



# GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT

AIBSNLREA – THIRD ALL INDIA CONFERENCE

JANUARY 7 & 8, 2023 - KOLKATA

**ALL INDIA BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED RETIRED EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION**  
**Central Head Quarters**  
**New Delhi**

**Report of the General Secretary placed in the third All India Conference of AIBSNLREA held on  
07th and 08th January 2023 at Kolkata**

***Respected President and dear Friends,***

**1.0** Welcome and Happy New-Year to all of you. As you all know that we have assembled here in Kolkata, known as City of Joy, to hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> All India Conference of our Association. So far, ..... delegates have reported for participating in this Conference. We may recall that in our First All India Conference held on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2016 at Bhubaneswar in Odisha, a total of 121 delegates from various parts of the country participated. On the other hand, in our 2<sup>nd</sup> All India Conference held at Madurai in Tamilnadu on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 157 delegates had participated. Since we had our last AIC at Madurai, much water has already flown through the Ganges during the last 37 months. We would, therefore, like to share some of those developments with you all for the purpose of our records and discussions in this AIC.

**2.0** Within a few months, after the Madurai AIC, entire world started facing the wrath of the worst pandemic of the Centuries- known as Covid 2019 which took away several lakhs of human lives. With no prescribed and recognized line of treatment and no vaccination against the corona virus, entire world including the Big Powers had to meekly surrender before the pandemic. India was also no exception with nearly 5.3 lakhs casualties having been reported so far. The only silver lining in India is that it could come out with a few effective vaccines within no time and administered the same to its high population. But despite that Covid-19 could snatch away some lives and even now the virus is trying to rise its head through other variants. Being the seniors and mostly with co-morbidities, we need to continue to follow all corona-protocols prescribed by the Government. However, we cannot forget many of our colleagues of yesteryears including our Organizing Secretary (South) Ch Gandhi from East Godavari District whom we lost due to Covid-19. We are very much missing them and pray that their souls continue to rest in peace. We can also realize the pains of hundreds of our members who lost their near and dear ones due to the pandemic and other reasons. We also pray for them.

**3.0 Organizational activities and Membership:** Life Membership strength of our Association now stands at **6731**. We may recall that at the time of our First AIC at Bhubaneswar and 2<sup>nd</sup> AIC at Madurai, our membership strength stood as 3800 and 5634 respectively. During the period under Report, we could add five more branches in our strength – one at Alwar-Bharatpur in Rajasthan State second one at Agra in Uttar Pradesh State, the third one at Kalaburagi in Karnataka State and the fourth one at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh. Another Branch has also been formed at Patiala in Punjab. In addition, we formed our Tamilnadu State Branch on 01.06.2022, and Delhi Circle Branch on 16.11.2022. A new State body in Rajasthan has also been formed on 05.01.2023. Unfortunately, here also Covid-19 played the role of the spoiler, since the Branches could not hold the GB Meetings and even failed to freely contact the individual retirees settled in their respective area of activities to get them enrolled as members. On our part, we held a virtual meeting of CHQ Office Bearers on 20.09.2020 basically to discuss BSNLMRS related issues and organizational

matters. Details of the meeting were circulated vide our Newsletter No. 09/2020 dated 21.09.2020.

**4.1 Dissemination of information:** Our website, as usual, continued to remain as the main platform to disseminate information. We also regularly published our monthly e-journal “Second Innings” and meticulously released it on 6<sup>th</sup> of each month. However, we could issue very few Newsletters during the period. Meanwhile, we started sending all important and authentic information to all the activists of the Association at all levels through WhatsApp messages in their mobile numbers available with us. This is a new feature that we added in our efforts to reach first and fast with authentic information to the members. We also added another feature wherein the letters can be directly accessed from the e-journal itself without going to the website by clicking on the links. We also obtained SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificate for our website for secure browsing.

**4.2 Disturbing trend of believing unreliable messages spread through WhatsApp:** We now notice with great concern that of late the incidences of unreliable and unauthentic messages, being routinely forwarded using WhatsApp facility, are on the rise. People never try to verify the authenticity of such messages and start blindly believing in them. This creates confusion and invites avoidable queries leading to issuance of clarifications from time to time. This Association hides nothing from the members. All its communications with various agencies and postings, unlike in other websites, are permanently available in its website since its launching in 2008. We are also not indulging in the practice of posting something now, and thereafter either modifying or deleting the same. Moreover, compilation of all important Orders of our need, subject head-wise, could be found on this website. Our members need to make it a habit to go through the postings in our website regularly to keep them abreast with latest and authentic information.

