

A bank symbolises Trust and Security

- a place to keep one's money safe and to be able to access it whenever the need arises and
- a partner in progress. The Bank indeed forms an integral part of finance for the average urban dweller whether it is for investing, borrowing or financial assistance.

The Section 5 (b) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, defines the word, Bank and Banking as follows:

"A Bank, by definition, is an establishment, licensed by the RBI to accept money as deposits for the purpose of lending and investment. The bank also pays! receives interest on the deposits! loans. The Bank acts as an intermediary, in financial transactions, and provides other financial services to its customers."

"Banking means accepting, for the purpose of lending or investment, of deposits of money from the public repayable on demand or otherwise and withdrawable by cheque, draft, and order or otherwise."

The Scene Today

The customer-bank interface appears to have become faceless, mechanical and impersonal. Paper money has been transformed to plastic money and e-money. The conventional ledger entries and bank balances have been digitized. The communication gap between the Bank and the customers appears to have widened. Unless these are bridged, the avowed goals of financial inclusion of the Government and Reserve Bank of India may not be realized.

Money, is accepted from the public, as Deposit, in three types of accounts.



Savings Deposits, as the name implies, are meant for keeping the savings of individuals to be spent as and when required. The ease of withdrawal is the prime feature of Savings Bank deposits. All Banks, till recently, were paying the same interest and the interest was paid half yearly. Interest was paid on the minimum balance between the 10th and the last date of the month. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently deregulated the interest rate payable on Savings Deposits by the Banks. Consumers Association of India played an important role in achieving this. As a result of several years of hard work, today, millions of savings bank customers get paid interest on the daily halance in their account

Current Account is mainly intended for business and commercial purposes Banks do not pay any interest on the balance in current deposit accounts.

Fixed **Deposits** are the monies deposited by the customers with the banks for a fixed period, say, 91 days, one year, three years etc. Banks pay interest on the fixed deposits /more than the Savings Interest rate of interest). Banks pay interest on fixed deposits monthly, quarterly, half yearly, annually or cumulatively on maturity, as agreed upon by the customer at the time of making the fixed deposit. The banks charge a penalty for foreclosure (if the deposit is closed ahead of the maturing date) of fixed deposits before the due date; but generally the money is repaid to the customer immediately. Similarly, the Banks automatically renew the deposits on due date (irrespective of the presentation of Deposit receipt by the customer) for the same period or for one year.

A consumer's selection of a bank is based on the following considerations:

- The proximity to one's work place or residence. which is the primary factor in selecting a Bank.
- Recommendations of friends and relatives on the service and convenience of operations play a role in selecting the Bank.
- Sometimes canvassing by the Bank can prompt a person to open an account in a particular Bank.

How to select a Bank?

(i) It is necessary for customers to inquire about the profile of the Branch of the Bank for services offered.

Today most banks use Core Banking which gives the consumer the facility to carry out transactions in any branch of the same Bank.

(ii) Matching your profile with that of the target customers of the branch is crucial:

The different types of customers grouped for banking purposes are

- High Net worth Individuals -HNIs
- · Non Resident Indians- NRIs
- Business & commercial organisations
- Salaried class and Pensioners
- · Farmers and Agriculturists

For example

- High Income group may be interested in wealth /portfolio management products.
- Middle & Low Income groups in home loans, educational loans etc.

- Pensioners in the safety and rate of interest on deposits etc.
- Highly techno savvy persons or youngsters maybe interested in "Banking beyond Banking hours.

Services offered by some banks:

- The number of transactions per quarter in HSBC is 12 only and Quarterly Account Balance (QAB) required is as high as Rs 75000.
- Citibank requires Rs 1 lakh for opening an account and Rs 3 lakhs QAB to be maintained.
- Citibank allows free transactions through other bank's ATMs.
- Foreign banks concentrate on investment and wealth management using their treasury operations.
- They also concentrate on credit card business with stiff charges on delayed payments.
- Many of the New Generation Private sector banks concentrate and create expertise to handle High net worth individuals (HNIs) and Non resident Indians (NRIs).
- Such a Bank, which usually operates in urban Areas though suitable for HNIs and NRIs, may not solicit and seek the salaried middle class or pensioners as their account holders.
- The Public Sector Banks (PSU) are sturdy and have no hidden charges in the services they provide. It is more suitable for the salaried and pensioners.

