

On BSNL facing Competition and advancing as a strong PSU in the changed scenario in telecom sector.

This All India Conference of BSNL Employees Union held at Chennai from 31.12.2016 to 3.1.2017 notes the fact that due to the united struggles of the Unions and associations of the non-executives and executives against the anti-BSNL policies of the Government and due to the calls given by the unions and associations unitedly and due to the implementation of programs like " Service With A Smile" for extending better services to the customers, the BSNL could be retained as a 100% Government owned PSU without any disinvestment and its financial condition has started to improve.

The income of the BSNL on services has increased by 4.43%, from Rs 27242.23 crores in 2014-15 to Rs 28449.42 crores in 2015-16. Other income has increased from Rs 1402.97 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 4469.42 crore in 2015-16. The operating profit has increased from Rs 672 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 3378 crores in 2015-16. The net loss was decreased from Rs 8234.09 crores in 2014-15 to Rs 3879.92 crore in 2015-16. For several months in 2016 until August 2016, BSNL stood number one in acquiring new mobile customers.

But a drastic change has come after the starting of mobile services by Reliance Jio from 5.9.2016. It's entry was murky by getting several benefits by tweaking laws with the blessings of the Government and the CAG has objected the way in which it acquired 4G spectrum and the way in which it got unified license in 2016 at a price discovered in 2001. The Prime Minister Modi's photo was used for the marketing advertisement of Reliance Jio, indicating the preference of the Government for Reliance.

But the significance of the entry of Reliance Jio is that it started providing 4G data services at lower rates along with free voice calls, by providing the voice calls as data, on internet. In the starting month of September 2016 alone, it acquired 1.59 crore customers. Thus it initiated the era of converging voice and data. Thus to face and survive in this competition, voice calls have to be provided as data and to compensate the loss on voice revenue, the data traffic has to be increased dramatically and for this it is necessary to have sufficient 4G spectrum and a huge optic fibre network and the network should be scaled up accordingly.

But BSNL was deprived of a proper 4 G spectrum and the band of 4G spectrum given to BSNL in the name of BWA spectrum was not useful. BSNL management, as per the news paper reports, has requested the Government to grant 700 MHz band spectrum which is highly efficient for 4 G services and to treat the cost of the spectrum as increase in the paid up equity of the Government in BSNL. By combining this 700 MHz spectrum with the existing 2500 MHZ BWA spectrum, BSNL will be able to provide 4 G services through spectrum route. Since the Government is not considering this because of its anti-PSU and anti-BSNL attitude, the BSNL is compelled to provide 4G services in the limited areas of WiFi hot spots and in all other areas the customer can get 3G services only. Announcing lower tariffs and free voice calls without providing 4G services everywhere through spectrum route will not be of much help to BSNL to face the competition in the changed scenario of 4G data services becoming dominant in the coming few years. Therefore it is essential to compel the Government to provide 4G spectrum free of cost to BSNL to enable it to face the competition and survive in the changing scenario.

The Modi Government has proposed to take away the 65000 towers of BSNL from it and to form a subsidiary tower company and is going ahead to materialise it. All the Unions and Associations of non-executives in BSNL have totally opposed this since it is aimed at fragmenting and privatising BSNL in a piece-meal manner. A 100% successful strike was held on 15.12.2016 against the formation of the tower company. But the Government is not willing to relent.

Our struggles compelled the Government to grant Rs 1250 crore compensation to BSNL recently in the month of September 2016, for the losses incurred on rural land lines during the year 2012-13. But it also declared that this compensation will no longer be granted hereafter. This is

violation of the assurance given at the time of formation of BSNL for compensating the losses incurred by it on rural land lines.

Considering all the above facts, this Conference demands the Government to grant 4G spectrum to BSNL, to stop the formation of the subsidiary tower company and to help BSNL to procure the required equipment and cable, tools and other materials to enable it to expand and upgrade its network. This Conference also demands the Government to settle all other demands raised by the Forum of BSNL Unions and Associations for the advancement of BSNL.

This Conference directs the CHQ of the Union to take initiative for organising further united, strong, militant struggles and campaign among the people for bringing a strong pressure on the Government for stopping the formation of tower company, for allotment of 4G spectrum, for helping in procurement of equipment, for compensating the losses on rural landlines and for accepting other demands.

This Conference appeals all BSNL non-executives and executives to carry forward more vigorously and enthusiastically the program of "Service With A Smile" so that more and more customers will come to BSNL and its market share will increase considerably.