**5.0 Response from the Ministries/Departments and other agencies on our representations:** Despite the severe constraints that all the Pensioners’ Welfare Associations are having in absence of any recognition rules or prescribed channel of communication, AIBSNLREA tried its best to continue with its efforts to take up the issues of common interest and even the individual cases with concerned authorities for their redressal. We also used RTI route and CPENGRAM mechanism introduced by DoP&PW, as and when needed. We continued to get response from the Departments/Ministries in most of these cases. Further, we followed up the cases by personal visits to the Sections/Offices in both DoT Headquarters including CCA Office and BSNL Corporate Office.

**6.0 Reduction of staff-strength of BSNL by offering VRS to reduce establishment cost and improve financial health of BSNL:** The most important and major development that took place, during the period under reporting, is introduction and offering of a Voluntary Retirement Scheme, termed as “BSNL Voluntary Retirement Scheme-2019”, for both the Executive and non-executive employees of BSNL. The Cabinet, in its meeting held on 23.10.2019, approved the DoT’s proposal vide its Cabinet Note dated 22.10.2019 for VRS to be offered to the BSNL Employees. The details of the Scheme were circulated by DoT, through an Office Memorandum, vide No. 30-04/2019-PSU Affairs dated 29.10.2019.

**6.1 Salient features of the BSNL VRS-2019 as circulated by Department of Telecommunications:** The Scheme, circulated by DoT, envisaged that: -

(1) the Scheme shall be offered to the BSNL employees of age 50 years and above under Gujarat Model.

(2) ex-gratia amount, under Gujarat Model, is so limited that cost of ex-gratia amount and admissible pension for the remaining period of service does not exceed 125% of the salary that the employee would have drawn on the date of voluntary retirement in the remaining period of service.

(3) payment of ex-gratia on VRS and preponed pensionary liability to spread over a period of ten years to be supported by budgetary allocation of Government of India. Ex-gratia on VRS is to be paid in two instalments of 50% each during Financial Year 2019-20 and during Quarter 1 of the Financial Year 2020-21.

(4) staggered payment of Commutation/Gratuity to the employees opting for VRS to be made as follows: -

(i) For the employees of more than 55 years of age, on opting VRS, pension will be commuted only when they attain 60 years of age. For the employees with 55 years of age or less, on opting VRS, pension will be commuted in the sixth year i.e. 2024-25.

(ii) Similarly, payment of Gratuity is postponed in the same manner. Simple interest at the prevailing GPF rates from the date of voluntary retirement till gratuity is released, will be paid on the deferred gratuity amount.

## 6.2 BSNL issues Orders notifying the VR Scheme and circulating the guidelines to facilitate exercise of option by the employees:

BSNL, on its part, vide is No. 1-15/2019-PAT (BSNL) dated 04.11.2019 notified the Scheme and circulated the guidelines to facilitate exercise of option by the BSNL employees and called for option in pursuance to DoT OM dated 29.10.2019. BSNL notified that the Scheme shall open from 04.11.2019 up to 03.12.2019 (5.30 PM). It was also stated that the effective date of VRS will be 31.01.2020(After Noon). At the time of formulation of VRS Scheme in October 2019, BSNL had a total of about 1,53,000 employees. Following implementation of BSNL VRS-2019, a total of 78,569 BSNL Employees opted for VRS. This includes 13,310 Executives belonging to various cadres who opted for VRS. Break up of pre-and Post VRS strength of the Executives as well as the number of VRS-optees in different Executive cadres was later placed in a tabular form by BSNL in its Heads of Circle Conference (HOCC) held in 2020. However, in response to a RTI query on 09.09.2022, BSNL has put this figure as 13,298. The information placed in the said HOCC in a Tabular form is as under: -