Old Generation Private Sector Banks, sanction loans faster but charge a little higher rate of interest.

Many banks have also redefined the operation of their branches as a part of market segmentation and have carved out specialized branches.

- Personal Banking Branch,
- · Commercial & Institutional Branches,
- Hi-Tec Branch
- SME Branch,
- Foreign Exchange (Forex) Business Branch,
- NRI Branch etc making their targeted customers explicit.

Ask yourself this simple question:

Will the bank be interested in having me as their customer? If your answer is yes then proceed to open an Account.

(iii) Attitude, Knowledge and Expertise of the Staff:

The other relevant consideration for selecting a Bank can be the knowledge, personal interest and expertise of the bank staff in understanding and satisfying your needs. You may ascertain this from existing bank customers and also satisfy personally.

(iv) Delivery Channels:

Delivery channels various are through technology based means which the customers can transact their business with the Bank at their convenience anywhere and at anytime of the day or night. Thus, the customers will have the choice of transacting ATM, business through Internet Banking, Tele banking, Mobile banking or through plastic cards such as Credit Card. Debit Card Smart Card etc.

ATMs, Tele banking, Internet Banking and mobile banking are available round the clock. Banks of your choice can also be accessed at multiple locations, including overseas locations.

Different means or channels have evolved. in tune with various needs of the customers. However the widening gap of technology friendliness and paucity of resources have put pressure on the effectiveness of such efforts. Also, the number and distribution of ATMs, arrangements with other bank ATMs for services can be an important consideration.

The Banks also issue add-on cards in joint accounts for a fee. Such a facility also may be of interest to some customers with children studying in another location etc.

(v) Product features:

For example, the banks have introduced different classes of Savings Bank products. The key factor is the minimum balance and /or quarterly Average Balance being maintained. The charges for non maintenance of minimum balance, the facilities provided in such accounts like auto sweep, concessional charges on remittance, d-Mat accounts etc are the factors to be considered. At the cost of repetition, it will be necessary to be aware of charges for maintenance of accounts and various facilities

(vi) Interest payable/Receivable by the bank and Bank charges:

Banks pay interest on deposits placed with them and this also gets revised periodically Similarly, the banks levy processing charges, documentation charges, interest on loans, penal interest on delayed payments, pre-payment charges, charges for non maintenance of minimum balance, ATM card new and annual renewal charges, commission for issue of drafts, locker rent, cash handling charges etc.

- 1. It may be prudent to find out, clearly from the bank, the rate of interest paid by them on deposits, interest and other charges levied by the bank for their loans and services.
- 2. The customers can approach the head office of the bank, banking ombudsman and consumer forum if any of the terms are changed without their consent.

Procedure for Opening a Savings Bank Account

The account opening form needs to be completed, signed and submitted to the bank. The following details will be required:

- a) Personal details: name, address, occupation, male/female, date of birth, PAN number, SPECIMEN SIGNATURE or THUMB IMPRESSION etc.
- b) Mode of operation of the account: Singly, payable to either or survivor, payable and operated jointly by all account holders and so on.
- c) Nomination
- d) Request for Cheque book, ATM/Debit card, internet banking facility, mobile banking facility etc, and
- e) Financial details like other bank accounts, credit cards, annual income, assets owned or planned to be acquired like house, car, two wheelers, TV, computer etc. This information is required by the bank for cross selling of products by the bank and for availing loan facility from the bank.

Know Your Customer (KYC) NORMS

Banks were advised by Reserve Bank of India, to follow certain customer identification procedures for opening of accounts and monitoring transactions of a suspicious nature for the purpose of reporting it to appropriate authority.

These standards have become the international benchmark for the regulatory authorities, for framing Anti Money Laundering rules and combating financing of terrorism. Compliance with these standards by both the banks /financial institutions and the country have not become necessary for international financial relationships.

