



Editorial

TENSION GRIPS THE ABSORBED BSNL PENSIONERS

All the absorbed BSNL pensioners must have some agonizing time while preparing to join the festivals of Navaratri and Dussehra, since the fate of two of their long pending genuine cases are still hanging in balance. These issues viz, anomaly in fixation of pension to DOT Employees absorbed in BSNL who retired between 1.10.2000 and 31.07.2001 and merger of 78.2% IDA with basic pension benefit to the absorbed BSNL pensioners are routinely coming up for discussions in the last so many meetings of Standing Committee Of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) arranged by Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare. The official minutes of these meetings are, as usual, giving only the status reports and not any sign of final break through. Quite naturally, the absorbed BSNL pensioners have reasons to be upset.

The Minutes of the last meeting of SCOVA held on 5th September 2014, as released by Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare on 25.09.2014, raised both some hopes and despair in the minds of affected absorbed BSNL pensioners. The first issue of removal of anomaly in pension of those who retired between 1.10.2000 and 31.07.2001 remains unresolved for over a decade. These pensioners had their pension fixed on the basis of average of last ten months pay which were drawn partly in CDA and partly in IDA pay scales.

Since the CDA pay was less, the average of last ten months pay was also less for them. As a result, their resultant fixation of pension was also on lower side. Had their pay been only in IDA scale, the present problem would not have arisen at all. This is in fact a case relating to principle for fixation of pension. Therefore in order to remove their hardships, the principle for fixation of pension needs to be changed. Following a recommendation from VI CPC, the Government has changed the principle for fixation of pension. It is now based on last pay drawn. But this new principle was made effective from 1.1.2006. Had the Government allowed this principle to be applied retrospectively or at least for the present case, these affected pensioners would have got the justice. At one point of time, the matter was forcefully presented by AIBSNLREA to the Government. But DoP&PW in consultation with DOE, vide its No. 38/6/10-P&PW(A) dated 11.08.2010, informed AIBSNLREA that the pension of these pre-2006 retirees were fixed correctly and turned down the request to **allow** fixation of pension on last pay drawn. Thereafter, a partial solution to the problem was found out by DOT in consultation with DoP&PW as circulated vide DoT No. 40-10/2005-Pen(T) dated 27.09.2011 for fixing the pension at 50 % of the minimum of the pay scale. Since this could not satisfy the majority, AIBSNLREA presented a proposal to DoT that the CDA

pay drawn prior to 01-10-2000 may notionally be fixed in IDA pay for the purpose of fixation of pension [To read the proposal, view the postings dated 29-11-2012 and 22-12-2012 in AIBSNLREA's website]. DoT agreed to consider the said proposal to notionally convert the pay in CDA scales in IDA pay and allow fixation of pension on the basis of average of last ten months pay. And this is the proposal which is now under consideration of DoP&PW. Unfortunately, DoP&PW has examined the present proposal on "financial implication" angle and had asked for several information from DoT. As seen in the minutes of SCOVA meeting, the information as asked for by DoP&PW are yet to be obtained from BSNL and sent to them implying that there would be further delay in resolving the issue. Moreover, DoP&PW may even consult DOE in the matter. Only silver lining in the minutes of last SCOVA meeting is that DoP&PW has agreed to discuss the matter with DOT to find a solution to the issue. If the authorities really intend to resolve the matter, this issue needs to be considered on the basis of principle and not on financial implication angle.

The other case for revision of pension/family pension of pre-2007 and post 2007 BSNL pensioners who retired between 1.1.2007 and 9.6.2013 by allowing the benefit of merger of 50% DA effectively amounting to 78.2% is also very badly delayed. The proposal, which DoT has mooted and DoP&PW has also concurred, is based on wrong foundation and tends to deprive the concerned absorbed BSNL pensioners of their actual dues. Even if the DoT's proposal gets through at one point of time or the other, some problems will continue to be there

and will have to be taken up at the appropriate forum for further redressal. AIBSNLREA strongly believes that had DoT implemented the DPE's Order to allow effective merger of 78.2% IDA w.e.f. 01.01.2007 i.e. the date on which the revised IDA pay scales were implemented in BSNL, the present problem would not have come at all. This issue is also being discussed in the meetings of SCOVA for last several occasions, but has not reached the finality. According to the Minutes of the last SCOVA meeting held on 05.09.2014, the representative of Department of Expenditure had stated that DOE would send its "comments" within one week to Department of Telecommunications. It is, however, a separate issue that some pensioners' associations had reported at that time that DOE had assured to issue the "Orders" within 7 days. Order on the subject, anyhow, has to be issued only by Department of Telecommunications and not by any other Department. Now the question comes how is that the representative of DOE had said on 5.9.2014 that "comments" would be sent within one week when the same is awaited till this day i.e. almost for a month after the said SCOVA meeting. This case is a classic example of how the inter-ministerial consultations on any proposal moved by any Department takes its own time to reach the finality. Given the state of affairs regarding file movements in Ministries, one can now reasonably expect that the "comments" of DOE may reach DOT anytime from now. But it is difficult to predict what would be DOE's stand on the proposal. **Thus, the woes of the affected absorbed BSNL pensioners seem to be never ending. These affected pensioners are naturally under severe stress and tension.**