### Pre and Post VRS Staff Strength (Executive)

Sl No	Designation	Pre-VRS strength	VRS Optees	Post VRS strength	%age (Post/Pre VRS)
01	CGM Equivalent	43	4	39	90.7%
02	PGM Equivalent	161	11	150	93.2%
03	GM Equivalent	409	50	359	87.8%
04	DGM Equivalent	660	412	248	37.6%
05	AGM Equivalent	5718	3815	1903	33.3%
06	SDE Equivalent	16620	6385	10235	61.6%
07	Sub Divisional Officer (OL)	106	47	59	55.7%
08	JTO Equivalent	19900	2175	17725	89.1%

09	Principal Private Secretary	27	18	9	33.3%
10	Private Secretary	298	183	115	38.6%
11	Personal Assistant	485	210	275	56.7%
	Total	44427	13310	31117	70.0%

Source: HOCC Meeting, 2020

**6.3 Inordinate delay in payment of Ex-gratia deviating from the assurance given by DoT to the BSNL VRS-2019 retirees:** Though DoT had assured that Ex-gratia on VRS is to be paid in two instalments of 50% each during Financial Year 2019-20 and during Quarter 1 of the Financial Year 2020-21, it failed to honor its own commitment. As a result, the affected VRS Retirees became increasingly frustrated and aggrieved. AIBSNLREA took up the issue seriously with both DoT and BSNL. The Association also pursued the issue with the concerned senior Officers and requested them to ensure immediate release of Fund and make payment. At one point of time, BSNL responded to our representations, vide its No. BSNLCO-A/11(14)/10/2020-ESTAB dated 09.10.2020 stating that “.... payment of Ex-gratia in respect of retirees of BSNL VRS-2019 has been released up to 92% of the total amount. The balance payment will be released as per the sanction of amount from DoT/Govt. of India”. We continued to mount pressure on both DoT and BSNL to release fund and make the payment. BSNL, vide its No. 32-904/2018-Pen (B) dated 21.12.2020, again had to reiterate and re-assure that “... So far appropriately 92% of the ex-gratia amount have been paid to VRS-2019 retirees. The balance of ex-gratia amount will be paid as and when funds are provided by DoT, Govt of India”. But issue of such statements by BSNL, which was under pressure, did not end here. It again replied to us, vide its No. BSNLCO-A/11(12)/3/2020-ESTAB dated 23.12.2020 stating that “.... Payment of Ex-Gratia in three instalments in respect of retirees under BSNL VRS-2019 has been made as per the fund received from DoT. Accordingly, payment of final instalment of Ex-Gratia will be paid as per fund receivable from DOT”. However, in March 2021, BSNL vide its No. BSNLCO-A/11(11)/8/2020-ESTAB dated 05.03.2021 confirmed release of fund by DoT for payment of fourth and final instalment of ex-gratia to the BSNL VRS-2019 retirees and also issued detailed instructions to the Circles to release the payment in ERP/SAP latest by 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Thus, another genuine grievance of the BSNL VRS-2019 was finally redressed.

**6.4 Delay in payment of Group Savings Linked Insurance Scheme amount by LIC to the BSNL VRS retirees:** Since LIC was delaying release of Group Savings Linked Insurance Scheme amount to the VRS retirees, AIBSNLREA had to step in to protect the interest of the VRS retirees and BSNL got engaged in series of discussions with LIC to get the amount released early. Finally, the issue was resolved to our satisfaction.

**6.5 Imminent problem for final settlement of GPF claims to the BSNL VRS-2019 retirees averted:** Since BSNL had remitted only the GPF credit for the BSNL retirees and BSNL VRS-2019 retirees from April 2019 onwards and did not remit the interests, there was delay in releasing the GPF amount. The matter was taken up with DoT by this Association. Finally, DoT issued an Order vide No. 7-1/2018/PFP-Policy/236-266 dated 16.01.2020 directing that the GPF final payment be settled to the extent of credit received in individual cases along with the interest due up to the date retirement, within due dates. Thus, another big problem looming large on the VRS retirees was averted.

**6.6 Payment of encashment of Earned Leave/Half Pay Leave to the BSNL VRS-2019 retirees:**

BSNL first issued instructions to complete the process for payment of leave encashment/half pay leave encashment to the BSNL VRS-2019 retirees by 14.08.2020 which was subsequently extended to 05.09.2020. Since still some cases were found pending, BSNL vide its No. BSNLCO-RB-I/11(20)/5/2020-ESTAB dated 16.10.2020 circulated a list of pending cases and advised the Circles to process all the pending cases immediately as per rules/instruction and submit report/justification in each case of non-payment of leave encashment latest by 19.10.2020.