KYC Norms require the following documents to be furnished to the Bank. Two recent passport size photographs, ID proof, address proof and introduction by an existing customer of the bank:

(i) For ID proof the Banks generally accept the following documents:

- (a) Passport,
- (b) PAN Card,
- (c) Voter's ID card,
- (d) Driving Licence,
- (e) Ration card with photo,
- (f) Government ID card,
- (g) Senior Citizen's Id card

(ii) For Address proof the Banks accept the following documents:

- (a) Passport,
- (b) Telephone bill,
- (c) Electricity bill,
- (d) Ration card,
- (e) Certificate /Address Proof issued by Post Office etc.

The original documents have to be produced for verification along with a Xerox copy for Bank's records.

Variations / Types of Savings Bank (SB) Accounts

Banks, in order to cater to the needs of different customers have designed a number of Savings Bank products, targeting different sections of customers along with offer of freebies.

Operations in Savings Bank accounts

The operations in Savings Bank (SB) accounts are generally credit (deposit) or debit (withdrawal) of money. The SB account is used for depositing cheques in their favour, like salary cheques, interest cheques, dividend warrants, IT refund orders, pension cheques, insurance annuities etc.

Almost all the bank branches are now on Core Banking Solution (CBS) and the customers in general have welcomed this development. With CBS all the branches of the bank and ATMs are connected using leased telephone lines and to a centralized data base. This has made anytime, anywhere banking a reality.

Technology based Products and Delivery Channels

In addition, banks have introduced technology based products and Delivery Channels, for improved customer service:

- **ATM** this has facilitated, customer access to cash (both withdrawal) deposits) 24 x 7
- Internet Banking. account querying, transfer of funds, mobile recharge, payment of utilities, purchase of air/train tickets etc).
- **Debit Cards** (dispensed the need for carrying cash for making purchases)

The comparative rates and services are compiled i

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SBH	SBI	SBM	SBT	ANDHRA	BOB	BOI	CANARA	CBI	CORPORATION	INDIAN	
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1000	1000	1000	1000	500	1000	500	1000	1000	500	500	
1000	1000	1000	1000	500	1000	500	1000	1000	500	500	
500	1000	1000	1000	250	500	500	500	500	250	500	
500	500	500	1000	250	500	500	500	250	250	500	
NA	200	225	226	NA	100	60	NA	7 5	7 5	NA	
50	50	50	50	7 5	0	100	0	50	99	0	
200	NA	NA	220	200	NA	100	150	100	165	100	
0	2	2.5	2	2.5	3	3	3	NA	5	3	
50	NA	50	55	NA	200	100	150	50	30	NA	
NA	UL	UL	NA	NA	NA	NA	UL	NA	UL	NA	
20	100	50	50	50	NA	NA	25	NA	100	NA	
2	0	NA	6	2	NA	NA	0	NA	2	NA	
NA	UL	UL	NA	NA	NA	NA	UL	NA	UL	NA	
50	50	20	50	50	NA	25	25	NA	25	NA	
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112	NA	NA	110	100	NA	NA	60	NA	50	7 0	
55	50	50	50	55	NA	100	60	NA	50	30	
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n the table below showing details of all 28 Banks