ACTION ON REPRESENTATIONS

NON-EXTENSION OF BENEFIT OF DEFERED OPTION UNDER PARA 4 OF DOP&PW No. 4/18/87-P&PW(D) DATED 05.07.1989 TO THE ABSORBED GROUP C & D EMPLOYEES IN BSNL– DOT FORWARDS THE REPRESENTATION ON THE ABOVE ISSUE RECEIVED THROUGH PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE TO CMD, BSNL:

Prime Minister’s Office had forwarded a representation on the above issue to the Secretary, Department of Telecommunication on 09.07.2014 for “action as appropriate”. Now Department of Telecommunication has forwarded the same to CMD, BSNL for “appropriate action in the matter” and communicate directly action taken on the petition to the petitioner under intimation to DOT. [To read the PMO’s and DoT’s letters, posting dated 12.09.2014 in this website may be viewed].

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT ACTS ON AIBSNLREA’S REPRESENTATION ON NON-EXTENSION OF FITMENT BENEFIT OF MERGER OF 78.2% IDA FOR FIXATION OF PENSION:

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India has acted on AIBSNLREA’s representation vide No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2014/16 dated 10.07.2014 addressed to Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot, Hon’ble Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment on the above matter [To read this representation, posting dated 11.07.2014 in this website may be viewed]. The Ministry has since forwarded a copy of the said representation to DOT on 26.08.2014 “to take appropriate action in the matter immediately under intimation to this Ministry”. The letter is marked as URGENT, SENIOR CITIZEN’S ISSUE. [To read the letter from Ministry of SJ & E, posting dated 03.09.2014 in this website may be viewed].

MINUTES OF THE 25th MEETING OF SCOVA

[Minutes of the 25th Meeting of SCOVA held on 05.09.2014 is reproduced below. Only the decisions on two important issues pertaining to BSNL pensioners are reproduced - Ed]

ix) SI.No.9 of ATR:- Anomaly in fixation of pension to DoT employees absorbed in BSNL, who retired between 1.10.2000 and 31.7.2001.

DoT informed that BSNL is collecting the requisite information sought by DoPPW from Corporate Offices of BSNL/MTNL. It was decided that the matter may be discussed in a meeting between DoP&PW and DoT to find a solution to this issue.

(Action: DoP&PW and DoT)

x) SI.No.10 of ATR:- Merger of 78.2% IDA with basic pension benefit to the absorbed BSNL pensioners.

DoP&PW has already conveyed its ‘no objection’ to the proposal. Department of Expenditure intimated that they will send their comments to DoT within a week.

(Action: DoT and DoE)

MEDIA REPORTS

GOVERNMENT FORMS COMMITTEE TO ASSESS THE AMOUNT OF UNCLAIMED DEPOSIT IN PPF AND POST OFFICE SAVINGS SCHEMES AND SUGGEST STEPS FOR THEIR UTILIZATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF SENIOR CITIZENS

In a welcome move, the Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley has formed a Committee under Shri H R Khan, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India to assess the amount of unclaimed deposits in PPF and Post Office Savings Schemes and also suggest steps for their utilization for the benefits of Senior Citizens. Other members of the Committee are Secretary, Department of Posts, Joint Secretary (Ministry of Law), Joint Secretary (Budget Division, Ministry of Finance), Deputy Managing Director, State Bank of India and Executive Director, Punjab National Bank. The Committee is to submit its report by 31.12.2014. Here is the report on the issue appearing in the media:

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has set up a committee under RBI Deputy Governor H R Khan to assess the amount of unclaimed deposit in the popular PPF and Post Office saving schemes, and suggest steps for utilisation of funds for the benefit of senior citizens. The Committee, which has been set up in pursuance of the announcement made by the Minister in his Budget speech, will also suggest whether the unclaimed deposit should come to government or be kept in a separate account.

