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TREND ANALYSIS OF NPAs AND PROFITABILITY OF TOP TEN BANKS FROM 2011-2014

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ABSTRACT

NPAs (Non-Performing Assets) are an important parameter while analyzing not only the profitability of the banks but also the efficiency of banking operations. It not only causes the margins to decrease, but also affects liquidity and results in higher provisioning for doubtful debts. This study aims to assess the Non-Performing Assets of the top ten banks in India and its impact on the profitability of banking sector for a period of five years, from 2011-2014

KEYWORDS

NPA, banking operations.

INTRODUCTION**ECONOMIC REFORMS: A BRIEF BACKDROP**

A walk down history lane suggests that the chronic malaise of Bank Assets turning bad is deep rooted in the ultra-conservative economic policies adopted by the Indian Government during the 60s and the 70s. Fallouts from factors like protectionist policies, license raj and monopolized markets, to mention just a few, compounded to manifest themselves as widespread industrial sickness by the time the 80s came along. By 1985, the economy was facing serious balance of payment problems. These problems snowballed and by the end of 1990, the country was in the midst of a serious economic crisis. The government was on the brink of default, its central bank had refused new credit and the foreign exchange reserves could barely finance three weeks worth of imports. Ultimately, the government had to airlift national gold reserves as a pledge to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a loan to cover the balance of payments debt. This prompted the government to bring about urgent and large scale reforms across various sectors of the economy, especially in the Banking Sector. As a result, the Narasimham Committee-I was set up in 1991 to examine all aspects relating to the structure, functions and procedures of the financial system in India. The findings of the committee were subsequently tabled in the parliament, and a number of key reforms were introduced in the banking sector. The Narsimham Committee-II was tasked with the progress review of the implementation of the banking reforms initiated in 1992. The objective of the review was to further strengthen financial institutions in India. The Committee submitted its report on Banking Sector Reforms to the then Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, in April 1998.

Both committees made several key observations and recommended significant changes in the Banking Sector in India. They identified NPAs as the single largest cause for concern for the sector. The Narsimham Committee-I concluded that 'priority sector lending' was leading to the buildup of Non-performing assets of the banks and was the main reason for reduced profitability of commercial banks in India. It recommended that 'priority sector lending' be gradually phased out. Subsequently, the Narsimham Committee-II also stressed the need for 'zero' non-performing assets for all Indian banks with international presence. It identified poor credit decisions, cyclical economic factors and behest-lending to be the major reasons for the huge buildup of Non-Performing Assets in Banks. The Committee suggested the creation of Asset Reconstruction Companies to take over the bad debts of banks, allowing them to start on a new slate. The Committee also suggested a proper system to identify and classify NPAs, NPAs to be brought down to 3% by 2002 and for an independent loan review mechanism for improved management of loan portfolios. The recommendations led to the introduction of a new legislation, subsequently implemented as the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act (SARFAESI), 2002.

ECONOMIC REFORMS: THE GENERAL EFFECTS

As mentioned earlier, the year 1991 marks an important milestone in the history of the Indian Economy. The reforms undertaken as per the Liberalization policy implemented that year opened up Indian markets to foreign investors, thereby injecting the economy with much needed foreign investment, and brought about a revival in an economy that had been stagnating for years. The Pokhran tests of 1998 and the resulting economic sanctions on India did throw a spanner in the works towards the end of the 90s. However, beginning in the earlier part of the past decade, most of the sanctions were relaxed and foreign investment surged primarily on account of the nascent, yet growing, BPO & IT industry. This increased inflow of cash and resources into India was a major factor behind the growth in size and scale of banking operations in India, the origins of which can be traced back to the liberalization measures being adopted in 1991.

On the flip side, with the increase in size and scale of operations, banks have become even more exposed to default risk, i.e. losses owing to non-repayment of loans. On a year-on-year basis, banks have witnessed a disturbingly consistent increase in the amount of assets being categorized as non-performing. This is despite the fact that various reforms have been brought about to strengthen the functioning of the banking sector and to bring down the level of NPAs to a bare minimum. Yet, NPAs remain a major point of concern for Banks and Investors alike. Concerns have been expressed by the Governor of RBI Raghuram Rajan regarding the high level of NPAs in Public Sector Banks. The MD & CEO of ICICI bank, Chanda Kochar, has attributed the rise in NPAs to external factors. The Banking Sector is still edgy as Haldia Petrochemicals and Dabhol Power, to which banks have an exposure of over 50000 million Rupees and 85000 million Rupees respectively, are on the verge of going bad. Thus, the concerns are not misplaced; the malaise is not new.

NPA: DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

In simple terms, an asset can be classified as Non-Performing when it ceases to generate any income for the bank.

The latest circular DBOD.No.BP.BC.9/21.04.048/2014-15 released by the Reserve Bank of India on July 1st, 2014 addressed to all Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs), serves to further refine the definition of and to elaborate on the conditions under which an asset is declared as non-performing. Basically, a non performing asset (NPA) is a loan or an advance where interest and/or instalment of principal remain overdue* for a period of more than 90 days in respect of a term loan.

