

Alright, let's delve even deeper into Bandhan Bank, incorporating specific facts and figures to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding.

## **1. Foundation and Transformation: The Genesis of Bandhan**

- 2001: The NGO Roots:**

- Bandhan Konnagar was born as an NGO, a grassroots initiative to uplift underprivileged women in rural West Bengal. This initial phase was purely philanthropic, focused on social empowerment through microfinance.

- 2006: BFSL's Entry:**

- Bandhan Financial Services Limited (BFSL) was established, marking the shift towards a more structured and scalable microfinance operation.

- 2009: Consolidation:**

- The NGO's microfinance activities were fully transferred to BFSL, creating a unified entity for microfinance operations. This was a critical step in professionalizing and expanding the reach of the microfinance services.

- 2014: Bank Incorporation:**

- December 23, 2014, saw the incorporation of Bandhan Bank Limited as a public limited company in Kolkata. This was the formal step towards becoming a universal bank.

- 2015: Banking License and Launch:**

- June 17, 2015: The RBI granted the banking license under Section 22 of the Banking Regulation Act.
  - August 23, 2015: Bandhan Bank officially commenced operations, a landmark moment in Indian banking history.
  - The bank launched with 501 branches and 50 ATMs, demonstrating its commitment to immediate and widespread service.

- Significance:**

- Bandhan's journey is unique: a transition from a small NGO to a major commercial bank, showcasing the power of microfinance in driving financial inclusion.

## **2. Core Business and Services: Serving the Underserved**

- Microfinance Focus:**

- The bank's core strength remains its microfinance operations, targeting small business owners and women in rural and semi-urban areas.
  - Banking Unit (BU) outlets are central to this, facilitating Group Loans and Small Business & Agri Loans (SBAL).

- Diversified Banking Services:**

- To complement microfinance, Bandhan Bank offers a full suite of banking products:

- Debit cards, internet and mobile banking, and EDC-POS terminals for convenient transactions.
- Online bill payment services for ease of use.
- Distribution of third-party general insurance and mutual fund products for financial planning.
- Gold Loan offerings, expanded to 60 branches by FY 2018-19, with an outstanding loan book of Rs 128.28 crore from 22,619 customers as of March 31, 2019.
- Housing loan services, extended to 356 centers across 20 states and two Union Territories by 2021-22, with a focus on affordable housing.

- **Digital Transformation:**

- The launch of "Neo+ Savings Account" demonstrates the bank's push towards digital banking.
- The creation of "Biz Deluxe Current Account, Biz PRO Current Account and Start-up Current Account" to help different business clients.
- Implementation of the Core Banking System (CBS).

### **3. Expansion and Network Growth: Reaching Every Corner**

- **Branch and BU Expansion:**

- 2016: Expanded to 656 branches and 2,022 DSCs.
- 2017: Expanded to 840 branches and 2,546 DSCs.
- 2019: 986 Branches, 3014 DSCs and 481 ATMs.
- 2020: 1,018 branches and 485 ATMs.
- 2021: 1,147 branches and 4,163 banking units, totaling 5,310 banking outlets.
- 2022: 1,189 branches and 5,639 banking outlets.
- 2023: 1,411 branches and 5,999 banking outlets.
- 2024: 1,700 branches and 6,297 banking outlets.

- **Geographical Diversification:**

- The bank has strategically expanded beyond its initial stronghold in East and North-East India, focusing on pan-India presence.
- The outlet distribution as of FY 2023-24: 33% rural, 37% semi-urban, 18% urban, and 12% metro, illustrating a balanced approach.

### **4. Financial Performance and Milestones: Growth and Recognition**

- **IPO Success:**

- March 2018 IPO: Priced at Rs 375 per share, debuted at Rs 485 on BSE, a 29.33% premium.

- **Deposit Growth:**

- FY 2018-19: Total deposits grew by 27.64% to Rs 43,231.62 crore, with 40.75% being CASA deposits.
- FY 2019-20: Total deposits increased to Rs 57,081.50 crore, a 32.04% rise.
- FY 2020-21: Total Deposits increased by 36.6% to Rs 77,972.2 crore.

- **Awards and Accolades:**

- SIDBI ET MSE Awards 2018: "Noteworthy Lender to the MSE - Private Sector

- Bank."
- Aadhaar Excellence Awards 2018: "Best Performing Bank" in Aadhaar generation and update.
- The Economic Times Awards 2019: "Emerging Company of the Year."
- The Economic Times Bengal Corporate Awards 2020: "Fastest Growing Company" and "Excellence in Business Performance."

## **5. Regulatory Compliance and Challenges: Navigating the Landscape**

- **RBI Restrictions:**

- September 2018: RBI imposed restrictions due to the NOFHC shareholding exceeding 40%.
- These restrictions included a ban on opening new branches without prior approval and a freeze on the MD & CEO's remuneration.

- **Compliance Measures:**

- Amalgamation of GRUH Finance Limited to reduce NOFHC shareholding to approximately 61%.
- Ongoing engagement with the RBI to address the compliance issue.

- **SEBI Exemption:**

- October 2018: SEBI granted exemptions regarding lock-in periods and eligibility conditions to facilitate RBI compliance.

- **COVID-19 Impact:**

- Implementation of RBI's COVID-19 Regulatory Package, including moratoriums on loan repayments.
- The bank had to navigate the economic disruption caused by the pandemic.

### **Salient Points with Facts and Figures:**

- Bandhan's transformation from an NGO to a bank is a testament to its social impact and business acumen.
- The bank's focus on microfinance, evidenced by its extensive BU network, remains a core strength.
- Significant deposit growth (e.g., 36.6% in FY'21) reflects customer trust and confidence.
- Strategic expansion, with a balanced rural-urban presence (e.g., 33% rural outlets in FY'24), ensures widespread access.
- Regulatory challenges, though significant, have been addressed through proactive measures.
- The IPO success, and numerous awards, highlight the bank's strong performance.
- The bank is implementing digital banking to help modernize its services.

By incorporating specific facts and figures, we gain a more concrete understanding of Bandhan Bank's trajectory and its role in the Indian financial landscape.