

## Equitas Small Finance Bank to expand loan disbursements

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*Opens 3 branches in Chennai*



Growth plans (from left) PN Vasudevan, MD and CEO, Equitas Small Finance Bank; N Rangachary, Chairman, Equitas Holdings, and Arun Ramanathan, Chairman, Equitas Small Finance Bank, at a press conference in Chennai on Tuesday Bijoy Ghosh

**Chennai, September 6:**

Newly-launched Equitas Small Finance Bank will expand loan disbursements for agriculture and small businesses and get into gold loans, said its Managing Director and CEO PN Vasudevan.

The bank, which launched its operations with three branches in Chennai on Tuesday, is one of the 10 microfinance players to have received in-principle licence last year to enter small finance banking.

Previously, as a microfinance institution, Equitas Finance had concentrated on commercial vehicle loans, housing loans and small enterprises. It has a customer base of about 26 lakh, about ₹ 6,500 crore in advances and has grown at about 50 per cent annually over the last five years.

Vasudevan said most of the 580 lending branches under Equitas Finance will be converted in stages to bank branches. Initially, 412 branches will be converted to full-fledged banks in the coming months. The rest will be lending branches. The bank has over 9,000 staff and will recruit about 3,500 more staff.

Over ₹ 100-crore investments have gone into setting up the IT infrastructure for the bank which will enable it to launch online services, apart from having efficient systems. Equitas has built up the skills to assess credit worthiness of small and micro businesses efficiently and quickly.

This will stand it in good stead as it launches full-fledged banking operations, he said.

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