**6.7 Director (HR), BSNL addressed all Heads of Circles requesting them to give personal attention to ensure that the vigilance cases of BSNL VRS-2019 Retirees are finalized in a time bound manner:**

Pointing out that a focussed approach is necessary for early settlement of pending vigilance/disciplinary matters and that DoT is pressing hard for issue of Ex-gratia fund utilisation certificate from BSNL, Director (HR) BSNL had written a DO letter, vide his No. BSNLCO-A/11(11)/15/2020-ESTAB dated 17.05.2021, to all Heads of Circles requesting them to give personal attention to ensure that the vigilance cases of BSNL VRS-2019 retirees are finalised in a time bound manner. This expedited settlement of some old pending vigilance cases of the BSNL VRS-retirees.

**7.0 Medical care issues with BSNL Retirees:** There is no dispute that the retirees at their old age need more Medicare facilities. This Association, therefore, always gives utmost importance to this issue and included this in its priority list. At present, the BSNL retirees have option either to continue with BSNLMRS or switch over to CGHS. In fact, CGHS has now become the most sought-after Health Scheme for the BSNL retirees. It also remains the fact that when the Management in BSNL wanted BSNL retirees to switch over to CGHS, there had been strong protest from the other Unions. However, AIBSNLREA was the only Association which welcomed the proposal but with a condition that it should be optional. Retirees must be given an option either to remain with BSNLMRS or switch over to CGHS. Department of Telecommunications agreed to this, and Orders were also issued accordingly. Following this, many BSNL retirees started moving towards CGHS. To-day, most of the BSNL retirees are found to have switched over to CGHS.

**7.1 Non-reimbursement of pending medical claims under BSNLMRS:** Even to-day, many old medical claims for reimbursement are pending with BSNL. AIBSNLREA had been continuously taking up the cases for reimbursement of pending claims. But BSNL had always been expressing their helplessness due to stated paucity of fund. We have been continuously pursuing the issue with all concerned and did not even hesitate to knock the doors of Chief Justice of India at one point of time. We even organized Savingram campaign by our members drawing attention of all concerned towards the extreme difficulties and hardships being faced by them due to non-reimbursement of their medical claims and requesting for early resolution of the issue. Most of the retirees who participated in the campaign also got the identical reply that their pending claims will be cleared as soon as fund is available. Even now, the same condition continues. Meanwhile, some pending claims pertaining to financial years 2018-2019 and 2019-20 have been reimbursed and credited in the bank account of the concerned BSNL retirees in early 2022-23. We still continued to follow up the issue with BSNL and according to the reply that we received on 12.08.2022 from DoT in response to our Grievance lodged in CPENGRAM vide Docket No. DOPPW/E/2022/22041 stating that "Due to cash inflow shortage the pending bills of Medical of retirees could not be released. However continued interaction with CBB section is being made for the funds. Depending upon future cash inflow suitable action to clear the payment will be taken in

coming months of financial year." In continuation to the above assurance given to AIBSNLREA, BSNL communicated to its Circles, vide its No. BSNLCO-CA/25/4/2021-CA-ERP-FICO/ dated 30.08.2022, that the Corporate CBB section has allotted funds to the Circles for making payment of medical bills up to 31.03.2022 to retired BSNL employees. BSNL further advised its Circles that "Going forward, the Circles should post the parked Medical bills of retired employees and deduct TDS, as applicable and these will be disbursed along with salary of working employees on monthly basis". Most unfortunately, the BSNL Circles and SSAs, even after receiving sufficient fund and clear instructions to make payment of pending Medical Bills up to 31.03.2022 to the BSNL retirees, were found clueless and a chaotic condition was allowed to be created. Many affected retirees started complaining of non-payment of their long pending claims and other irregularities. The Association, on its part, lost no time in taking up the matter again on 06.10.2022 with the concerned authorities in BSNL. These were followed up by visiting Corporate Office and meeting the concerned Officers. This prompted BSNL to issue series of instructions to the Circles/IFAs in quick successions which is unprecedented. In addition, in a detailed response to AIBSNLREA letter dated 06.10.2022, GM (CA/ERP-FICO) BSNL CO, has listed the steps taken by BSNL CO, steps to be taken by the Circles, instructions already existing on such steps, obligation on the part of the retired employees in ensuring that correct bank details, Mobile number and Email ID are entered in the system and has said that the Circles are being requested through emails also to clear all the medical liabilities of retired employees. But even after this, as a sizeable number of claims prior to 31.03.2022 remained unpaid, we took up the matter again with General Manager (CA/ERP-FICO), BSNL CO on 13.12.2022 requesting early allotment of funds as required by the Circles. GM (CA/ERP-FICO), BSNL CO, has immediately responded on 14.12.2022 stating that the contents of our mail have been noted and copied to Budget section for further necessary action. AIBSNLREA has now addressed a letter to the Director (F) requesting early allotment of funds.