The members of the Committee would include Secretary (Department of Post), Joint Secretary (Law Ministry and Budget Division in Finance Ministry), SBI Deputy MD and PNB Executive Director, a notification said. The committee would suggest procedure to bring unclaimed deposits to a common pool, it said, adding that the panel would submit its report by December 31, 2014.

Jaitley in his Budget speech had said a large amount of money is estimated to be lying as unclaimed amounts with Public Provident Fund (PPF), Post Office, saving schemes. "These are mostly out of investments belonging to the senior citizens and on their demise, remain unclaimed for want of relevant payment instructions. I propose to set up a committee to examine and recommend how this amount can be used to protect and further financial interests of the senior citizens," Jaitley had said.

Although there is no official estimate to ascertain the unclaimed amounts in PPF and small saving schemes, it is believed that the amount could run into hundreds of crores of rupees. In the postal department, an account is declared silent or inoperative when there is no transaction for three years. A PPF is a 15-year investment scheme, which attracts tax exemption. The minimum annual investment in PPF is Rs 500. The Budget has announced hiking the maximum annual investment limit in PPF by Rs 50,000 to Rs 1.5 lakh.

BRANCHES IN ACTION

PALAKKAD BRANCH OF AIBSNLREA HOLDS ITS GENERAL BODY MEETING: A general body meeting of AIBSNLREA Palakkad Branch (Kerala State) was conducted at Hotel Indraprastha, Palakkad on 23-09-2014. Thirty six (36) members participated in GB Meeting and two new members viz. S/Shri Raman K.N, Retd SDE and Suryanarayanan, Retd Sr AO joined the association. Now the strength has come to 60. Presidential address was given by Shri N. Bhaskaran Retd DGM. Secretary Shri Prabhakaran presented the minutes of last meeting. He described elaborately the unsettled 78.2% IDA merger issue.

The members were strongly agitated over the protracted delay in the settlement of 78.2% IDA merger on one pretext or the other. After Vote of Thanks presented by Assistant Secretary Shri P.V.Subramanian the meeting concluded at 1320 hrs and a lunch was served and all disbursed after that.

QUARTERLY GENERAL BODY MEETING OF AIBSNLREA, KOLHAPUR BRANCH: Quarterly General Body Meeting of Kolhapur Branch of AIBSNLREA was held on 21st Sept 2014 in Telephone Bhavan Conference Hall at Kolhapur with Shri L M Godi, President on the Chair. 54 members attended the meeting and 5 more new members joined the Association. President welcomed all the members. The new members were presented with bouquet by him. House observed two minutes silence to condole the recent sad demise of the wife of Shri S V Kulkarni of Sangli and mother of Shri A B Amaashi, Kolhapur. The Branch Secretary D K Joshi gave a detailed account of the Association activities and issues taken up by our Association at CHQ level and the progress made in the cases. He informed about the status of the issue of 78.2% IDA merger and revision of pension. He gave brief account of the recent SCOVA Meeting held in New Delhi, also the demands made by the various Associations/Unions including our Association to VII CPC. He also informed the house about the development of drawing pension of those who retired between June 2013 and Dec 2013 in Mumbai CCA office. Contents of e-House Journal. "SECOND INNINGS" also were read out. Retired DGM Shri S H Mokashi, Solapur spoke on the recent Pension Adaalat that took place in Solapur and explained that the delay is taking place in revision of pension because of very less staff in CCA office and huge work load of four circle Units for fixation of pension/revision. He suggested that the matter for posting of adequate staff should be taken up with CGM. Shri G L Joshi shared his experiences of "Manasorovar Yatra" and S/Shri UR Gaikwad, SG Kanade, D M Kengar and Mrs Nadagouda also shared their experiences with the members. The meeting ended with presentation of vote of thanks.

EAST GODAVARI BRANCH (AP STATE) HOLD MEETING WITH SR. GMTD, RAJAHMUNDRY: East Godavari Branch of AIBSNLREA had an official meeting with Sr GMTD Rajahmundry on 19.09.2014 at 11.00 hours. The official side was represented by DGM (Finance), DGM (Admn), AGM (Admn). The Association was represented by S/Shri GV Rama Krishna, Retd DGM, Finance and President of the Branch, S.Mallikharjuna Rao, Retd, DGM, (Finance), Ch. Gandhi, Retd DE, A.Kodanda Rao, Retd DE, G.Bhaskara Rao, Retd Sr SDE, S.S.Venkateswara Rao, Retd DE, K.P. Sreenivasa Rao, Retd JTO, P Venkata Reddy, Retd SDE, (Civil), G.Sundara Rao, Retd DE, KBS Naidu, Sr SDE and Finance Secretary, GSVSS Vara Prasad, Retd Sr SDE and Branch Secretary, AIBSNLREA, East Godavari Branch. Discussions were held on the issues submitted vide Branch letter No. AIBSNLREA/EG/org/2014-2016/4 dated 18-09-2014 in particular and the economic health of BSNL in general. Senior GMTD, East Godavary SSA issued suitable instructions to the DGM (Finance) and DGM (Admn) on the spot. The representatives of the Branch conveyed sincere thanks to the Sr GM TD and other Officers for their instant response to the grievances of the members.

