

## History, status and vision of SNEA on Superannuation benefit to BSNL directly recruited employees:

After pay, pension and terminal benefits are the most important concern for any serving employee. Similarly, for the employees directly recruited by BSNL, Superannuation benefit is the most important issue directly affecting their social security. At the time of formation of BSNL itself, this important issue got covered in Rule 37A. As per Rule 37A, BSNL employees absorbed from DoT are covered by Govt pension under CCS pension Rules 1972 and for the BSNL directly recruited employees, a separate pension fund is to be formed. Instead of forming a separate pension fund, EPF pension scheme introduced for the BSNL directly recruited employees, after discussion with the Unions and Assns. All were demanding for a more secured EPF scheme instead of forming a pension fund.

Initially, the EPF contribution was a fixed amount of Rs 781/- per month for all the BSNL directly recruited JTO/JAOs, with the ceiling of 12% of 6500, irrespective of the emoluments. BSNL continued the same contribution till 2005. SNEA struggled since 2003 for the removal of the ceiling on EPF contribution, demanding full 12% of the emoluments (basic pay plus IDA) as the employer contribution. Finally BSNL management agreed to our demand in May, 2005 and BSNL Board approved the proposal with retrospective effect. The orders issued removing the ceiling on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2005 with retrospective effect, making provision for EPF contribution @ 12% of emoluments, w/o ceiling, a big achievement for the BSNL direct recruits. This was the second major issue, SNEA could settle for the BSNL directly recruited JTO/JAOs. First was the E1A pay scale for the direct recruits also at par with the absorbed officers instead of E1 scale.

2<sup>nd</sup> PRC recommended a separate pension fund, with a contribution, maximum upto 30% of the emoluments towards PF, Pension, Gratuity and Post Retirement Medical Benefits. This demand came into limelight when Forum gone on agitation in 2012 along with other demands of 78.2% IDA and CCL. Till that time management was taken a stand that there is no need for a separate pension fund as EPF scheme is available. During

settlement of the agitation, management agreed to constitute a committee to examine it. The committee recommended for a separate pension fund, starting with a contribution of 2% from BSNL.

In 2013-14, then CMD agreed for 4% contribution and in our AIC at Jaipur, present CMD assured 6% contribution, in the presence of almost all the General Secretaries. However there was no conscience among the Unions/Assns even on 6%, sticking to unrealistic demand of 12%. On 19.02.2016 in our absence, management announced 3% in a meeting and gone ahead with that. SNEA strongly protested against this betrayal. We are continuing our struggle to see that this 3% contribution is enhanced to the 6% as assured to SNEA. Eventhough the 3% proposal is approved by Board and gone to DoT for approval, our strong protest reopened the case and management agreed to review the contribution after recalculation of the medical expenses. Now UF also taken it as a demand in the trade union notice.

The proposal is pursued in DoT for early administrative approval. Association met almost all the senior officers in DoT in this regard. On 19.08.2016, an agenda meeting was held with secretary, DoT in this regard in which Secretary directed the concerned officers to clear the proposal and assured that DoT approval will be communicated to BSNL shortly.

Our future agenda in 3<sup>rd</sup> PRC is to ensure that superannuation benefit is becoming a mandatory provision, giving no scope to the management to linger on or decide the quantum of contribution.

SNEA CHQ..