**7.2 BSNL's surprising action to deduct TDS from pending medical claims and deposit the same with IT Department without actual payment to the pensioners:** Surprisingly, BSNL once started deducting TDS at the time of posting medical bills in the SAP but before making actual payment to the pensioners which were duly reflected in the 26 AS page of IT Department. We took up the issue with BSNL, DoT and even with the Income Tax authorities but without success. But our mounting pressure on them finally forced them to retract. BSNL, vide its No. BSNLCO-TAXN/13(15)1/2020-Taxation/4045 dated 03.03.2021, informed us that "BSNL has discontinued the practice of deducting TDS at the time of posting medical bill in the SAP and will deduct TDS of Retirees medical bills at the time of payment with effect from January 2021 onwards ..." Thus, another genuine issue with the BSNL retirees – specially the Executives could be successfully resolved.

**7.3 BSNL issued Orders allowing outdoor claims under BSNLMRS based on latest prescription which is not older than six months in view of lock down due to Covid-19:** Conceding to the request from AIBSNLREA, vide its No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2020/38 dated 18.05.2018, BSNL Corporate Office, vide its No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12(12)/1/2020-ADMN dated 02.06.2020, issued orders allowing outdoor medical claims with latest prescription which is not older than six months in view of the difficulties being faced by the beneficiaries to get latest prescription due to lock down ordered in the country in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

**7.4 Formulating a Health Insurance Policy for the retired BSNL employees:** BSNL, vide its letter No.25-1/2021-BSNL(WL)/Admn dated 30.07.2021, introduced Health Insurance Policy - 2021 for

its serving employees w.e.f. 01.09.2021. Earlier, when the proposal to review the existing medical policy was mooted by BSNL in the year 2019, it was AIBSNLREA which submitted its views, vide letter No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2019/05 dated 25.02.2019, suggesting introduction of a Group Health Insurance Scheme for retirees also, with the premium to be borne by BSNL and also to continue with the existing arrangement under BSNLMRS for outdoor treatment. But since BSNL issued Orders introducing Health Insurance Policy only for the serving employees, AIBSNLREA again addressed Director (HR), BSNL requesting formulation of a similar Health Insurance scheme for BSNL retired employees as well, with the yearly premium to be paid by BSNL. BSNL intimated us that the issue raised by us was a policy matter and that our suggestions had been noted. The first scheme launched by BSNL for the serving employees did not take off and it had to launch the scheme again with a new Insurance company. It is reported that the scheme received lukewarm response from the employees, due to high premium amount.

**7.5 Further reduction of annual ceiling limit for reimbursement of outdoor treatment for retired BSNL employees:** BSNL, vide its Office Order No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12/2/2022-ADMN-Part (1) dated 01.04.2022, has again revised the annual ceiling limit for reimbursement of outdoor treatment with vouchers for retired BSNL employees, bringing it down from 15 days to 12 days' pay (Basic pay at the time of retirement plus DA as on 01.04.2020).

**7.6 Fresh move by BSNL for empanelment of maximum number of Hospitals under BSNL MRS:** BSNL CO, vide its No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12(12)/3/2021-ADMN dated 20.06.2021, had requested the CGMs of all Circles/Units to coordinate with the Sales Team/representatives of the hospitals in the BA/SSA/towns/City for empanelment of maximum number of hospitals on CGHS rates preferably on credit basis and to make special efforts to bring reputed and eminent hospitals in the empanelled list. The letter further stated that the process of invoice processing and payment to hospitals providing credit facility be streamlined to make it a time bound system so that they continue to provide cashless healthcare facility. With the already empanelled hospitals backing out citing non-clearance of dues by BSNL, this move still remains only on paper.