	IOB	PNB	SYNDICATE	UBI	VIJAYA	AXIS	HDFC	ICICI	ING VYSYA	CATHOLIC SYRIAN	CUB	KVB	LVB	ТМВ	FEDERAL BANK	HSBC	CITI
	18004254445	18001802222	18004256655	1800222244	18004259992	18002335577	1800224060	1800333499	18004259900	04872333095	914352402322	18001021916	18004252233	18004250426	18004251199	18001034722	18001802484
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	1000	10000	1000	1000	500	5000	10000	10000	5000	500	3000	1000	500	500	1000	25000	25000
:	1000	10000	1000	1000	500	5000	10000	10000	5000	300	2500	1000	500	500	1000	NA NA	NA NA
	500	5000	500	500	250	2500	5000	5000	5000	200	2000	1000	500	500	1000		NA NA
	500 NA	5000 300	500 30	250 NA	250 30	1000 750	5000 7 50	2000 7 50	5000 200	100 100	1000 30	1000 NA	100 50	250 100	1000 300	NA 350	NA 500
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•	0	112	0	100	100	250	100	0	150	0	0	0	7 5	0	25	150	NA
	100	100	NA NA	100	100	500	100	200	NA	100	200	250	200	NA	150	150	250
	2.5	2.5	2	2.5	5	2.5	2	2	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	2	2	NA	2
	20	25	NA	25	25	50	25	NA	NA	50	NA	0	100	100	50	50	NA
									Stad Latty								
	NA	UL	ÜL	NA	NA	NA	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	NA	NA
	NA	100	50	NA	20	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	100	NA	NA
	NA	2	0	NA	2.5	NA	100	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	NA	NA
	NA	UL	UL	NA	UL	NA	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	NA	NA
į	NA	50	50	NA	50	NA	100	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	200	NA	NA
	NA	0	0	NA	2,25	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	NA	NA
		é															
	NA	YES	YES	NA	YES	NA	NA	YES	NA	YES	YES	NA	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
		•			•				•					•			
	NA	35	0	NA	0	NA	25	NA	NA	50	0	NA	0	NA	60	50	NA
	NA	8 5	50	NA	25	NA	NA	NA	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	NA	60	50	NA
	YES	100	50	NA	15 +	NA	25 + DD	NA	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	NA	60	NA	NA
	NA	100	50	NA	40	200	200	NA	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	NA	200	2 7 5	250
	NA	60	50.	NA FO	60	NA 100	50	NA	NA NA	50	100	NA	NA Fo	NA	35	100	NA DEG
	NA NA	100	50 50	50	100	100	7 50	NA NA	NA NA	10	100	NA NA	50 50	NA NA	300	275	250
	NA	100	50	100	35	350	50	NA	NA	50	100	NA	50	NA	7 5	250	2 7 5

using the POS (Point Of Sale) terminals provided by the Merchant Establishments in collaboration with banks.

• **Mobile Banking** - which is being implemented by most banks, gradually and facilitates the youngsters accessing banking services.

Internet-banking has virtually extended banking operations to every home with access to internet. With the proliferation of 3G mobile technology, mobile banking which has been introduced by the banks has further facilitated banking operations by customers using their mobile phones.

Some of the Foreign Banks and New Generation Private Sector Banks provide the facility of delivery of cash for a fee. With the advent of other delivery channels like ATMs, Net Banking, ECS, Mobile Banking etc all the monetary receipts and payments transactions are carried out electronically.

These developments have raised the customer expectations in respect of banking services, at reasonable and affordable cost, safety of banking operations and speed of delivery of various services. The efficiency of the services and expeditious resolution of grievances are key drivers.

In view of the fact, that substantial investments have been made by the banks in computers, technology and trained staff, some charges for the services availed by the customer may become inevitable.

COMPARATIVE STUDY

Comparative Testing is a formal process by which products & services of different vendors are tested The services are tested for compliance to the regulations laid out by the regulatory authorities for services.

CONCERT is undertaking Comparative Testing for South India under a grant from Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India. In the first year, Concert is testing 7 products and 3 services. One of the services selected for testing is Banking Services.

The results are published for all the tested brands. As part of the testing, the tester tries to provide consumer education on the various features, proper usage and how-to-buy guides for the product/service under test. For this, the Banks were grouped in four categories

1.NATIONALISED BANKS

State Bank Of India Andhra Bank State Bank Of Hyderabad State Bank Of Travancore State Bank Of Mysore Vijaya Bank Corporation Bank Indian Bank Indian Overseas Bank Punjab National Bank Canara Bank Syndicate Bank Bank Of Baroda Bank Of India Central Bank Of India

2.NEW GENERATION PRIVATE BANKS

Axis Bank Icici Bank Ing Vysya Bank Hdfc Bank

3.OLD GENERATION PRIVATE BANKS

Catholic Syrian Bank Karur Vysya Bank Ltd Tamilnadu Mercantile Bank Ltd City Union Bank Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd

