



P. Abhimanyu
General Secretary

BSNL EMPLOYEES UNION

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BSNLEU/ 543 (CL)

23.06.2020

To,

Shri P.K. Purwar,
CMD BSNL,
Bharat Sanchar Bhawan,
Janpath, New Delhi – 110 001

Sir,

Sub: - **Strike by contract workers in West Bengal and Kolkata circles due to non-payment of wages for the past one year and against massive retrenchment through outsourcing - reg.**

Ref: - **(1) BSNL Corporate Office letter no.2-2(Misc./Circular)/2019-WS&I dated 30.09.2019.**
(2) BSNL Corporate Office letter no.2-2(Misc./Circular)/2019-WS&I dated 19.05.2020.

We wish to bring the following to your kind notice for favour of necessary action.

It has been brought to our notice that, the contract workers are on strike in West Bengal and Kolkata circles. It is also reported that, this agitation by the contract workers has disrupted normal functioning in both the circles and has created a deadlock. It is needless to state that, this situation has been created, due to the non-payment of the contract workers' wages for the past one year and also due to the instructions issued by the Corporate Office, vide letters cited under reference (1) & (2), for massively retrenching the contract workers.

BSNLEU, together with the BSNL Casual Contract Workers Federation (BSNL CCWF), have been continuously pressing hard for the payment of long pending wage arrears of the contract workers. Many agitational programmes have also been conducted on this issue. It is true that BSNL is undergoing severe financial crisis. However, in spite of it, the BSNL Management could have at least made a part-payment of the wage arrears. It is highly unfortunate that this was not done. As a result, 12 contract workers have committed suicide so far. It will not be an exaggeration to state that, the BSNL Management is responsible for all these suicides.

78,569 BSNL employees have retired w.e.f. 01.02.2020, under the VRS-2019. It means, the strength of BSNL's employees has been reduced by half, by the implementation of VRS-2019. In such a situation, the role of BSNL's experienced contract workers became very crucial, for the effective maintenance of BSNL's services. But, surprisingly, the BSNL Management has taken the decision to retrench the contract workers massively. It has also taken the ill-advised decision to outsource all the works, that so far have been done by the contract workers.

What is the rationale behind the Management's decision to retrench the contract workers, through outsourcing? It is only due to the consideration that, the contract workers in BSNL are being paid minimum wages, as stipulated by the Ministry of Labour, together with social security measures such as EPF and ESI. Whereas, neither minimum wage will be paid in the system of outsourcing, nor EPF and ESI is made available. It is an open secret that, the workers are being ruthlessly exploited by the contractors, in the system of outsourcing. As such, it is highly unfortunate that the BSNL Management has decided to provide space for such an exploitation by contractors in BSNL, with the sole aim of saving some money.

The BSNL Management should keep in mind that BSNL is not a Private Limited Company, but belongs to the Public Sector, which has been established with the sole aim of serving the nation and it's people. But, it is regrettable that forgetting this, the BSNL Management is following all the unethical practices of the private sector. BSNLEU, has repeatedly told the high command of the BSNL Management that, the existing contract workers can be better utilised in the Marketing Wing, to generate more revenue for the Company. However, the BSNL Management has preferred to tread in the beaten-track of cutting down the strength of the workforce to cut down the operational cost.

Being the biggest Trade Union of BSNL, BSNLEU has always kept the well being of the Company and that of it's employees, as it's twin objectives. However, it is a sordid state of affairs that, the Management is neither able to keep the Organisation afloat, nor is it taking care of it's employees. The massive retrenchment of contract workers will deliver a serious blow to the operation and maintenance of BSNL's networks. Complaints have already started creeping in, indicating that manipulations by the contractors have already started in the outsourcing of works.

Hence, we once again request the Management to kindly reconsider it's decision to retrench the contract workers massively, through the exploitative system of outsourcing. BSNLEU also urges upon the BSNL Management to immediately clear the long-pending wage arrears of contract workers. We desire that serious talks should be held between the Management and the Unions and Associations, regarding the gainful utilisation of the contract workers, instead of blindly retrenching them. Only a wise decision of the Management, on this issue, will avoid the ongoing West Bengal / Kolkata type of struggles.

We sincerely hope, that the BSNL Management will shed it's anti-contract worker mindset and will take a wise decision that will create a win-win situation, both for the Company and the contract workers.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,



(P. Abhimanyu)
General Secretary

- Copy to: (1) Dr. P. K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, South Block, New Delhi – 110 011
(2) Shri Rajiv Gauba, Cabinet Secretary, Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi – 110 004
(3) Shri Anshu Prakash, Secretary, (Telecom), Department of Telecom, Sanchar Bhawan, New Delhi- 110 001
(4) Ms. Shashi Negi, Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg, New Delhi-01
(5) Shri Arvind Vadnerkar, Director (HR), BSNL, Bharat Sanchar Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi – 110001
(6) Shri Keshav Rao, GM (WS&I), BSNL CO., Bharat Sanchar Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi – 110001
(7) Shri Manish Kumar, GM(Restg.), BSNL C.O., Bharat Sanchar Bhawan, New Delhi – 110001