**8.0 CGHS Facility:** Being fed up with the gradual withdrawal of facilities under BSNLMRS and non-reimbursement of their medical claims, the CGHS gradually became the center of attraction to the BSNL retirees. However, they were found to be hesitating to move out, since to arrange for such a huge amount, which was required to be deposited with CGHS as life-time subscription, had been found very difficult.

**8.1 Switching over to CGHS by BSNL retirees:** However, having been assured by BSNL that the BSNL retirees would be reimbursed the one-time contribution that they make to switch over to CGHS, vast majority of these retirees have already switched over to CGHS. But the process of reimbursement of life-time contribution was not always smooth. Here also BSNL delayed reimbursement on the same old pretext of non-availability of Fund. AIBSNLREA always intervened in the matter as and when situation so warranted. Finally, BSNL relented and gave priority to clear claims for reimbursement of one-time contribution made to CGHS. However, now we find that BSNL also is interested to ensure that more and more BSNL retirees including VRS-retirees switch over to CGHS and had even conveyed a decision to reimburse all the claims by 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2022 of the retirees who have not opted so far, if they switch over within one month of the issue of its Order vide No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12/2/2022-ADMN dated 21.06.2022. There was another such offer a few months earlier too vide BSNL order No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12/2/2022-ADMN dated



14.02.2022. The facility to avail Fixed Medical Allowance of Rs.1000/- per month by those residing in non-CGHS areas but opting for CGHS, has received major attraction resulting in a large number of such pensioners opting to switch over to CGHS. Meanwhile, BSNL has issued another order, vide No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12/2/2022-ADMN dated 23.11.2022, conveying its decision that “those retirees/VRS optees who have not opted for CGHS so far, if they switch over to CGHS by 31st March 2023, reimbursement of one-time payment of their CGHS subscription will be processed on priority after submission of their claim in BSNL”.

**8.2 Refusal by CCA, Nagpur to issue equivalent Basic Pay as per Central Pay Scales to the BSNL IDA Pensioners who desired to switch over to CGHS:** Since CCA, Nagpur was reported to have been refusing to issue mapping of CDA with IDA to the BSNL IDA Pensioners who desired to switch over to CGHS, AIBSNLREA had to take up the issue with Secretary (Telecom). Finally, the CCA, Maharashtra & Goa intervened and replied us vide its letter No. CCA/MH&Goa/PG/ dated 02.12.2019 that “One template already issued to all concerned offices under the control of o/o CCA MH & Goa, Mumbai, to issue the same in r/o pensioner who applied for mapping of IDA scale that with CDA scale, to opt for CGHS facility”.

**8.3 Demand to expand coverage by CGHS to more cities:** As per a recent publication issued by Ministry of Health & Family welfare, total number of cities covered under CGHS is 77 and another 3 are to be added shortly. This number stood as 25 in the year 2014. It was also reported that Government had a plan to cover 100 cities by 2022. But the demand for covering more and more cities is increasing day by day. However, despite taking up the issue by the individual associations and also in the forum like SCOVA, Government is not able to add more cities under CGHS as per demand made. Similarly, pressure on the existing Wellness Centres is also rapidly increasing. Shortage of Doctors and other para-medical staff in these Centres are also reported. The beneficiaries are also facing serious problems on this account. Despite bringing the issues to the notice of the concerned authorities and also the Ministry of Health & Family Affairs, Government of India, there is hardly any noticeable progress to redress the grievances of the CGHS beneficiaries.

**8.4 Department of Health & Family Welfare clarified that CGHS Card is valid for referral to empanelled HCOs of pensioner beneficiaries through module irrespective of City/Wellness Centre where the Card is registered:** Department of Health & Family Welfare (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) issued an order, vide its File No. 44/60/MCTC/CGHS2022 dated 18.01.2022, clarifying that CGHS card is valid at any Wellness Center in India for availing CGHS facilities, irrespective of the WC/City, where it is registered. It has been further clarified that Empanelled HCOs shall provide treatment on credit basis to CGHS pensioner beneficiaries on referral or in medical emergency, irrespective of the City / Wellness Centre where the CGHS Card is registered, and the credit bill shall be sent to the CGHS of the City where the treatment is taken.

