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**BANKING SECTOR REFORMS AND IT'S IMPACT ON INDIAN ECONOMY; AN OVER VIEW**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Face of Global Banking is undergoing a transition. Banking is now a global issue. Reforms in the financial sector, covering banking, insurance, financial markets, trade, taxation etc. have been a major catalyst in strengthening the fundamentals of the Indian economy. The reform measures have brought about sweeping changes in this critical sector of the Indian's economy. Banking in India is generally fairly mature in terms of supply, product range, and reach-even though reach in rural India still remains a challenge for the private sector and foreign banks in the year 2007. The broad objective of the financial sector reform has thus been to create a viable and efficient banking system. Improvements in the growth rate can be effected through three, not necessarily mutually exclusive channels: improving productivity of capital, through investments in human capital and raising total factor productivity (TFP). Indian economy has been recording impressive growth rates since 1991. The main thrust of the financial sector reforms has been the creation of efficient and stable financial institutions and development of the markets, especially the money and government securities market. In addition, fiscal correction was undertaken and reforms in the banking and external sector were also initiated. The year 1991-92 is the year of remarkable initiatives taken by the Government of India affecting the various facets of the Indian economy. Considering the scenario in which banking sector was in the year 1990-91, a number of initiatives were taken by the Reserve Bank of India for improving the efficiency of the banking sector and for opening up the banking sector. Taking this as a base, the author intends to examine the impact of the reforms on Credit Deposit ratio, Credit to GDP ratio, Investment in Government securities to deposits, share of business of public sector banks, the proportion of various types of advances etc. Further, it goes on to examine the difference in various aspects of the working results of the Public sector banks and private banks when compared with foreign banks.

**Keywords:**

Indian economy, Capital market, Foreign exchange reserves, Economic growth, banking sector reforms.

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**Introduction:**

Globalization is a complex phenomenon and a process that is, perhaps, best managed by public policies. Globalization has several dimensions arising out of what may be called the consequential enhanced connectivity among people across borders. While such enhanced connectivity is determined by three fundamental factors, viz., technology, taste and public policy, cross-border integration can have several aspects: cultural, social, political and economic. There has been a significant progress towards globalization in the recent past and policy-wise, there have been impressive initiatives, the extent to which India is globalized is considerably at the lower end of the emerging economies. Flexibility in product and factor markets play a part not only in capturing the gains from financial sector reform but also more generally from globalization ([www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)). Face of Global Banking is undergoing a transition. Banking is now a global issue. Since the early 1980s, bankers working together with national policymakers and officials at such international financial institutions (IFIs) as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have largely succeeded in deregulating the global banking system.

Reforms in the financial sector, covering Banking, Insurance, Financial markets, Trade, taxation etc. have been a major catalyst in strengthening the fundamentals of the Indian economy. ([www.ifbi.com](http://www.ifbi.com)). The most significant achievement of the financial sector reforms has been the marked improvement in the financial health of commercial banks in terms of capital adequacy, profitability and asset quality as also greater attention to risk management. Further, deregulation has opened up new opportunities for banks to increase revenues by diversifying into investment banking, insurance, credit cards, depository services, mortgage financing, securitization, etc. At the same time, liberalization has brought greater competition among banks, both domestic and foreign, as well as competition from mutual funds, NBFCs (non-bank finance companies), post office, etc. As banks benchmark themselves against global standards, there has been a marked increase in disclosures and transparency in bank balance sheets ([www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com)). The face of banking is changing rapidly.

The Indian banking system continues to be dominated by Government banks, with public sector banks accounting for three-quarters of total commercial banking assets.

The banking system is fragmented; with the exception of the State Bank of India, no one bank holds more than ten percent of total system assets. The combined assets of India's five largest banks are less than the assets of the largest Chinese bank ([www.unpan1.un.org](http://www.unpan1.un.org)).

In most emerging markets, banks assets comprise well over 80 per cent of total financial sector assets, whereas these figures are significantly lower in developed economies. Another difference in the banking industry in developed and emerging economies is the degree of internationalization of banking operations.

