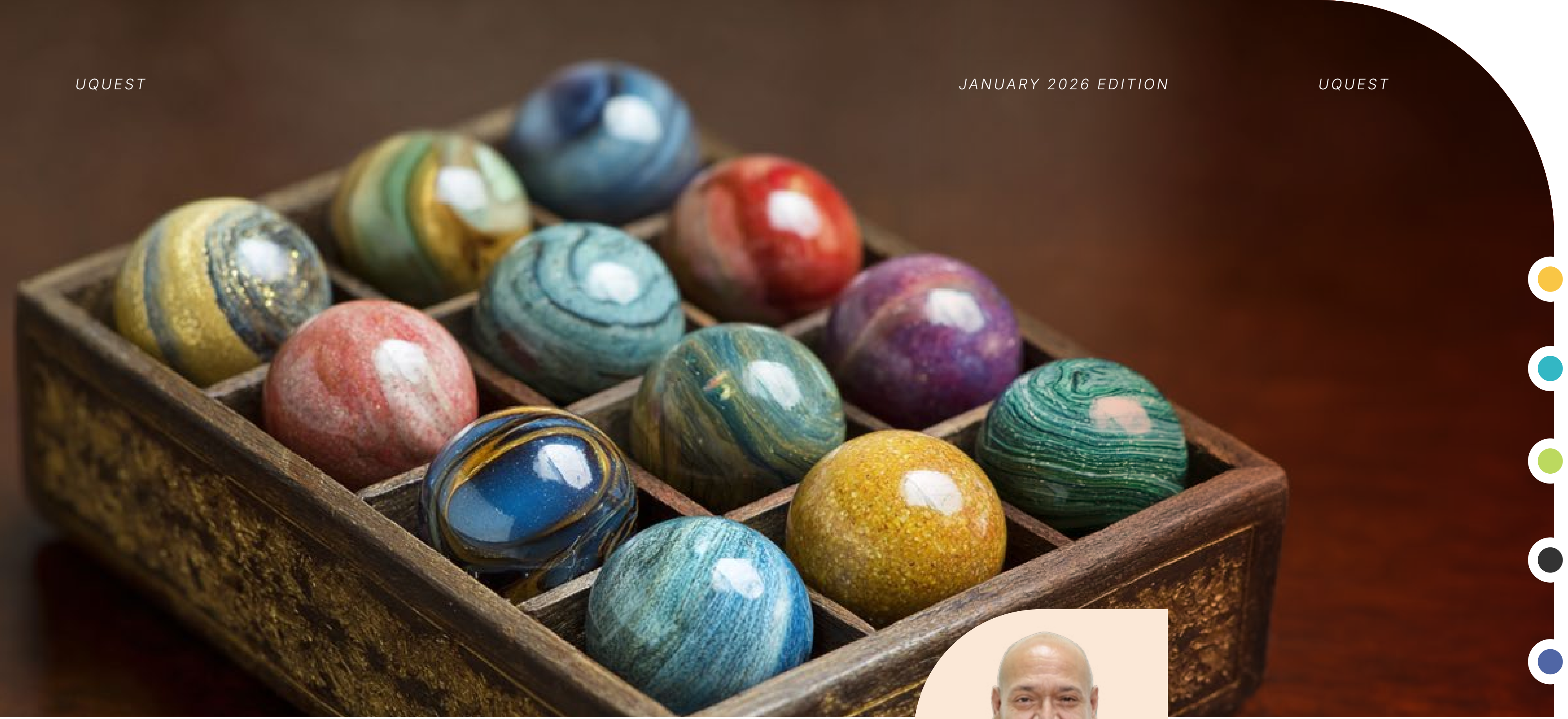
a) Targeted customers' needs to be onboarded with the right products.

b) Educating the customer about financial discipline in life and business.

c) Frequent Customer Engagement with a blend of human and digital touch is a must.

d) Upskilling through training programmes at regular intervals helps the resources to be effective in customer engagement.

Regular onboarding is happening and it's a tad disappointing to note that the human touch is missing with the offerings. A good human touch will make the financial relationship more sustainable.



Marbles in the Box Theory: How Income Flows Shape Financial Behaviour

- Mandar Deshpande

People often assume that money shapes behaviour — but behaviour shapes money.
Financial habits form long before the first paycheque arrives, influenced by upbringing, emotional patterns, and early experiences with scarcity, security, or risk. When a person finally starts earning, they do not become financially "new"; instead, income activates everything that was silently forming for years.

The Marbles in the Box Theory explains why many individuals with the same income can live completely different financial lives. One grows wealth, another prioritises stability, while a third seeks experiences. The difference lies not in what they earn, but how their money moves inside them.

This theory shifts the focus from external finances to inner architecture — the emotional tendencies and mental patterns already present before income arrives.

The Core Metaphor

Every person carries a psychological "box" — their financial mindset.
This box contains marbles, representing ingrained values, habits, biases, and emotional reactions related to money.

When income flows in, it does not add new marbles.
Instead:

Income tilts the box, and the existing marbles roll according to one's natural tendencies.

This tilt determines how money is divided among spending, saving, investing, insuring, and experiencing life. Some people's marbles roll quickly toward consumption, others toward security, others toward growth. The movement is instinctive, often unconscious.

Thus, financial behaviour is less about how much you earn and more about how you are wired to respond to earning.

The Five Corners of the Box

Each corner represents a major financial direction toward which marbles may roll:

Spending Corner
Lifestyle, consumption, comfort, instant gratification.

Saving Corner
Safety, liquidity, preparation for uncertainty.

Investment Corner
Wealth creation, long-term returns, future orientation.

Insurance Corner
Risk protection, responsibility, family security.

