

# Priceless Deposit: A Librarian's Episode

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## Introduction

A Librarian cherishes his knowledge acquired by him and makes it available to the readers whenever possible. Such enlightened services rendered by the Librarian have always been valued and rewarded not in the form of gains, but it wins the respect of the persons who have availed this knowledge to the fullest extent. After putting in 11 years' service in Academic Library and 28 years' service in a specialized library I retired in 2007 from the services of Bank of Maharashtra. After this long tenure, I kept myself engaged in various academic and social fields. I never lost the touch of Books and I got engrossed in these activities as usual. After retirement i.e. after four years I got a phone call from my one time colleague who was now Deputy General Manager in Bank's services. The date was 4<sup>th</sup> November 2011. He was rather very anxious to talk, but was in a protocol mode. He said that he is handing over the phone to the Bank's Chairman and Managing Director as he wants to have some information about the Bank. The very next moment the CMD started talking to me. He said, ' Mr Misal, I was told that you know the History of our Bank. Is it right? I said, 'Yes Sir, I was associated with writing the history of the Bank of Maharashtra and during that tenure, I had a chance to speak to prominent personalities / employees of the Bank who had contributed to the progress of the Bank.

## A Librarian's Brainstorm

Now going backwards let me reminisce about my past when I was a student in primary classes. I hail from Nipani – a border place between Maharashtra and Karnataka. I loved to read Marathi literature right from my childhood – newspapers, magazines, literary books, suspense stories. Anything that was available for reading attracted my attention. I was a voracious reader. In this enthusiasm I with some like-minded colleagues who loved reading established an independent Library named as 'Ajantha Book Service'. I had an intense love for reading and writing. After my graduation I started my work as a Junior clerk in the Shivaji University Library, Kolhapur. After one year's service in the Library I further opted for

undergoing Library Science Course and stood First Class First in the Examination. I got an opportunity to be a Librarian in Pune – Educational Capital of Maharashtra. It was an Arts and Commerce College and therefore I was advised to complete graduation in Political Science since that was a principal subject at that college up to the graduate level. I completed both BA and MA in higher second class. That gave me an opportunity to be a part time lecturer in Political Science in the same college. I was also preparing for doctoral research in Political Science. In the year 1979 an advertisement for Library and Information Officer for a Nationalized Bank appeared in the Newspaper. I applied and I was selected since I had all the requisite qualifications and experience. I started working in Bank of Maharashtra having a Central Office at Lokmangal, Pune.

This Library was unique of its type. Bank's Chairman Dr Vasant Rao Patwardhan himself was a talented scholar and wanted to develop the library to make these visitors to have the knowledge of various small scale industries and opportunities for generating employment for self. At the same time, it was observed that most of the Bank employees were reluctant to appear for the Bank Examinations i.e. CAIIB –I and II. This was a specialized Library devoted to Banking and Finance. The reading and Home Lending facilities were made free for Staff who were working and residing out of Pune City. These efforts bear fruit, and the results of Bank Staff appear for this examination and getting through this National level examinations improved. The varied services rendered by this library were recognized by Media and wide publicity was also given. During this period I also started writing about latest developments in banking, finance and entrepreneurship. A number of books were written and were published by our Organization viz. Bank of Maharashtra Officers' Organization. I engrossed myself in keeping myself updated and that helped me to sharpen my knowledge in the field of Banking. I was invited by prominent colleges to deliver lectures on Banking. I kept on writing and delivering lectures on Banking in various prominent academic institutes.

Even after my retirement I continued with my reading and writing habits and after a period of 4 years after my retirement I received a call as stated above from my colleague in the Bank. He handed over the phone to the Chairman and Managing Director of the Bank. The talk was as below:

CMD: Mr Misal, I heard that you were connected with the writing the history of the Bank?

I: Yes Sir, during the period prior to my retirement I was assigned this work.

CMD: Then can you enlighten me whether any Finance Minister has ever visited Lokmangal i.e. the Central Office of the Bank.

I: No Sir.

CMD: Then how is it that the Executives now before me are stating that Finance Minister have visited Lokmangal?

I: They are right in some way. Shri Janardan Poojari and Eduardo Faleiro, State Minister of Finance had visited Lokmangal. But no cabinet minister has ever visited Lokmangal.

CMD: Then Yashwantrao Chavan as a Finance Minister has ever visited Lokmangal.

I: No Sir, he attended a function of our Bank at Nagpur.

CMD: I am very much satisfied with your information. What else can you tell me about Pranabda.

I: Sir, his book, **Beyond Survival: Emerging Dimensions of Indian Economy'** is in our Library.

