

Achievement or Betrayal?

After wasting nearly one year, the recognized union has accepted the offer of the BSNL Management for wage revision on 17.11.2009. Even though the wage review committee was formed by the BSNL Management in December 2006 itself, BSNLEU did not begin serious negotiations for second wage revision which was due for our employees from 1.1.2007.

A number of PSUs like Food Corporation of India, Port Trust and Coal India have effected wage revision already for their employees. Of all the PSUs, only in BSNL the wage revision for employees was delayed unnecessarily, while the Executives were given the same a year back. This discrimination was allowed to continue for more than a year. The recognized union justified this delay, promising better wage revision to employees than the Executives. However the BSNL Workers' Alliance protested against this delay and sought time to discuss the wage revision with the Management. This was objected to by BSNLEU on the ground that NFTE-BSNL and FNTO are unrecognized unions. But BSNLWA compelled and convinced the Management that an alliance representing more than 40% of work force cannot be kept out of the wage revision negotiations. Hence we were called for discussion on 16.11.2009. We demanded 30% fitment, 78.2% IDA merger and 5% increment. But the very next day, BSNLEU meekly surrendered to the Management 'accepting what was given'. The offer of the Management was nothing new. In January 2009 itself the Management offered the same proposals. But BSNLEU insisted for 5 year wage settlement. Hence the stalemate continued. But after wasting 10 months, now BSNLEU has accepted the same proposals of the Management. The Management was adamant and has not changed even a comma or full-stop.

On 22.4.2009, Shri.Gopal Das, Director (HRD) wrote a letter to Com.Namboodiri on wage revision. We reproduce the operative portion of the said letter below:

“I request you to consider 30% fitment benefit on existing pay + DA as on 1.1.2007 with the same periodicity as in the case of the Executives, which is the most reasonable offer. Depending upon your consent an agreement can be promptly signed, meeting the long overdue aspirations of the non-Executive employees”.

It is crystal clear that the Management was keen to sign wage agreement in April 2009 itself. But BSNLEU dragged on and wasted precious time for nothing. If Com.Namboodiri accepts the offer of the Management without any change now, why he did not do it 10 months ago?

As we all know, only the fixation will be given effect to from 1.1.2007. But all allowances like HRA etc will be granted only from the date of issue of order. Because of this delay in signing the agreement, our employees will now heavily lose in HRA arrears alone. Further by accepting only 68.8% instead of 78.2% IDA merger, Com.Namboodiri has made every employee suffer huge loss in arrears amount. Very recently, the employees of FCI have signed a wage agreement for 30% fitment with 78.2% IDA merger. When they could do it, why BSNLEU could not do the same for its employees?

Already our employees have lost 50% amount in Bonus this year. The promotion policy is still in cold storage despite signing an agreement a year back. Due to this delay also our employees will lose huge amount of arrears. Despite having recognition for five years continuously, BSNLEU has failed to protect the interest of both the company as well as the employees. They promised TTA promotion without any examination for Telecom Mechanics. But now 10 + 2 educations qualification is being insisted even for appearing in the examination.. The pay scale of OTBP of TTA cadre is not changed yet and it continues to be Rs.7100 only. Now the disinvestment is knocking at our door. Who knows? In future, Com.Namboodir may 'claim' that he 'achieved' 10% disinvestment in BSNL.

- **Com.C.K.Mathivanan,**
Secretary, NFTE