**8.5 Extension of timings of e-sanjeevani Teleconsultation by CGHS Headquarters, New Delhi:** Additional Director, CGHS Headquarter, New Delhi issued an O.M. dated 20.01.2022 extending the timings of eSanjeevani Teleconsultation from the existing 9.00 AM - 12 Noon, to 9.30 AM - 6.00 PM (with 1.30 PM to 2.00 PM break) on Monday to Friday and 7.30 AM to 2.00 PM on Saturday, w.e.f. 17th January 2022. While Consultations on Internal Medicine will be available on all days, ENT will be available on Tuesday & Friday, Ophthalmology on Monday, Wednesday & Friday, Orthopaedics on Monday and Thursday, and Psychiatry on Wednesday.

**8.6 Ministry of Health & Family Welfare revamps CGHS Website and launched its Mobile App:**

Aimed at benefiting more than 40 lakh beneficiaries (both in-service and retired personnel) with real-time information from the convenience of their homes, the Health Ministry has revamped the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) website ([www.cghs.gov.in](http://www.cghs.gov.in)) and mobile app, "MyCGHS". The basket of services is enlarged with the revamped website. With the newly provided feature of tele-consultation, the CGHS beneficiaries can seek expert advice directly through teleconsultation. The website also has a link to beneficiary login for accessing online facilities such as tracking of medical claims, grievances, status and downloading of CGHS card, accessing history of medicines, online appointment system and various other facilities.

**8.7 CGHS launches a monthly program to hold Webinar on various ailments:** CGHS has launched a monthly program to hold webinar on various ailments for the benefit of all. This is a part of the initiatives towards the issue 'Your Health Our Goal' program launched by the CGHS. One can join the webinar by using the link: <https://cghshq.webex.com/meet/adhq.dl>. CGHS has also been further requesting to download webex app to attend the seminar. This Association is receiving due intimation of the webinar along with the topic for discussions in advance in our e-mail id which is being posted in our website for the information of our viewers. CGHS is also sending sms to the registered mobile numbers of its beneficiaries regarding holding of the webinars.

**8.8 Storage of CGHS Card on DigiLocker Platform for its access and use for CGHS servicers:**

Department of Health & Family Welfare (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) issued an O.M, vide File No. 44/35/2015/MCTC/CGHS dated 27.01.2022, conveying its decision to provide an option to store CGHS card in DigiLocker, which is available as a mobile application. Through DigiLocker Platform, a CGHS beneficiary would be able to download his/her CGHS card on the mobile device. The OM also stated that "The downloaded CGHS card shall be equivalent to the original CGHS card as per the provisions of Rule 9A of the information Technology Rules, 2016, notified on February 8, 2017 via G.S.R. 711( E).

**8.9 Department of Health & Family Welfare issued detailed instructions to download Index Card and take print out of validity of CGHS Plastic Cards:** Department of Health & Family Welfare, vide its F.No. S.11011/3/2021-EHS dated 10.02.2021, has issued detailed instructions for downloading Index Card and take print out of validity of CGHS Plastic Cards for serving employees/pensioners (except whole life card). The beneficiary will no longer be required to visit the office of the Additional Director of the city/headquarters at Delhi to collect the paper Index Card.

**8.10 Treatment of CGHS beneficiaries in Government Hospitals- Directorate General of CGHS issued clarifications:** Directorate General, CGHS, vide No. Z15025/18/2020/DIR/CGHS dated 09.10.2020, issued some clarifications regarding treatment of CGHS beneficiaries at Government Hospitals. CGHS beneficiaries have option to avail Consultation from Specialists/Investigations/treatment procedure from any Central/State Government Hospital including that of Railways, Atomic Energy Commission, Steel Authority of India Limited/Coal India Limited and those under the Municipalities. In case such hospitals charge for certain treatments, same will then be reimbursed from the authorities concerned as per CGHS approved rates. The CGHS beneficiaries entitled for semi-private ward and higher are eligible for treatment in Nursing Home facility in those Government Hospitals which have only General Ward and Nursing Home ward.

