



CHAPTER VIII

Era of State-level Tribunals and Awards (1946-49)

As reported in the previous chapter, alarmed at the growing organized and striking mood of the employees on their various demands which could not be curbed by punitive actions of the management, they made a mad rush to the governments in the respective States for their intervention. The governments also did not hesitate to come to their rescue, but when they also failed to crush the movements by coercive actions, the respective State Governments appointed Tribunals for adjudication of the disputes. This way began the Era of Tribunals which were nothing but third party intervention to scuttle trade union movement and replace collective bargaining and negotiated bipartite settlement. The Tribunals so set up were of two categories : State Tribunals and National Tribunals.

Thus 1946-1966 may well be termed as the Era of struggles and Tribunals in the banking industry. This has two parts - 1) Era of State-level Tribunals 1946-49 and 2) Era of National Tribunals 1949-66. However, it may safely be said that barring some exceptions like Sastry Award some improvements of wages and service conditions of the employees were ensured by the provisions of the Awards. These Tribunals also played indirectly as catalytic agents for the leaders coming from different banks and corners of the country to know each other and thereby played an indirect part in creating ground for the foundation of Unions and State Organisations. Through such acquaintances and exchange of views between the leaders from different centres possibilities for extension and development of movements brightened.

State Level Tribunals :

Let us now briefly give the salient features of the Awards of the State-level Tribunals.

Divatia Award :

Bank of India - Consent Award :

Clerks : Salary : Rs. 65 to Rs. 175 with a span of 17 years.
Fixed Dearness Allowance : Rs. 30/- per month.

Other Banks :

(1) Big banks. 12 big banks — Imperial Bank of India, Lloyds Bank, Grindlays Bank, Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China Bank, Netherlands India Commercial Bank, Central Bank of India, Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Allahabad Bank, Punjab National Bank and Indian Bank. The Award became applicable on 4500 award staff including 1200 'Low paid' staff in these banks.

a) Clerks : Salary Rs. 65 to Rs. 275 with 25 years' span, in between 3 Efficiency Bars. Starting salaries for Graduates from Rs. 75/-

Low paid staff -

Peons Rs. 30 to Rs. 65

Sweepers & Scavengers Rs. 20 to Rs. 40

Dearness Allowance : (1) Clerks - 25% of salary with Rs.30 as minimum and Rs. 50 as maximum (2) Low Paid staff - Rs. 25 for Peons, Sweepers and Scavengers Rs. 15 and Chokras Rs. 20 as fixed.

(2) Small Banks :

Clerks : Salary -Rs. 55 to Rs. 250 in between 3 Efficiency Bars. Salaries for Graduates to start from Rs. 65/-**Low paid**

staff- Peons Rs. 24 to Rs. 55; Sweepers & Scavengers Rs. 15 to Rs. 30.

Dearness Allowance (1) Clerks - 20% of salary with Rs. 25 as minimum and Rs. 35 as maximum (2) Low Paid staff—Rs. 17 at flat rate.

Provident Fund and Pension : Since all banks had Provident Fund or Pension or both, the Adjudicator suggested some modification of the rules for consideration of the beneficiaries and Trustees.

Gratuity : To be paid in banks having no pension or retiring allowance to all employees on voluntary retirement or resignation after 15 years' service, and on retrenchment or discharge, after 10 years service, the maximum amount being 15 months salary after 15 years of continuous service.

Leave rules :

Big Banks : Clerks : Privilege Leave : One month's leave with accumulation upto 3 months.

Casual Leave : 10 days a year with full pay & allowances
Sick Leave : One month for each year of service with a maximum of 12 months during the service period.

Low-paid staff : Same rules subject to accumulation of P.L. upto 2 months.

Small Banks : Same rules except that P.L. and sick leave at the rate of 3 weeks per year.

Service Rules : Free medical consultations in all big banks, voluntary retirement after 30 years of service, compulsory retirement at the age of 60 except as otherwise provided in pension rules.

(Source : AIBEA publication 'A Trade Union Odyssey')

However, discrimination and differentiation made between employees of big banks and small banks with so many efficiency bars in the pay-scales created grievances among the employees.

B.B. Singh Award (U.P.) – In his Award B.B. Singh classified banks into three categories e.g. A, B and C recommending varying scales of pay, including separate scales for graduates.

A Class Banks :

Graduates : Rs.75 -120 - EB - 8 - 200

Under Graduates : Rs. 60 - 3 - 90 - 4 -110

Head Cashiers, Supervisors & Department In-charges : Rs. 120- 8- 200-10- 300

Peons & Chowkidars : Rs. 25 -1 - 35

B Class Banks :

Graduates : Rs. 60 - 4 -100 - EB - 5 -150

Under Graduates : Rs. 60 - 3 - 90 - 4 -110

Head Cashier, Supervisors & Department In-charges : Rs.75-5-120-8-200

Peons & Chowkidars : Rs. 25 - 1/2 - 30

C Class Banks :

Graduates : Rs. 60 - 3 - 90 - 4 -110

Under Graduates : Rs. 50 - 2 - 60 - 3 - 75

Head Cashier, Supervisors & Department In-charges : Rs. 75-5-120-6-150

Peons & Chowkidars : Rs. 20 - 1/i - 25

(Source : Ibid)

For reasons explained earlier, B.B. Singh Award could not be put into effect and the disputes were referred to the K.C. Sen National Tribunal.

R. Gupta Award (W.B.) for Imperial Bank Employees:

There was substantial revision of pay structure in the given scenario and it was to remain effective for a term of one year from 04.08.1947. Pay structures awarded:

Clerical Staff :

Grade-1 & Head Cashiers : Rs. 100 - 8 -180 - EB -10 - 250
 Grade-11, Receiving Tellers & Munshis : Rs. 70-4-126 -EB -
 130 - 5 -175 Stenographers : Same As above + Rs. 20 monthly
 allowance, Poddars & Collecting Sircars : Rs .45 - 3 - 90

Non Clerical Staff :

Compositors : Rs. 45 - 3 - 90

Record Suppliers : Rs. 35 - 2 - 65

Impositors, Messengers & Sweepers : Rs. 30 - 2 - 60

Daftary : Rs. 32-2-62

Lorry Drivers & Head Messengers : In Calcutta - Rs.70- 3
 -100

Outside Calcutta - Rs. 60 - 3 - 90 Khansamas: Rs. 32 - 2
 - 62 Head Cash Coolie : Rs. 32 -2-62 + Rs. 5 at every
 stage.

(Source : Ibid)

S.C. Chakraborty Award— Some of the residual demands of the Imperial Bank Employees, not covered under R. Gupta Award, came in for consideration and adjudication by Justice Chakraborty and the same were pronounced to be operative from 22.11.1948.

S. Sen Award in Central Bank— Exact details of the Award not available. But as the management were not ready to implement 9 of the 14 recommendations of the Tribunal, it can be assumed that the Award to a major extent was favourable to the employees. As such they went on 17 days' strike in August 1948 for its proper implementation and succeeded in the matter.