CMD: I am very much pleased with this information. Can you please come on the day of his visit. This is my personal invitation. Since, I am in Delhi and accompanying him; you come to Lokmangal before an hour of the function.

As advised by him I was there at the gates of Lokmangal. Since the Finance Minister was arriving at Lokmangal there was tight security. No one was allowed except having a valid entry pass or the staff working at Lokmangal. I told the security that I was an ex staff member, but I was not allowed inside since I did not have any valid permission. Luckily a Security Watchman who was earlier working at the Head Office recognized me and allowed me to get inside.

I went to the Library and there too was heavy security and guarded by a senior police officer. I was not allowed to get inside the Library. I requested them to call the concerned Library Personnel. When the Library staff approached me, I requested him to search for the said book and be shown to the Finance Minister. The staff stated that he was assigned a particular duty and does not know where and in which Book shelf the book might be kept as there was a total renovation of the Library and no specific arrangement system was then

adopted. I said if I am given some time to search the said book I can hand over the same to the Staff for showing it to the Finance Minister. I knew how the book looked like, its cover and size of the book very well since it was on Indian economy I had referred earlier the same for my CAIIB exam. They were very reluctant since they were given strict orders that FINANCE MINISTER would be spending just two or three minutes and their duty was to present some New Books (Book on Dnyaneshwari and Daasbodh (English version) and a bouquet, They did not like my interference in their work since I was retired from services long back.

I then thought that I should return. But before doing so, I would have to inform CMD about the same as he has personally invited me and he was on his way to receive FINANCE MINISTER. I then rang the secretary of CMD and narrated him the entire episode. Since he knew me; he said that he firmly believes in what I have stated. He asked me to wait near the Library and within a minute or so Chief Security Officer and Protocol Officer came down and took me inside the Library premises. They instructed the Library Staff that whatever reference I will be searching should be done freely and no interference in my work should be done. I was also told that I should remain in the library till the time FINANCE MINISTER's visit and to attend any queries about the Library. I then went inside and tried to search the said book. Since the arrangements were totally changed, I thought that it would be difficult to search the book. However, I knew the shape, design and cover of the book I could locate it within ten minutes. Joyfully, I brought the book to the Counter and handed over the same to the concerned library staff. He was irritated looking to the condition of then book, at its paper had become pale since it was the printed in 1984 and the cover was also torn to some extent. The library personnel thought that if such book is shown to the FINANCE MINISTER he would get irritated. So they called their boss an Asstt general manager of the deptt. He came down and was fuming with anger. The concerned staff was not satisfied. He was looking at that book as torn old book. He immediately summoned his superior and narrated the story with his view that the concerned book will not have any positive response from FINANCE MINISTER. He too agreed with him. He came to me and straightway asked me to vacate the Library. Without arguing I was leaving the Library he asked me to wait and asked me my introduction. I said, I was an ex-staff and my name is Prakash Misal. While reiterating the name he said that he has positively heard this name in some context. I said that I had written a number of reference material named Banking Update for the use of Bank Staff. He

then recognized and was frank enough to state that the same publications had helped him in his promotional examinations. Still, he was of the opinion that to show the FINANCE MINISTER his publication in such condition would be of no use. I said it would be in the right perspective to show his publication was being widely used as a reference service by the readers and had helped them in their enriching the knowledge. Every author would always prefer to know that his book is being widely read and appreciated. He asked me to wait but still he was of the opinion that what the Library Staff said was correct since FINANCE MINISTER might not have time to look into such books as he was the author, but assured me that he would keep that book on the Counter.

FINANCE MINISTER came with his paraphernalia and senior bank executives. He was having a stroll around the Library. Incidentally, one colleague who knew me very well was now Asstt. General Manager of the Bank came to me. I told him in short about the book. He knew the hidden value of the Publication and when FINANCE MINISTER was greeted with bouquets and some books in the Library. He handed over the gifts to his assistants. He was about to leave the Library and my colleague went ahead and said to him that the Library is having a very prestigious publication and showed him the book authored by him. He was delighted to see his book. He turned around and started speaking, that's how this book was popular at that time and now it was out of stock. The book was very much popular amongst the academicians. It seemed that he was glad to see that his book was well read. The concerned AGM requested to sign in the book as it would be a valuable treasure to preserve. FINANCE MINISTER was glad to do that. The visit was hardly for a few minutes. The convoy then departed for the main function and with full satisfaction I left the Library having been convinced that my devotion to reading material and librarianship was totally fulfilled. After a gap of 2-3 months, Mr Pranab Mukerji became PRESIDENT of India and in the special showcase of Bank Library the book is displayed as a book written and signed by the President.

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