4.FOREIGN BANKS

Standard Chartered Bank HSBC Bank Citihank

The service components tested

- **1.**The contents of account opening form and ease of filling,
- The charges and prompt issuance of cheque books,
- **3.**Printing of customer name in the cheque books,
- 4. Cheques payable at any of the bank's branch,
- **5.**Charges for Cheque books, Passbook, ATM card etc.,
- **6.**The ceiling of amount for above and charges,
- **7.**Cash handling charges for payment through other branches of the bank in the same place, other places.
- **8.**Charges for ATM operations, operating through other branches (other than the branch where the account was opened),
- 9.Issuance of ATM card,
- 10. Delivery of ATM PIN,
- **11.**Timely replacement of lost ATM card /PIN,
- 12.Cost of replacement of ATM card.
- 13. Automatic renewal of ATM cards,
- 14. Charges for new ATM card,
- **15.**Charges for standing instructions, Stop payment, cheques returned unpaid (Inward / outward),
- **16.**The prescribed minimum balance

- for opening an account,
- 17. The minimum balance to be maintained and charges for non maintenance, (with variation for Metro, Urban, Semi urban and Rural branches)
- **18.**The quality of the service as perceived by the consumers.
- **19.**The charges for non maintenance of minimum balance,
- **20.**Charges for inoperative account, (where there are no transactions in a year) etc.,
- **21.**Rate of interest paid on SB balances, (though at present it is the same, with deregulation by RBI the rate of interest paid on SB deposits may vary).

Testing methodology adopted

(a)Customer Survey: A detailed survey questionnaire was prepared, which aimed at testing customer satisfaction regarding the products/services offered by his/her bank. The topics covered include

- •Readability of account opening forms
- Minimum Balance to be maintained for savings deposits,
- · Locker facilities offered,
- Passbook/statement facility,
- Availability of complaint redressal systems,
- Availability of net banking, ATM facility, ECS facility,
- ·Transparency regarding fees/charges,
- Account closure procedure,
- ·Additional services/facilities offered.

The survey covering around 6000 customers for their views and experience on the Banking services was

conducted and responses collected. in the four southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka.

The complaints were grouped under:

Service related, ATM, Charges, Amenities TDS, Loan etc.

The rating based on the survey is

tabulated for the 3 Groups of Banks. (See page 14 & 15)

(b)Desk Analysis:

The second part of testing was a desk research based on the published data available in the Banks' website, forms, brochures etc.

Charges for the various service components were compared and tabulated.

We are narrating a few complaints and hardships encountered by the account holders during their banking transactions.

Ms. Hema had an account with a nationalised bank in Bangalore. When she shifted to Chennai, she continued her banking transactions with the same account thanks to core banking which enables a person to operate the account from any location. Once Ms.Hema was in a hurry, and accidentally inserted a wrong ATM card to withdraw cash. The transaction was aborted. After a few days, she contacted the branch where she used the ATM card for withdrawing the cash. The Manager of the Branch asked her for the transaction slip generated while trying to withdraw the cash. She handed the slip. Since it was on thermal paper, the content got erased and nothing was legible.

The bank expressed inability to help her without the details of transaction and advised her to apply for a duplicate card. If the ATM machines use ordinary paper, instead of thermal paper such hardship can be avoided.

Mr. Suresh wanted to withdraw his salary to meet his monthly household expenses. The bank informed him that there were insufficient funds in his account. Perplexed, Suresh requested for his account statement. The statement reflected an ATM withdrawal, amounting to almost 90% of his salary. Mr. Suresh informed the bank that the entry pertaining to the ATM withdrawal was not a transaction made by him.

The Bank after confirming the same asked him to furnish a letter for reversing the transaction and promised to do the needful. The Bank took nearly 8 days to reverse the transaction and credit the money. Luckily Suresh had a few friends who lent him money to meet his immediate expenses or else he would have been in deep trouble.

The reversal of wrong transaction should be done within 24 hours so that the fund in the account is made available in time for the account holder's use.