Experience Corner
Hobbies, travel, memories, personal enrichment.

Every person has all five corners — but the degree of tilt varies dramatically.

The Four Financial Personas

1. Instant Gratifier – "The Colourful Box"

- Lives in the present moment.
- Income pushes marbles quickly toward Spending and Experience.
- Gains immediate happiness but sacrifices long-term stability.

Deeper Insight:
To them, money is a tool for expression and enjoyment; spending becomes identity.

2. Safety Seeker – "The Guarded Box"

- Prioritises control, security, and predictability.
- Marbles roll toward Saving and Insurance.
- Feels safe but often misses opportunities to grow financially.

Deeper Insight:
Risk feels threatening, and safety brings emotional comfort.

3. Growth Builder – "The Expanding Box"

- Strategic, patient, future oriented.
- Marbles move toward Investment and Insurance.
- Builds wealth steadily, with clear long-term thinking.

Deeper Insight:
Delay today for gain tomorrow — the foundation of compounding.

4. Conscious Balancer – "The Symmetrical Box"

- Strives for harmony, not extremes.
- Marbles distribute evenly across all corners.
- Enjoys life while staying financially stable.

Deeper Insight:
Views money as energy that must be directed thoughtfully.

Behavioural Insights

Inborn Patterns

Financial behaviour often reflects emotions formed early — scarcity, generosity, fear, pride, discipline, or impulsiveness.

Income as a Trigger

A sudden inflow (salary, bonus, gift) activates these tendencies automatically.
People don't become different — they become more of who they already are.
Awareness Changes Trajectories
Understanding how your marbles move allows deliberate redirection, creating healthier money habits over time.
Life Events as Shifts

Major events — marriage, crisis, job loss, parenthood — can permanently change the tilt of the box.

Why It Matters

Money management is deeply psychological.
People often fail not because they lack income, but because they lack awareness of their internal tilt.

A more powerful question than "How much do you earn?" is:
"When money flows in, where do your marbles roll first?"
Once a person recognises this pattern, financial planning becomes far more effective and personalised.

Relevance to BFSI Training & Advisory

For the BFSI sector — especially roles in wealth management, personal banking, investment advisory, insurance, and financial coaching — this theory is a practical diagnostic tool.

1. Behavioural Client Profiling

Instead of relying only on income, age, or product eligibility, advisors can identify a client's "marble pattern" to predict real behaviour.

2. Personalised Advisory

A Safety Seeker needs reassurance;
A Growth Builder needs strategy;
An Instant Gratifier needs guardrails;
A Conscious Balancer needs structured flexibility.

3. Better Product Mapping

- Instant Gratifier → automated SIPs, spending control tools
- Safety Seeker → guaranteed products
- Growth Builder → market-linked investments
- Conscious Balancer → diversified portfolios

4. Training Enhancement

This model can be used in:

- Relationship Manager training
- Behavioural finance modules
- Customer psychology courses
- Need-based selling workshops

It transforms BFSI training from product-centric to mindset-centric, improving client engagement and trust.

My take

Financial outcomes are shaped not by what people earn but by how their internal tendencies respond to what they earn. Every individual carries a box filled with emotional and behavioural marbles. Income merely tilts the box — revealing priorities, fears, strengths, and desires.

Those who learn to tilt their box consciously, rather than reactively, achieve greater financial peace, purpose, and progress.

New Launches

Sundaram Home Finance Ltd

Sundaram Home Finance Ltd – Management Trainee Induction Program welcomed a new cohort of young professionals stepping into the housing finance sector with passion and purpose. The program was designed to build strong fundamentals in customer service, ethical sales, and operational excellence — shaping disciplined and trusted future leaders who uphold the values of the Sundaram Group.

The inauguration was graced by **Mr. Ganapathi S — CHRO**, whose inspiring address encouraged the trainees to embrace learning, agility, and customer-first thinking as they embark on their professional journey. With a blend of experiential learning and expert-led sessions facilitated by MABFSI, the learners were equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and right attitude to excel in their roles and contribute meaningfully to the organization's growth.

NBI Nepal

National Banking Institute, Nepal – Effective Branch Management Program brought together branch managers from leading banks across Nepal, uniting them on a common platform of professional excellence. This signature program focused on transforming branch leaders into strategic business drivers — skilled in revenue growth, proactive customer relationship management, and deeper market insight.

Through a well-crafted blend of credit assessment mastery, operational rigor, and people leadership capabilities, participants explored the full spectrum of responsibilities required to run a high-performing branch. Dynamic behavioural sessions further empowered them to communicate with impact, delegate effectively, and cultivate a culture of service and compliance.

With shared learning, cross-bank collaboration, and practical implementation at its core, the program equipped every manager to return to their branches with renewed confidence, sharper decision-making skills, and a growth-mindset for delivering sustainable success.

The paper presented by **Indira J** (working with Axis bank vertical) was accepted with major revision for the 4th International Conference on Intelligent Computing, Information and Control Systems which was held from November 19-21,2025 at Nepal College of Information Technology, Lalitpur, Nepal.

The title of the paper was Artificial Intelligence in Private sector banking: A study of Disruption, adaptation & opportunity. ICOIICS 2025 aims to bring together leading researchers to share their innovative ideas and foster meaningful collaborations.

Employee Spotlight

Rajendran M,
(working with HDFC bank short term vertical) has successfully completed "Train the Trainer" Certification recently, offered by IIT Roorkee & NPTEL. Rajendran has also completed a few more certifications in the last one year on "soft skills TTT" & "Certified expert facilitator".

The editorial board of U-Quest congratulates both the professors & wishes them best of luck in all their future endeavours!!!

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