

Name of the Book: Indomitable – A working woman’s notes on life, work and leadership

Author: Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer, Salesforce, India & Former Chairperson, State Bank of India.

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“Indomitable – A working woman’s notes on life, work and leadership” is the book that cherishes the journey of a simple, Indian, educated, aspirational girl who made her way to head one of the biggest Public Sector Bank in India. This autobiography gives us a glimpse of the life led by Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya right from her growing years till her retirement day at State Bank of India.

The book starts with the childhood chronicles of Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya, her life at Bhilai & Bokaro. The first two chapters of the book discusses the lessons that she learnt from her parents. These chapters give us a close peek of her family & cultural background that laid the foundation of building the strong personality, whose name will be written with golden letters in Indian Banking history.

In “Kolkata” chapter of the book, Ms. Arundhati Bhattacharya wrote about the feeling of independence along with the sense of responsibility that she felt during the college days. Ms. Bhattacharya mentioned how she ended up joining State Bank of India and how she dealt with the anxiety one faces while appearing for the examinations.

Next few chapters of the book revolved around few special moments like how during her training period, her coordinator motivated their batch and hinted that one of them could be the Chairman of the bank one day. Who knew at that point in time, that he had predicted the future. She has also discussed few myths that her husband had prior to marriage regarding work life of bank employees!

This book takes you to an interesting career path that a woman banker encounters along with the challenges and the rewards that it brings with it. Ms. Bhattacharya takes us through the difficulties a woman banker faces while applying for transfer post marriage.

Transfers are an inevitable truth for bankers, staying alone even when you have a loving family is altogether more painful. The guilt she had of not being able to see her father for the last time could be seen woven in her words. However, as she truly justifies her name "Arundhati", nothing swayed her away from exceling in her professional life.

Ms. Bhattacharya shared her experience of working at Treasury Department during the transition from manual to electronic mode. She acknowledged the support she got from her family during her foreign posting. She insisted that it is important to balance work & life simultaneously.

She has meticulously written about how she grew in her career from one rank to another, from one city to another and the challenges associated with them. Her writings shed light on how she attempted to manage cost while ensuring that the profit of the bank is augmented.

Ms. Bhattacharya's concern's towards her employees is evident from the fact that she introduced numerous employee friendly measures particularly for female employees that helped them to build a sustainable career without compromising their personal lives. Going down the memory lane, Ms. Bhattacharya in retrospect, resonates whether her efforts as a Leader, were able to create any change.

The best feature of any book is its ability to take you to the situation on which it is centred and in this regard, while reading the book, each banker and specially a women banker would be able to see herself in the shoes of Ms. Bhattacharya. This book is a final coup d'oeil of all what may happen if you join as a Probationary Officer and aspire to Head the bank.