ASSET CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORIES OF NPAs**

According to the latest circular pertaining to NPAs released by the RBI, banks are required to classify nonperforming assets further into the following three categories based on the period for which the asset has remained nonperforming and the realisability of the dues:

- i. **Substandard Assets**
- ii. **Doubtful Assets**
- iii. **Loss Assets**

SUBSTANDARD ASSETS

With effect from March 31, 2005, a substandard asset would be one, which has remained NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months.

DOUBTFUL ASSETS

With effect from March 31, 2005, an asset would be classified as doubtful if it has remained in the substandard category for a period of 12 months.

LOSS ASSETS

A loss asset is one where loss has been **identified by the bank or internal or external auditors or the RBI inspection but the amount has not been written off wholly**. In other words, such an asset is **considered uncollectible** and of such little value that its continuance as a bankable asset is not warranted although there may be some salvage or recovery value."

Provisions as prescribed by the RBI regarding nonperforming assets are as follows:

I SUB-STANDARD ASSET

A provision of 10 % is to be made from the profits in order to meet the profits generated from NPAs.

II DOUBTFUL ASSETS

There are three categories of doubtful assets and the provision for each one of them is as follows:

- D1 i.e. up to 1 year: 20 % provision is to be made by banks
- D2 i.e. up to 2 years: 30 % provision is to be made by banks.
- D3 i.e. up to 3 years: 100 % provision is to be made by banks.

III LOSS ASSETS

100 % provision is to be made for assets falling under this category.

REMEDIAL MEASURES BEING TAKEN AT PRESENT

In order to tackle the issues of growing amount of NPAs in the banking sector, the government, acting upon the recommendations of the Narasimhan Committee-II, introduced the SARFAESI Act (Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act), 2002. The act gave banks and other financial institutions the powers to take possession of the secured assets of the borrower, including transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale, so as to realize income due to them without the intervention of a court or tribunal. It prescribed the circumstances under which the banks could execute these powers. An amendment has been proposed in the SARFAESI Act during the winter session of the parliament. This amendment will allow banks to take over the management of companies that have willfully defaulted on loan repayment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have been conducted in the past with the objective of understanding the impact that Non-Performing Assets have on the functioning and profitability of the Banking Sector in India.

Namita Rajput, Monika Gupta & Ajay Kumar Chauhan (*Profitability and Credit Culture of NPAs: An Empirical Analysis of PSBs*, 2012) found a negative relationship between the profitability measure and NPAs.

Dr. Sonia Narula & Monika Singla (*An Empirical Study on Non Performing Assets of Bank*, 2014) observed the performance of Punjab National Bank for a period of 6 years, from 2006-2012 and concluded that the relationship between NPAs and Profitability to be a positive one.

Meenakshi Rajeev & H P Mahesh (2010), in their working paper titled *Banking Sector Reforms and NPA: a study of Indian Commercial Banks* (2010), examine the trends of NPAs in India from various dimensions and explain how self-monitoring has been able to greatly reduce the problem. They are also able to illustrate that public sector banks which, to some extent, function with welfare motives, have been as successful in reducing NPAs as their counterparts in the private sector have been.

Prashant K Reddy (*A comparative study of Non-Performing Assets in India in the global context- similarities and dissimilarities, remedial measures*, 2003) studies the mechanisms adopted by other Asian countries in handling NPAs and further looks into the effects of the reforms on the level of NPAs in India. He further suggests mechanisms to handle the problem in India by drawing lessons from the means adopted to do the same in other countries.

Venkata V Vemula & Murali Mahalingam (*Non-Performing Assets: an Indian Perspective*, 2012) examine the various causes of rising NPAs in India and measures being taken to curb this menace.

Deepak K. & Margesh Wavhal (*Impending NPA crisis in Indian Banks & remedies*, 2014) examine whether the problem of loans going bad is a systemic problem or a monster created by banks themselves. The focus of their work of study is large corporations like Kingfisher Airlines and Bhushan Steele. They discuss the current magnitude of the problem and suggest measures to remedy the situation.

Pacha Malyadari & S. Sirisha (*A comparative Study of Non-Performing Assets in Indian Banking Industry*, 2011) examine trends of NPAs in weaker sections of the society in both public sector and private sector banks. They study data for a period of seven years i.e. from 2004-2010. Their paper concludes that asset quality of both public and private banks has improved consistently in the past few years as reflected by the decline in ratio of NPAs as a percentage of advances to weaker sections of the society.

Isaac K. Otchere (*Competitive and Value Effects of Bank Privatisation in developed countries*, 2005) conducted a study on the performance of privatized banks in middle and low-income countries, showing mixed results. The paper observes that private banks in developed countries have experienced significant improvements in operating performance during the period under study. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of the performances of privatized banks in developed and developing countries has revealed that privatization in developing countries has encouraged excessive risk taking among privatized banks in developing countries, with the consequence that those banks carry larger NPAs in comparison to their counterparts in developed countries.

Asha Singh (*Performance of Non-Performing Assets in Indian Commercial Banks*, 2013) examines the performance of both public sector and private sector banks in terms of gross and net NPAs for a period of eleven years, i.e. from 2001 to 2011, and have found that the level of gross and net NPAs have shown a declining trend during this period.

