Preface
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Life has always been in a state of change. Change is inevitable and a continuous process. But the pace of change during last two decades in all spheres of life, be it social, political, economic or science, particularly in the field of technology, has been unprecedented and unparallel in the recent human history. These changes have affected all aspects of our life and living.

The era of cold war between two super powers of world has been over; world has moved from bi-polar to a unipolar system. The disintegration of USSR and the collapse of the socialist economic system have given an indomitable edge to capitalistic system of economy throughout the world.

World economy in the last two decades has shifted from national to internationalization of economic activities through the process of globalization. Governments world over have been confining their role to the administration of the State and government’s desire and ability to govern employment conditions has waned and now market forces are shaping business policies, public sector has been witnessing minimization in its size, and private sector is increasing in both, size and stature. Liberalisation, privatization and globalisation have become buzz words in the economic system today. Now government’s role in all parts of the world has been restricted to the administration of law and order and more and more services are coming under the ambit of business organisations. Service-based industries have been dominating over the manufacturing-based industries.

Businesses have to compete in a global market rather than national markets to find space for their products. This heightened and nail-biting competition has put additional pressure on employers to achieve highest standards of performance for the survival and growth of their organizations. So employee performance has become the sole criteria to determine the terms and conditions of employment. Collective bargaining has been reduced to shop-level and individual-level bargaining. Employers believe that their umbilical cord is with their employees rather their unions. So employees’ unions have been sidelined in the contemporary economic environment.
Technology is now acting as a catalyst in all fields of life. Mass production has been replaced by flexible production techniques necessitating engagement of casual, temporary, contractual and part-time employees. The technology has virtually de-structured and re-structured industrial set-up by facilitating the sub-contracting of certain processes, establishing ancillary units, shifting operations to multi-production sites and outsourcing non-core functions/processes. This has worked as a double-edged weapon for organisations by economizing costs on one side and helping to tide over labour problems on the other. Owing to these changes organized labour has been losing its ground.

Contemporary workforce is more educated and skilled, more knowledgeable and ambitious and keen to have information relating to the organisation and the job. Employee composition in business organisations has assumed a heterogeneous and cosmopolitan character. Consequently new and more proactive human resources management policies and practices are adopted to manage this new generation of employees. Employers have taken over many functions which used to the domain of trade unions and thus assumed a dominating role in industrial relations system. These changes have brought about a paradigm shift in employer-employee relations.

Liberalization and de-regulation of Indian economy in early 1991 has brought about radical changes in the functioning of the economy as a whole but some sectors like financial sector has undergone complete metamorphosis owing to massive reforms in the post-liberalized era.

The entry of more foreign banks and the birth of a new generation of private sector indigenous commercial banks, who barged into the market with the state-of-the-art technologies and innovative products and more proactive HR policies and practices, have posed fresh challenges to the existing public and old private sector commercial banks. The banking sector has moved from a totally regulated environment with a strong trade union federation to a market driven competitive system. The pace of changes gained momentum in the last few years. Banking in India is emerging as one of the fastest growing
market in the world with business growing at a compound annual growth rate of about 20% to the tune of US$ 1171.29 billion by March 2007 from US$ 469.4 billion as of March 2002. (Source: www.ibef.org) and banks in India today provide direct jobs to about one million persons. Globalization is expected to gain greater speed in the coming years in view of further opening up of financial services under WTO.

Though technology has been metamorphosing banking organisations in all its aspects from systems, processes, strategies including people management, yet in the Indian banking context, the brick and mortar branches would continue to be relevant.

To analyse the existing employer-employee relations in commercial banking industry in the context of the impact of the aforementioned political, economic, social, and technological changes on the employment relations system, this research study was undertaken.

This modest research attempt could never have been possible but for the will and help of Allah, all praises and thanks to Him.

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