Financial sector reforms introduced in the early 1990s as a part of the structural reforms have touched upon almost all aspects of banking operation. For a few decades preceding the onset of banking and financial sector reforms in India, banks operated in an environment that was heavily regulated and characterized by sufficient barriers to entry which protected them against too much

competition. The banking reform package was based on the recommendation proposed by Narsimhan Committee report (1992) that advocated a move to a more market oriented banking system, which could operate in an environment of prudential regulation and transparent accounting. One of the primary motives behind this drive was to introduce an element of market discipline into the regulatory process that would reinforce the supervisory effort of the reserve bank of India(RBI). Market discipline, especially in the financial liberalization phase, reinforces regulatory and supervisory efforts and provides a strong incentive to banks to conduct their business in a prudent and efficient manner and to maintain adequate capital as a cushion against risk exposures. The administered interest rate structure, both on the liability and the assets side, allowed banks to earn reasonable spread without much efforts. Although banks operated under regulatory constraints in the form of statutory holding of government securities and the cash reserve ratio (CRR) and lacked functional autonomy and operational efficiency, the fact was that most banks did not efficiently. The functioning of the market's disciplining mechanism and also the effectiveness of the supervisory process, however, is hindered by weak accounting and legal system, and inadequate transparency of accounting disclosures. From a central bank's perspective, such high-quality disclosures help the early detection of problem banks by the market and reduce the severity of market disruptions. Consequently, the RBI as part and parcel of the financial sector deregulation, attempted to enhance the transparency of the annual reports of Indian banks by, among other things, introducing stricter income recognition and assets classification rules, enhancing the capital adequacy norms, and by requiring a number of additional disclosures sought by investors to make better cash flow and risk assessment.

#### **Review literature:**

Joshi (1986) in his study of all scheduled commercial banks operating in India analyses the profitability and profit planning relating to the period 1970-1982. The study discusses and trends in profits and profitability of commercial banks nationalization. The factors leading to the deterioration of profitability are highlighted.

Minakshi and Kaur (1990) attempted to measure quantitatively the impact of the various instruments of monetary policy on the profitability of commercial banks. The study empirically proves that pre-liberalization banking being highly regulated and controlled industry, has suffered a lot so far as profitability concerned. The bank rates and reserve requirements ratio has played a significant role in having a negative impact on the bank's profitability.

Ojha (1992) in his study attempts to measure the productivity of public sector commercial banks in India. After identifying various measures of productivity like total assets per employee, total credit per employee, total deposits per employee, pre-tax profits per employee, net profit per employee, working funds per employee, ratio of establishment expenses to working funds and net interest per employee, comparison is made with the banks at the international level. The study concludes the Indian banks have very less productivity ratio compared with western countries. Since in his study a comparison has been made of Indian public sector banks, which have to perform other social functions unlike western commercial banks.

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**Impact on Corporate Sector:**

**Corporate governance:**

Capital markets have always had the potential to exercise discipline over promoters and management alike, but it was the structural changes created by economic reforms that effectively unleashed this power. Minority investors can bring the discipline of capital markets to bear on companies by voting with their wallets. They can vote with their wallets in the primary market by refusing to subscribe to any fresh issues by the company. They can also sell their shares in the secondary markets their by depressing the share price. Financial sector set in motion several key forces that made these forces far more potent than in the past:

**Deregulation:** economic reforms have not only increased growth prospects, but they have also made markets more competitive. This means that in order to survive companies will need to invest continuously on large scale. The most powerful impact of voting with the wallet is on companies with large growth opportunities that have a constant need to approach the capital market for additional funds.

**Disintermediation:** meanwhile, financial sector reforms have made it imperative for firms to rely on capital markets to a greater degree for their needs of additional capital. As long as firms relied on directed credit, what mattered was the ability to manipulate bureaucratic and political processes; the capital markets, however, demand performance.

**Globalization:** globalization of our financial markets has exposed issuers, investors and intermediaries to the higher standards of disclosures and corporate governance that prevail in more developed capital markets.

**Tax reforms:** tax reforms coupled with deregulation and competition have tilted the balance away from black money transaction. It is not often realized that when a company makes profits in black money, it is cheating not only the government, but also the minority shareholders. Black money profits do not enter the books of account of the company at all, but usually go into the pockets of the promoters.

