

An insight of Standard Pay Scale Issue:

Introduction:

At the time of absorption after corporatization, it is only SNEA which demanded E2 scale for JTOs and E3 for SDEs while other association was on its toes to accept Rs.2000/- additional pay and get absorbed into BSNL in line with the C&D employees who got absorbed into BSNL by taking Rs.1000/- additional pay.

Under the leadership of visionaries like Com **W Sheshagiri Rao**, GS TEOA and Com **G L Jogi** GS, BSNEA (later amalgamated into SNEA at Kanyakumari) this association only fought for the attendant conditions to be clearly declared before processing absorption. The cases filed in PCAT by our association resulted into the blue print of absorption, future of executives and the result was

- **4-6 years Time Bound Up gradation,**
 - **Point to point fixation and IDA scale settlement.**
 - **Declaring IDA scales in consultation with Associations and**
 - **We SNEA alone (TEOA and BSNLEA) went on 5 days agitation in 2003 after the broad guidelines of P CAT, to get E2 for JTO and E3 for SDE. The result of the negotiated settlement of our strike was E1A and E2A for JTOs and SDEs respectively.**
- Had SNEA (TEOA and BSNLEA) not fought in 2003, JTO would have been in E1 and SDE in E2; and **today there would not have been any basis (cause of action) to raise the issue of E2 and E3 for JTO and SDEs.**
- The moot question before us is; what these so called saviors were doing at this crucial juncture?

Impact of 2nd PRC:

SNEA struggle in 2003 and the dictum of DPE not to go for intermediary scales has really kept the issue of standard pay scales still alive today.

After 2nd PRC, we continued our struggle for Standard Pay Scales, unfortunately the joint committee formed in 2012 could not actually do anything as;

- **One of our partner member in that committee demanded E2 from 1st Oct 2000 and**
- **The other partner demanded the cascading effect, etc.,**

- **Therefore committee washed away its hands saying that it cannot go beyond terms of reference (Only Standard Pay Scales-E2 and E3).**

Again during the agitation of SNEA (SNEA alone) in 2014, at one point of time management said it will reduce the scale of JTO/JAO to E1, but our firm stand that we will not get it to be reduced below E1A as it was the negotiated settlement of our legitimate decisive fight in 2003 was a clear warning bell for the management. And it is this firm stand of SNEA compelled BSNL to again approach DPE to get E1A and E2A pay scales approved and in case if DPE rejects intermediary scales, they would negotiate with us for up gradation.

Accordingly the proposal was sent to DPE through DOT for the approval of intermediary; E1A and E2A pay scales. One must know and understand that it is only SNEA which was proactive and constantly interacted with DPE, ensured that the proposal is rejected within very short time, during July 2014. Only SNEA was pursuing with DOT and DPE on day to day basis till the proposal is rejected but others were never serious of its repercussions.

- **Had E1A and E2A pay scales were approved by DPE as per BSNL proposal, again the cause of action for our fight on Standard Pay Scales would have been permanently buried?**

SNEA once again commenced the programme of agitation in Sept 2014 and in April-May 2015. This struggle of May 2015 compelled the present CMD BSNL to constitute **Khan Committee** with fixed time lines to settle the issues raised by SNEA; Standard Pay Scale, CPSU Hierarchy and Reduction of 6 year TBU to 4-5 years.

Thus the strong foundation for E2 and E3 Standard pay scales is ultimately laid by the sustained, serious, committed efforts of SNEA, CHQ leaders and of course by the full heart support of the members of SNEA and also the stake holders in the issue; our young friends.

- Now, one has to understand how seriously the issue of Standard Pay Scale is taken by various leaderships at Delhi?

Aftermath of Khan Committee Report:

All the three Associations, SNEA, AIBSNLEA and AIGETOA were the members of the committee represented by Com K Sebastin, Com Pralhad Rai and Com R P Sahu as the General Secretaries of the respective associations. No one had submitted any dissent note and all are in full agreement with proceedings and have signed the recommendations.

Even in 2012 and also in 2015; the terms of reference to the committee was only to standardize the pay scale E1A and E2A and the date of effect is only 1-1-2007 (after 2nd PRC) and never the issue of cascading is the terms of reference.

