

BSNL EMPLOYEES UNION

Recognised Union in BSNL

(Registered Under Indian Trade Union Act 1926. Regn.No.4896)

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VRS is not the panacea for BSNL's problems.

It is reported in the media that, the DoT would move the Election Commission, for getting the approval of the Cabinet, to implement VRS in BSNL. BSNL Employees Union (BSNLEU) strongly opposes this move of the DoT.

A picture is being painted by the DoT that, BSNL is facing a financial crisis due to overstaffing. The fact of the matter is that, BSNL is facing the crisis only because of the pro-Reliance Jio and anti-BSNL policies of the government. It must be borne in mind that, the same BSNL earned a net profit of Rs.10,000 crores in 2004-05, when 1 lakh more employees were working in the Company. Hence, the real problem is not the number of BSNL's employees.

In fact, BSNL started making turn around in 2014 itself. The Company was earning operational profit in the financial years of 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. However, problem started when Reliance Jio started it's services in September, 2016. Utilising it's huge financial muscle, the Reliance Jio is practicing predatory pricings, with the view to close down it's competitors. It may be recollected that, Shri J.S. Deepak, the then Secretary, Telecom, was unceremoniously shunted out of the DoT, only because he opposed the predatory pricings of Reliance Jio.

The TRAI has helped Reliance Jio in a big way. At first, it changed it's own definition issued in May, 2003, regarding predatory pricing. Secondly, the TRAI slashed the IUC (Interconnect Usage Charge), by 57% in October, 2017, which benefited Reliance Jio to the tune of Rs.1,000 crores, while hardly hitting the revenue collections of the older telecom companies.

At the time of the formation of the BSNL, the Union Cabinet has assured that it would take all steps to safeguard the financial viability of BSNL. However, what actually happening is that, the government is meting out BSNL with a step-motherly attitude. The best example is that, BSNL is still not allotted with 4G spectrum, which is hampering the company's growth in a big way.

Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, assured the unions and associations of BSNL in January, 2018 that, BSNL would be allotted with 4G spectrum. However, it is more than a year since that assurance was given, and the Company has still not been allotted with 4G spectrum. The non-allotment of 4G spectrum to BSNL, is a calculated move by the government to clip the wings of the PSU service provider.

BSNL is having a debt of only Rs.13,000 crore. In fact, BSNL is the Company with the least debt in the entire telecom industry. All the private companies, including Reliance Jio, are having debts of more than Rs.1 lakh crore each. Still, the DoT is creating roadblocks

for BSNL to avail credit from banks. This is also a clear cut step by the government to retard the growth of BSNL.

BSNL is having vacant lands throughout the country, whose value is more than Rs.1 lakh crore. BSNL has sought the approval of the government, to generate revenue from these vacant lands, through renting and leasing. BSNL has estimated to generate atleast Rs.5,000 crore through this monetisation. However, the government has not given the necessary approval for more than one year now.

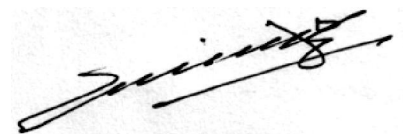
Recently, the whole country witnessed how the government moved swiftly to bailout the Jet Airways. Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley directed the State Bank of India led banks, to pump in Rs.1,500 crores for bailing out the Jet Airways. Why such a largesse is not being shown to BSNL, which is the government's own company. It may be surprising for every one to know that, the government has not given a single naya paisa as financial assistance to BSNL, during the last 18 years' of it's existence.

It must be noted that VRS is already implemented twice in the MTNL. However, it has not helped for the financial revival of MTNL. That Company is neck deep in financial crisis today. Hence, we want to point out that, VRS is not going to help for the financial revival of BSNL.

If the government really wants to ensure BSNL's financial revival, then it must immediately allot 4G spectrum. It should financially help BSNL by extending soft loan for the expansion and modernisation of it's networks. The government should also accept the demands of the unions and associations like giving approval to BSNL to monetise it's vacant lands.

These are the days when the government has launched a large scale attack on the Public Sector of the country. It's intention is to privatise BSNL as early as possible. The implementation of VRS in BSNL, should only be seen as a strategy to reduce the workforce of the Company, as a preparation to hand it over to a private corporate.

Hence, BSNL Employees Union strongly opposes the move of the DoT to implement VRS in BSNL. The union will do it's best to unite likeminded unions and associations to fight against this retrograde move of the government.



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