**Risk management:**

In the days when interest rate were fixed by the government and remained stable for long periods of time, interest rate risk was a relatively minor problem. The deregulation of interest rate as a part of financial sector reforms has changed all that and made interest rate highly volatile. For instance, the rate of interest on short term commercial paper was about 7.75-8.50% at the end of 2008-2009 dropped back 6.50-7.50% at the year of 2009- 2010 and constant by 7.00-8.50% at the year of 2013-14

Companies which borrow short term to fund their new projects may face difficulties if interest rates go up sharply. It may turn out that at the higher cost of finance, the project is not viable at all. Worse, companies may find it difficult to refinance their borrowings at any price in times when money is tight. Many companies which borrowed in inter corporate deposit (ICD) market in 2013-14

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to finance acquisitions and expansion face this difficulty in 2013 and 2014 when the ICD market dried up. Large scale defaults (euphemistically described as rollover) took place during this time.

In the post reform era, corporate have also been faced with high volatility in foreign exchange rate. The rupee –dollar rate has on several occasions moved up or down by several percentage points in a single days as compared to the gradual, predictable changes of the eighties. Indian companies have found their dismay that foreign currency borrowings which looked very cheap because of low coupon rate of interest can suddenly become very expensive if the rupee depreciates against the currency in which the bond is denominated.

#### **Capital stricter:**

At the beginning of the reforms process, the Indian corporate sector found itself significantly over-levered. This was because of several reasons:

Subsidized institutional finance so attractive that it made sense for companies to avail of as much of it as they could get away with. This usually meant the maximum debt-equity ratios laid down by the government for various industries. In a protected economy, operating (business) risk was lower and companies could therefore afford to take more risks on the financing side. Mostly of debt was institutional and could usually be rescheduled at little cost. Bond covenants: international bond covenants are quite restrictive specially for companies whose credit worthiness is less than top class. These covenants may restrict the investment and dividend policies of the companies may mandate sinking funds, may include cross- default clauses and may contain me- too clauses which restrict the future borrowing ability of the company. Bonds covenants have typically been quite lacks in India. Moreover bond (and debentures) trustees have been generally very lacks in the performance of their duties.

#### **Cash flow discipline:**

Equity has no fixed service cost and year to year fluctuations in income are not very serious so long as over all enough is earned to provide a decent return to the shareholder. Debt on the other hand has a fixed re payment schedule and interest obligations. A company that is enabling to generate enough cash flow to meet this debt service requirement faces in solvency or painful restructuring of liability. Again, Indian companies have not experienced much of this discipline in the past because much of their debt was owed to banks and institutions who have historical been willing to re schedule loan quite generously. Institutions may be less willing to do so in future. More importantly, rescheduled is not an easy option when the debt is raised in the market from the public. Bonds are typically rescheduled only a part of bankruptcy proceeding or a BIFR restructuring. As the next face of economic reforms targets bankruptcy related laws, cash flow discipline can be expected to become far more stringent.

#### **Group structure and business portfolio:**

Indian business groups have been doing serious introspection about their business portfolio and about their group structure under the influence of academic like C.K. Prahalad, Indian business

groups which have traditionally been involved in a wide range of business have been contemplating a shift to a more focused strategy. At the same time, they have been trying to create a group organizations structure that would enable the formulation and implementation of a group wide corporate strategy. In many cases they have not gone beyond a statement of intend.

**Working capital management:**

Working capital management has been impacted by a number of the developments discussed above –operational reforms in the area of credit assessment and delivery, interest rate deregulation, change in the competitive structure of the banking and credit system, and the emergency of the money and debt markets. Cash management has become an important task with the facing out of the cash credit system. Companies now have to decide on the optimal amount of cash and near cash that they need to hold, and also on how to deploy the cash. Deployment in tern involves decision about maturity, credit risk and liquidity. During the tight money this policy of this period, some companies were left with to little liquidity cash, while other found that their cash looked up in unrealizable or illiquid assets of uncertain value.

**Conclusion:**

With the increasing levels of globalization of the Indian banking industry, evolution of universal banks and bundling of financial services, competition in the banking industry will intensify further. The banking industry has the positional and ability to rise to the occasion as demonstrated by the rapid pace of automation which has already had a profound impact on raising the standard of banking services. Indian corporate finds themselves equipped to operate in highly competitive and financial market place they will have only themselves to blame.

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