GENERAL BODY MEETING OF AKOLA BRANCH (MAHARASHTRA STATE): A General Body Meeting of Akola Branch of AIBSNLREA was held on 14-09-2014. Discussions were held on the pressing problems of the BSNL pensioners. The Branch Secretary reported that the membership strength of Akola branch has now increased from 35 to 44 which includes two members from East Vidarbha Branch, Nagpur who had earlier enrolled there.

BI MONTHLY GB MEETING OF AIBSNLREA, UDAIPUR BRANCH: Udaipur Branch of AIBSNLREA held its bi-monthly General Body meeting on 13-09-2014. Twenty eight (28) members attended the meeting. Branch President Shri J M Avasthi welcomed all the members. Branch Secretary Shri Gaffar Mohammed

garlanded all the members whose date of birth was in the month of August and September. The members discussed about the reported proceedings of last SCOVA meeting held on 5.9.2014 and expressed their unhappiness over the way in which the Department is handling the of re-fixation of pension of pre 10-06-2013 retired BSNL employees. Demand was reiterated for restoration of payment of medical benefit without vouchers for outdoor treatment. The issue of inordinate delay in reimbursement of medical claims to the retired BSNL employees in Rajasthan Circle was raised by the members and it was resolved to take up the matter with CGMT, Rajasthan Circle. Meeting was then concluded after presentation of thanks by Branch Secretary Shri Gaffar Mohammad. This was followed by lunch in Natraj palace Hotel.

GENERAL BODY MEETING OF VARANASI BRANCH OF AIBSNLREA: Varanasi Branch of AIBSNLREA held its General Body Meeting at Buddha Hotel, Sarnath on 7-9-2014. The meeting was presided over by Shri B N Singh. In addition to the life members of the Branch, a large number of retired BSNL Executives from nearby areas like Gazipur, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Sonebhadra, Azamgarh and Chandauli attended the meeting. The participants mainly discussed about the inordinate delay in extending the fitment benefit of merger of 78.2% IDA for fixation of basic pension. Shri Yad Ali, Branch Secretary conducted the meeting and Shri R K Sinha, Finance Secretary of the Branch presented the vote of thanks to the members and others.

PAYMENTS RECEIVED BY CHQ DURING SEPTEMBER 2014

- Kanpur Branch (UP State) of AIBSNLREA has deposited Rupees one thousand four hundred (Rs 1400.00) only in Syndicate Bank on 08.08.2014 as quota for seven new life members.
- West Bengali State Branch of AIBSNLREA has deposited Rupees twelve thousand eight hundred (Rs 12800.00) only in Karur Vysya Bank on 11.09.2014 only as quota for sixty four new life members.
- Parbhani Branch (Maharashtra State) of AIBSNLREA has deposited Rupees two hundred (Rs 200.00) only in Syndicate Bank on 12.09.2014 as quota for one new life member.
- Udaipur Branch (Rajasthan State) of AIBSNLREA has deposited Rupees four hundred (Rs 400.00) only in Syndicate Bank on 16.09.2014 as quota for two new life members.
- Mumbai Branch (Maharashtra State) of AIBSNLREA has sent a cheque (No.783026 dated 8.9.2014) drawn on SBI for Rupees two thousand (Rs 2000.00) only as quota for ten new life members which has been credited in the Account with Syndicate Bank on 19.09.2014.
- Akola Branch (Maharashtra State) of AIBSNLREA has deposited Rupees one thousand four hundred (Rs 1400.00) only in Syndicate Bank on 19.09.2014 as quota for seven new life members.
- Shri Prabhash Choudhury, Retd DE and Life Member of Dhanbad Branch (Jharkhand) has deposited Rupees one thousand (Rs 1000.00) only in the Syndicate Bank on 23.09.2014 as donation on settlement of his pensionary benefits after finalization of a long pending vigilance case.
- Kolhapur Branch (Maharashtra State) of AIBSNLREA has deposited Rupees one thousand two hundred (Rs 1200.00) only in the CHQ's Savings Bank Account with Syndicate Bank on 30.09.2014 as quota for six new life members.

Edited and published by Shri S Basu, General Secretary, AIBSNLREA