

P R E F A C E

This is an era of multi-divisional and multi-national business organisations involving an international movement of capital funds and accompanied by new challenges for management and accounting. Since 1950's the recognition is growing that interdependence among nations is inevitable and often mutually advantageous.

Never before any industry changed so radically in its goal orientation and focus as the banking industry. Its growth both in national and international arena shows no signs of abatement.

Banks all over the world are competing to finance business opportunities outside their own countries. These banking corporations necessarily rely heavily on accounting reports to manage their international business operations and to plan for appropriate future actions in the international field. Accounting information is the main vehicle for both national as well as international reportings.

A report, internal or external, selects the essential data from the myriads of information that surrounds the particular entity, interprets the data, and presents a meaningful story for the concerned reader. An annual report is an external report

required under the Companies Act (except in U.S.A. where American Securities Acts are only concerned for accounting principles related to disclosure requirements) to be submitted to the corporate owners communicating to them stewardship functioning. On a more general level of reasoning, annual reports are a function of wide-spread ownership, dependence on financial markets and a slowly emerging acknowledgement of corporate social responsibility.

An annual report is not just a set of financial statements. On the other hand, financial statements are part and parcel of an annual report. Over the years, the relative importance of financial statements in external reporting has been steadily eroded. At one time, the financial statements were the whole of financial reporting. In last two decades, more financial reporting innovation have taken place outside the financial statements. This is an indirect recognition of the deficiencies of the financial statement format for purposes of communicating uncertain, interpretive and subjective data.

Financial reporting is, thus, in an age of rapid transition; its environment has undergone vast changes in the last two decades and an accelerating rate of change is in prospect for the future. Much of what are accepted today as financial reporting standards would not have been recognised as such

fifty years ago, and future standards will bear little resemblance to what it is today.

As we stand at the threshold of socio-economic development having international bearing on each country, it is high time and it may be very useful to study the reporting practices of commercial banks at the international level. This dissertation is an important, though a small contribution, toward these efforts. It is an enquiry into the reporting practices of commercial banks in U.S.A., U.K., Canada, Australia and India on some specific areas of information.

Completion of a research project is a difficult task. One has to face a number of problems in course of his investigation and the present researcher is not an exception to this. It is all the more difficult to conduct an empirical study of international nature.

However, the present study has been able to assume a concrete shape as a result of cooperation of numerous people and institutions for which the present researcher humbly expresses his heartfelt gratitude and indebtedness to all of them.

Department of Commerce,
University of North Bengal,
November 21 , 1984.

Ganesh Chandra Sarker
(Ganesh Chandra Sarker)