SNEA firmly believed to get E2 and E3 immediately, before 3rd PRC, knowing very well that

- **DOT in the name of huge expenditure on pension contribution will reject the proposal ,**
- **Being E4 to E7 scales involving up gradations of scales from Sr SDE to DGM levels and has to undergo various processes including cabinet approval and**
- **The long drawn battle for up gradation of E4 to E7 scales for Sr SDE to DGM levels and the PAY LOSS issues of 2007, 2008 batch JTO/JAOs can very well be, effectively addressed once E2 and E3 is cleared.**

But, the developments after the Khan Committee recommendations are really disastrous. Unfortunately, others differed with us and even having signed the recommendations as the members of the committee, these parties have gone back and alter their stand.

The new point like cascading was being tried by some sections only to delay and derail the process of implementation of E2 and E3 for JTO/JAOs and SDE/AOs. As management is also not interested in early settlement for the reason of increased the Salary Bill, very well understanding the ulterior motives of this section, magnanimous in recommending both E2, E3 in replacement of E1A and E2A and also the cascading (E3 to E7) and sent the proposal to DOT.

As expected; DOT on the ground of **huge expenditure on pension contribution** rejected the proposal. SNEA being committed for early implementation declared to issue strike notice, when one of the other association understanding the reality came forward for a joint struggle. We always believe in unity and consolidation and hence the notice for joint struggle is issued. **(The cementing force for unity and consolidation is the fair policy, honesty, mutual respect and trust but not the short term adjustments).**

If you look at the demands of joint struggle it was very clear that demand was for E2 and E3 for JTO/JAOs and SDE/AOs and as focused by SNEA from the day one.

We were on two days Dharna and 3 Days relay hunger Strike. Members at grass root level especially members of SNEA took it to their heart and involved in the agitation. Our young JTOs also participated in large number and hoped that this issue will attain its finality and were highly hopeful. (Thank you brave hearts, our struggle will not go waste and we will shorten the distance of achieving this goal very shortly).

But, the inside story, one must understand. When SNEA was very clear on this demand, one of the other associations though realized belatedly that first we should get cleared with standard pay scales, another was still singing for cascading and was writing in their websites that they are pursuing E2, E3 and subsequent up gradations. The result is joint leadership was not fully and only focused on E2 and E3. Unfortunately we again demonstrated before the management that we are not really united despite our demand being only for E2 and E3.

BSNL having already tossed the ball to DOT, now DOT is ready to throw it to DPE so that the purpose of the entire management is achieved to delay it as long as possible so that the arrears payment can be saved. Every day delay in settling the issue is a saving for the management.

Let us analyze a situation, if we all have demanded in one voice for only E2 and E3 in the first place, as agreed by all of us in Khan Committee recommendations, by this time we would have got the orders of standard pay scales because;

- **The proposal of non standard pay scales, E1A and E2A was already rejected by DPE and the letter is endorsed by DOT to BSNL,**
- **Already we are drawing E1A and E2A for JTOs and SDEs ,**
- **Khan Committee and management committee have already approved E2 AND E3.**

Today, we are into membership verification; we expect this verification should lead to settlement of legitimate issue of standard pay scales, issues including the 30% superannuation, CPSU cadre hierarchy. Our future fights for 3rd PRC implementation and of course joining hands for the profitability of our beloved company must be our next priority.

- Now each one of us to think; whether SNEA has followed all the steps for settlement of standard pay scales, done all possible efforts at various levels like BSNL, DOT and DPE and also sustained struggles?
- Of course the answer is “Yes”. But we didn’t get required co-operation by our partners associations in recent struggle. We have to overcome this and we will.

Our history tells us that we can write one more history. We want the right thinking executive to strengthen the hands of this association in all our future struggles. Even to negotiate the issues on hand, the strength of this association can be enhanced by supporting us in verification instead of wasting our ballot where we are being confused by some corner and thereby we can stop these people should not be successful in totally sidelining our youngsters in the coming days after verification.

The FLIP FLOP on the standard pay scale and other issues are now clearly visible from the updates in their websites of other associations but SNEA is the only association which is clearly focused and never changed its position. Our endeavor is to prepare our members for a greater fight, our massive tours all over India is to make them understand ground realities and not the hypes created.

Let us all join our hands together for this great task of uniting executives for achieving the aspirations of executives, future heroes of BSNL, by supporting an association in a massive way. Let management understand through this verification that executives are united under the banner of one association, SNEA which is their future.

...S B Nagavi , B Sc, LLb
Circle Secretary SNEA Karnataka