PURPOSE OF STUDY AND THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED

The paper aims to observe trends in the performance of major banks in India. The study uses the ROA (return on assets) and the net NPA ratio as performance indicators, and aims to observe the relationship between the ROA and net NPA ratio on the basis of data collected for the past four years. Secondary data has been gleaned from RBI reports, annual reports of banks and investment portals like moneycontrol.com and yahoo finance. Another objective that this paper aims to achieve is to study how the top banks in India are doing as far as NPAs are concerned. Thus, out of the 37 Scheduled Commercial Banks present in India, 10 banks have been identified and classified as major banks for the purpose of study. Six major factors were taken into consideration while deciding upon the sample to be drawn. Namely, business per employee and the market capitalization of each bank (in Rupees Crores), the total number of branches, the total number of ATMs and the total number of employees. The sample thus drawn represents a major chunk of business in the sector. Even though trends observed among the sample can be said to have a major impact on the overall trends in the Banking sector, however, the purpose of this paper is not to get a general overview of the performance of the Banking Sector as a whole but to simply study the trends in the performance of major banks in India during the past four years, i.e., from 2011-2015.

Given below is a table consisting of the banks selected and how they performed against the various parameters drawn.

TABLE 1

(*AMOUNT IN RUPEES CRORE)

Parameters	HDFC Bank	ICICI Bank	Axis Bank	SBI	IDBI	Bank of Baroda	Union Bank of India	Bank of India	Canara Bank	PNB
Branches ⁴	3032	3095	1932	14669	1068	4263	3551	4233	3743	5515
ATMs ⁴	10743	10481	11245	27175	1072	2630	4603	2133	3526	6312
Market Capitalisation*	208199	165536	88333	176922.9	9631.8	37307.5	11947	14602.5	16095.6	31699
Number of employees ⁴	69401	62065	37901	228296	15465	43108	31798	42348	42693	63292
Business per employee*	7.5	7.35	12.15	9.439	25.644	16.89	12.15	15.82	14.202	11.651

⁴ Data taken from "A Profile of Banks 2012-2013" an RBI report

The data pertaining to the study is presented in the table below:

TABLE 2

YEAR	GROSS NPA	PROVISIONS FOR NPAs	GROSS ADVANCES	NET PROFITS	TOTAL ASSETS
2011	59055.03	23354.16	2493228.99	39652.83	4063370.85
2012	86068.80	27854.78	2922159.24	47251.97	4665385.14
2013	114762.79	32798.19	3352896.32	53226.01	5369535.41
2014	147965.53	46295.00	3937186.868	51266.48	6219534.62

The Net NPA Ratio for each of the year under study has been calculated as per the following formula:

$$\text{Net NPA Ratio} = \frac{\text{Gross NPA-Provisions for NPA}}{\text{Gross Advances-Provisions for NPA}} \times 100$$

The ROA (Return on Assets) has been calculated as under:

$$\text{Return on Assets} = \frac{\text{Net Profits} \times 100}{\text{Total Assets}}$$

The table consisting of our findings is shown below:

TABLE 3

YEAR	NET NPA RATIO	ROA
2011	1.44	.97
2012	2.01	1.01
2013	2.46	.99
2014	2.61	.82

The coefficient of correlation is calculated as per the following formula:

$$\frac{N\sum dxdy - \sum dx \sum dy}{\sqrt{(\sum dx^2 - (\sum dx)^2) * \sum dy^2 - (\sum dy)^2}}$$

Inference: The coefficient of correlation comes to be -.514 for the past four years. This means that whenever the NPA Ratio increases by 1, the ROA decreases by .514.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

The coefficient of correlation between Net NPA ratio and the ROA during the past 4 years is -.514. This means that as per the trends of the last four year, an increase of 100 % in the Net NPA ratio will be followed by a decrease of approximately 50 % in the Return on Assets generated by the banks being studied. A cursory glance over the data for the past four years leads to the conclusion that the net NPA ratio has risen at an alarmingly consistent rate, whereas the ROA has been consistently decreasing over the period under study, more so in the past one year. The major point of concern is that for all the ten banks under study, the Net NPA ratio has exhibited a steady increase over the period of the last four years. Even though the private banks under study do also show a steady increase in the ROA over the same period, however, with the major bulk of banking business concentrated in the hands of public banks, the simultaneity of the fall in ROA and increase in the net NPA ratio is indicative of larger disturbing trends in the economy.

SUGGESTIONS

Despite the government taking various measures to curb assets turning bad, we find the NPAs consistently increasing. This implies that perhaps proper evaluations are not being carried out in the pre-sanctioning stage and not enough control is being exerted in the post-disbursement phase. Even though norms have been introduced in respect of KYC (know your customer), some where banks are failing in their objective of selecting the right borrowers. There is perhaps a need to relook at the norms that customers need to meet in the pre-sanctioning stage so as to ensure that less proportion of advances go bad.

NOTE

*an amount is considered overdue if it remains outstanding 30 days beyond the due date

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