Bank Name	Total Number of Respondents	Total Number of Complaints	Average %
Andhra Bank	205	83	40,49
Bank of Baroda	49	22	44,90
Bank of India	81	38	46.91
Canara Bank	422	122	28.91
Central Bank of India	56	27	48.21
Corporation Bank	165	76	46.06
Indian Bank	545	212	38.90
Indian Overseas bank	474	141	29. 7 5
State Bank of India	1065	325	30.52
State Bank of Mysore	138	65	47.10
State Bank of Travancore	174	64	36.78
Syndicate Bank	144	51	35,42
Union Bank of India	5 7 6	170	29.51
Vijaya Bank	8 9	28	31.46
Total			
Axis Bank	38	12	31.58
HDFC Bank	173	57	32.95
ICICI Bank	806	215	26.67
ING Vysya Bank	69	22	31.88
Total			
Catholic Syrian Bank	391	120	30.69
Federal Bank	174	57	32.76
кув	137	35	25.55
Total			
Groupwise	Group A	Group B	Group C
Criteria	Rating	Rating	Rating
Opening of accounts	Good	Good	Good

Groupwise	Group A	Group B	Group C
Criteria	Rating	Rating	Rating
Opening of accounts	Good	Good	Good
KYC Norms	Fair	Poor	Fair
ATM Operations	Fair	Fair	Fair
Branch Operations	Fair	Fair	Fair
Infrastructure	Fair	Fair	Fair
Service Experience	Good	Good	Good
Knowledge of Banking	Fair	Fair	Fair

Apr'12/May '12

Service	ATM	Charges	Amenities Provided	TDS	Sanction of Loans	Total Number of Complaints
25	29	- 4	4	8	13	83
6	9	1	2	2	2	22
11	14	3	3	3	4	38
38	21	16	21	18	8	122
9	10	1	2	1	4	27
36	15	3	7	6	9	76
83	42	12	27	21	27	212
32	49	6	9	8	37	141
98	87	19	24	45	52	325
20	23	5	5	5	7	65
19	25	4	8	3	5	64
18	9	6	6	1	11	51
32	7 2	16	1 9	15	16	170
8	12	3	2	1	2	28
435	417	99	139	137	197	
5	5	1	0	0	1	12
21	3	14	5	5	9	57
65	37	71	15	19	8	215
8	9	2	1	1	1	22
99	54	88	21	25	19	
42	12	12	12	25	17	120
20	20	10	6	11	6	57
13	12	6	1	2	1	35
7 5	28	28	19	38	24	
	G	roup A		Grou	рВ	Group C

SCORING Methodology

The Survey Questionnaire has mainly responses which are YES/NO. All YES (positive responses) are given a score of 2 and the NOs are scored as 0.

The ratings were as follows

4.1-5 Excellent 3.1-4 Very Good 2.1-3 Good 2.1-1 Fair

The comparative rates and services are compiled in the tableat the center sheet showing details of all 30 BANKS FOR EASY BANKING

1.Banks send SMS messages to customers whenever cash is withdrawn from their accounts, using ATM / Debit cards and Credit cards. Customers may keep their mobile number updated with the Bank's branch where the account is maintained.

2.Customers may note in a personal diary the details of the card number and contact phone number of the Bank to be contacted; so that in the unfortunate eventuality of card being lost, or misplaced, or PIN is forgotten etc and have to be reported, you have the information at hand.

3.In some ATMs the card has to be inserted and removed. In some other ATMs the card goes inside the machine and comes out after transactions are completed. In these ATMs for reasons such as card is blocked, the PIN has been wrongly entered more than thrice the card is captured /swallowed by the machine. There is no need to panic. In such eventuality the Manager of the branch where ATM is located and branch which has issued the card may be contacted.

4.Never disclose the PIN to anyone. Do not keep the PIN details with the card. Please change your PIN at periodic intervals.

5.The cvv number (the last three digits) on the credit card is critical and used for online transactions. After keeping it noted in a safe place, mask or deface the three numbers.

6.Whenever cash could not be drawn, but your account has been debited immediately inform the bank in writing with full details of date and time of the incidence As per RBI instructions banks must re-credit the amount to your account within 10 days. Otherwise banks have to pay a penalty of Rs 100 per day.

7.Be alert and cautious while using the new technology, but do not be "scared." All banks have put in place safety and control features in the interest of customers.

8.Many a time, the customers give their consent without fully understanding the implications or signing blank forms; thus they land opting for services or products they may not require. So please understand and carefully fill the application.

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