

colleague, Mr. K. Venugopal. Yet I had to continue as President from 1993 till 2007 and later as Chairman.

During these 28 years, I have been blessed with affection and regards everywhere I went; not only our members, their families, many colleagues belonging to the workmen cadre have been generous in their adulation towards me. That is heart filling. In my capacity as office bearer I tried my best to be of help to individual members most of whom even today have the sense of gratitude and recall the problems they faced and the help received.

Collectively speaking as your representative I had the proud privilege of participating in every joint meeting held between February 1981 (when I was not an office bearer!) and August 2009; in signing the historic settlement on promotion policy of December 1981 which laid a career path for the officers in the bank and the future leaders of banking industry; in signing a transfer policy after the first ever strike of officers in the Bank in December 1988 and signing several agreements for the benefit of the officers. All these were calculated to raise their sense of belonging and commitment to the Bank. **We convinced the management that the officers would walk the extra mile required to make the Bank to excel. In times of crisis, as in 1990-91, we laid stress on strategies for the survival of the Bank instead of on the monetary demands for the constituency. Our officers responded to our call and management was equally appreciative of our role so that when the Bank turned around officers were duly rewarded. The year 2000 was again a testing time for us when the Bank's value system was deeply eroded and we had the courage of conviction to call a spade a spade through series of campaigns, interaction with Directors and unique circulars.**

We also walked in stormy weather in 2001-02 with reference to our demand for VRS. As your representative, I had a very difficult task: the force of argument had failed to convince the management and we were compelled to invoke the argument of force in the form a strike in March 2002. There was criticism from different quarters including a direction from AIBOC, which asked us to withdraw our decision to go on strike. The Executive Committee stood firm and we created history. Subsequent to that the Bank has been recruiting large number of officers under autonomy.

Some of the past CMDs were very kind to me. Mr. K. R. Ramamoorthy was one whose intellectual caliber and concern for the employees can be matched by few. Even in conflict situations he maintained positive relationships. Mr. Cherian Verghese was another who was a fine gentleman with an equally genuine concern for his staff. Despite our troubled industrial relations during their period their honesty and human concern make me cherish the association with them. In between we saw Mr. R. S. Hugar who was a man with a large heart and people oriented. His three years was the golden years of IR for us. Among the Executive Directors, Mr. K. R. Shenoy and Mr. P. K. Gupta will always be remembered for their positive and human outlook. All of them were personally nice to me.

At the national level of officers' movement, I must acknowledge the encouragement and inspiration I continuously received from stalwarts like Mr. L. V. Subramaniam, Late Mr. Jeppu Vasanth Rao, Mr. P. S. Rajagopal, Mr. R. N. Godbole, Mr. S. R. Sengupta and Mr. Shantha Raju.

It was LVS whose fiery, inspiring address stirred our members into a dynamic role. He called upon the members to walk like an elephant. When you start a trade union career at the age of 31 without any experience, you need such inspiring advice. The contact with Mr. Godbole became more intimate after we joined AIBOC in early 1988. He was a master strategist and had an eye to scout talent and

recognize. It was his decision to give me the responsibility of newly created Joint General Secretary in AIBOC in 1995 which post I hold till date. Our strike for a transfer policy in 1988 was under his able guidance.

Several past colleagues in the Executive Committee shared my burden, guided me and stood with me. Late Mr. N Balasubramaniam, late Mr. C. Sadanandan and late Mr. K. N. Kalyanam took me as part of their families. Their untimely departure from this world was a personal loss to me.

Among the erstwhile office bearers there were many who stood by my side and guided me. My first President, Mr. K. Achutha Pai and the next President, Mr. C. Laxman Shenoy both of whom became General Managers were sources of strength. Mr. P. M. Shenoy, Mr. M. Prakash Hegde and Mr. T.R. Sundar led the movement in Mumbai very effectively those days. In Head Office, Mr. L. Nagesh Bhat, Mr. Y.K. Shenoy and Mr. K. Venugopal were part of my earlier team. Later, Mr. P. P. Suvarna joined our team in Head office. He and Mr. K. Sheshappa, now our Vice president were silent but meticulous in their work. When, for personal reasons, Mr. P. P. Suvarna relinquished the office bearership, it was a blow to us. In Bangalore, Mr. S. Shankar Ram, Mr. Amruth Prabhu, Mr. U. Sathyendra Shenoy and Mr. K. R. Sridhar alongwith Mr. M. Gourangadas provided the strength.

Mr. K. Venugopal took over from me as General Secretary in 1993. In fact he was instrumental in my becoming General Secretary in 1981. He was a leader of the masses and known for his creative thinking and excellent communicative skills. He brought in a sea change in our working.

Mr. M. Gourangdas was a class by himself. During his association with me spanning 28 years he stood with me in every crisis as a functionary and instilled confidence and showed the way.

I thank all the past office bearers and the present for their support.

I must also put on record the long association of Mr. P. Mahesh, our office Manager at CBOO, since 1982. From the days of Periera's Lodge, he has been my Man Friday! The other staff members in Central Office like Mr. Ananda Krishnan have been of great support.

What are the challenges before the members today? The days ahead are cloudy. But the officers in Corporation Bank have faced worse situation through collective effort. As the human resources are the key to the progress of any service organisation no management can ignore an important section of its resources for long. Such an act will be counter productive. The members need to have an iron will and clarity of goal. As Gurudev Tagore's prayer entreats, we should not bend before insolent might. I have the faith in our members that they will rise up to the challenges before CBOO. When there is a challenge to our identity as a collective body we need to rise to the occasion. We coined a base line for CBOO in 1985: '*Stand together, work together*'; that should guide us in our future endeavors. And our motto '*unity is strength*' has eternal validity.

When I take leave of you, I carry the good memories of the Bank for two reasons. One, the bank gave me a status in the society and economic stability and two, in the personal level in 1976 when I started off in the bank's STC I met the young lady destined to be my wife and able intellectual companion. She has greatly influenced my thoughts. Our two children have learnt from our lives to be better citizens.

At the time of laying down the office I owe an assurance to all members that the present leadership of CBOO is in capable hands. It is a philosophy followed by us that nobody should be indispensable