

Massive Indefinite Strike

The AUAB has taken a decision to go on indefinite strike from Dec 3rd, 2018 demanding implementation of wage Revision, 4G, Pension Revision , pension contribution and settling some 2nd PRC issues.

The struggle for wage revision is 'getting on' on three tracks. The first one is joint struggle of both Executives and Non Executives on the platform of AUAB for seeking relaxation of affordability clause, a conditional clause in the order of Executives and 3rd PRC. The second is purely by Non Executives in their wage Committee to arrive at the necessary agreement or MOU to implement wage revision for Non- Executives. The third one is the struggle of all central unions like AITUC, CITU, INTUC, LPF etc for abolishing and nullifying the affordability clause.

The immediate provocation for announcing the indefinite strike is the tone and tenor of DOT's directive letter dated 6th Nov, after some assurances by Secretary DOT on 2nd Nov. The subject matter of the letter is having only the reference of Executives but the content speaks for both Executives and Non-Executives. The main directive of DOT is advising BSNL to re examine their proposal sent for Executives on their varied observations and analysis. The main issue is dip in revenue growth and increase of Expenditure on account of wage revision if implemented with 15 %. The other question is about resources shown by BSNL which one is based on speculation and not on the basis of real grounds.

Unfortunately DOT is conveniently not cared and set aside its own version submitted in the Lok Sabha Committee on petitions. The reasons cited by DOT for the decrease in Revenue in the BSNL are

- a. Fixed to mobile substitution
- b. Stiff competition in the mobile sector
- c. Frequent downward revision of tariff
- d. Outgo of payment 18500 cr towards 3G/BWA
- e. Reduction of reserves and Balance and so reduction in interest income
- f. Premature withdrawal of ADC
- g. License Fee Non Reimbursement

h. Withdrawal of other subsidies and compensation

In the same way DOT has listed reasons for enhancement of Expenditure in the BSNL

- a. Huge legacy of work force whose salary and benefits is above 50% of revenue
- b. Inheritance of legacy wire lines and its maintenance
- c. Economically unviable rural operations as social obligations
- d. Increase in fuel charges
- e. Increased repair and maintenance cost

As per BSNL version, the company has spent 1.75 lakh crore on the salary head for this legacy of work force. The role of BSNL as priority sector specified by Finance commission was also not taken into account. Almost all the heads of SSAs/Circles got their wage revision on the basis of 7th CPC and DOT never cared about financial viability of BSNL and gave green signal to BSNL for implementing the same to its own ITS officers.

The inflation is the main reason for increase of salary expenditure. Frequent downward revision of tariff is the main reason for making the services cost ineffective.

The issue of 4G is being dragged months together. BSNL has demanded 2100 MHZ for more than 20 circles as AirTel , Reliance JIO, Idea are already capturing 4G market. As on last December already 24 crore 4G subscribers were added by the private Telcos. In this background one can understand the urgency of getting 2100 Mhz spectrum by BSNL for marketing 4G services.

The other issue is pension revision. Almost all the unions and associations are having consensus that the issue need not be dragged on the plea of pay revision. The issue should be settled in such a way that there should not be any anomaly either for the past pensioners or for the future pensioners. Unfortunately DOT has issued a letter on 16-3-17 stating as there is no change in pension formula, BSNL/MTNL absorbed employees will therefore continue to get pension based on the same formula. Many of our lower scale employees are being affected by this as they will get less pension than the minimum Rs 9000.

The issue of pension contribution is also getting dragged since long . As per the PIB issued when MTNL pension was included in the same category of 37 A, it was stated that the MTNL contribution for Pension could be as per actual pay from 2006 onwards. Unfortunately this position was not extended to BSNL .

Taking all these factors into account , the unions and associations have given a call for indefinite strike. Our CHQ appeals to one and all to make the strike success.