

***Wage revision - do not make BSNLEU as the scapegoat.***  
***Editorial, Tele Crusader, May,2024***

Wage Revision is the legitimate right of BSNL employees. However, the government is denying the same, citing the recommendation of the 3rd Pay Revision Committee. The recommendations of the 3rd PRC has made Wage Revision impossible for the employees of the loss making PSUs. At the same time, the DPE recommendations on Wage Revision are different for the Executives and the Workmen of the PSUs. It is keeping this in mind that, the DoT has directed the CMD BSNL to sign the Wage Revision agreement with the Recognised Unions of the Non-Executives and send the same for its approval.

It is based on this letter of the DoT that, the Joint Wage Negotiating Committee for the Non-Executives has been constituted in BSNL. Initially, the Management took a reasonable stand and finalised the new pay scales of the Non-Executives on 27.07.2018. However, things changed completely after the new CMD BSNL took over charge in July, 2019. Thereafter, the pay scales already finalised through mutual consensus in the Wage Negotiating Committee, are thrown into the dustbin.

Further, the Management Side representatives are imposing unacceptable conditions in the Wage Negotiating Committee. These conditions are reduced pay scales, 0% fitment, no revision of allowances – not even HRA revision and Wage Revision only notionally from 01.01.2017, which means even the employees who lost their increments due to stagnation, will not get any arrears. If the reduced pay scales are accepted, then the problem of stagnation will become permanent.

Under this situation, both BSNLEU and NFTE should organise trade union actions, to create pressure on the Management. However, it is unfortunate that NFTE is not prepared to join any struggle. BSNLEU organised a successful one day strike on 16th February, 2024. This strike coincided with the call of the Central Trade Unions. Nevertheless, BSNLEU organised the strike purely on the issues of BSNL employees. The Wage Revision issue was prominently focused in this strike. The strike call received very good response from the employees. NFTE should have also joined this strike. However, it is unfortunate that, despite repeated appeals made by BSNLEU, NFTE declined to join this strike.

Further, it is unfortunate that NFTE is trying to make BSNLEU as the scapegoat for the non-settlement of Wage Revision. It is making a mischievous propaganda that, Wage Revision is not settled only because the General Secretary of BSNLEU is declining to sign the agreement. This is nothing but fooling the employees. Wage Revision will not be settled, even if all the insulting conditions of the Management are accepted. Because, any Wage Revision agreement signed, will have to get the approval of the Cabinet.

Non-settlement of Wage Revision has created grievous sufferings to the Non-Executives. A vast majority of the Non-Executives are suffering from stagnation, resulting in the loss of thousands of rupees every month. BSNLEU and NFTE are the two recognised trade unions in BSNL. These unions have inherited the militant traditions of the P&T trade union movement. Both the unions strongly oppose the economic policies of the government. As such, it is the duty of both BSNLEU and NFTE to take the lead for organising serious struggles and create pressure for the settlement of the Wage Revision.

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