**8.11 DOP&PW issues orders on the procedure for implementation of change of option by a pensioner/family pensioner from FMA(CGHS) to CGHS(OPD) and vice versa:** DOP&PW issued an O.M., vide No. 4/05/2019-P&PW(D) dated 23.03.2022, detailing the procedure for implementation of option by a pensioner/family pensioner from FMA(CGHS) to CGHS (OPD) and vice-versa, (i) when a pensioner residing in non-CGHS area shifts his residence to a CGHS covered area, (ii) if a pensioner residing in non-CGHS area and availing FMA in lieu of OPD facility, intends to avail CGHS facility for both OPD and IPD and (iii) if a pensioner availing CGHS for both IPD and OPD, intends to avail FMA while residing in non-CGHS area or on shifting residence from a CGHS area to a non-CGHS area. This OM was duly endorsed by Department of Expenditure (Ministry of Finance), vide its No. CPAO / IT & Tech/7<sup>th</sup> CPC revision/19 Vol.III E/8022/2021-22/12 dated 08.04.2022 to all Pr CCAs/CCAs/CAs/AGs etc.

**8.12 Introduction of Health Insurance Scheme for Pensioners including those residing in non-CGHS area:** The above issue was being discussed for quite some time in the meetings of SCOVA as one of its agenda items. On last few occasions, the official minutes of the meetings clearly recorded that: "Ministry of Health & FW informed that, EFC Memo regarding finalization of Health Insurance Scheme was pending with Department of Expenditure. Ministry of Health was advised to follow up the matter with Department of Expenditure for taking a final decision in this regard". But this item was suddenly found missing from the list of agenda in the last 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of SCOVA held in June, 2022. AIBSNLREA then addressed a letter to the Secretary (Pension), DOP&PW, vide No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2022/26 dated 20.08.2022, pointing out that quite surprisingly the issue of Health Insurance Scheme for pensioners does not find a place in the list of unresolved agenda items in the Minutes of 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of SCOVA, as if the issue has been resolved. But no Order on this subject has, so far, been issued. AIBSNLREA, therefore, requested Secretary (Pension) to get the item re-included in the agenda for the next SCOVA meeting if the issue is yet to be resolved.

**8.13 CGHS orders removal of sixty-four Health Care Organizations empanelled under CGHS Delhi NCR from the List of empanelled Organizations under CGHS w.e.f. 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022:** Hospital empanelment Cell of DG CGHS issued an OM, vide its No. S-11011/07/2020-CGHS (HEC) dated 02.05.2022, removed 64 Health Care Organizations (HCOs) from the list of empanelled organisations under CGHS Delhi NCR for non-compliance with its directions for onboarding NHA IT platform for uploading the bills pertaining to pensioner CGHS beneficiaries in a paperless environment within the stipulated time. Earlier, all the Health Care Organizations (HCOs), Exclusive Eye Care Centres, Diagnostic Centres & exclusive Dental clinics empanelled under CGHS, Delhi NCR were advised by the DG, CGHS, vide File No. Misc.1-55/2021/CGHS(HO)/R&H/DIR.CGHS dated 16.06.2021, to Onboard the NHA IT Platform for uploading the bills pertaining to pensioners CGHS beneficiaries in a paperless environment within the stipulated time frame. Since these Organizations failed to follow the directions despite repeated reminders, their names were removed from the list of empanelled HCOs under CGHS. The OM dated 02.05.2022 also stated that "However, the HCOs shall complete the treatment at CGHS rates in respect of patients already admitted and undergoing treatment at such hospitals"

**8.14 Dept of Health & Family Affairs issued orders creating 64 posts for 16 new allopathic wellness centres:** Department of Health & Family Welfare has issued orders, vide its File No. Z15025/49/2019/DIR/CGHS dated 1.06.2021, for creation of 64 posts (including 16 posts of

Medical Officers) for 16 New Allopathic CGHS Wellness Centres at Ghaziabad (2), Narela (1), Panchkula (1), Nasik (1), Aurangabad (1), Mysuru (1), Coimbatore (1) and Chandrapur (1) and also regularisation of CGHS units temporarily functioning at Gwalior (1), Kannur (1), Kozhikode (1), Sonipat (1), Wadi (1) in Nagpur and Ichhapur (1) in Kolkata. Director CGHS was authorised to issue instructions for opening of the new allopathic wellness centres and for encadrement of the newly created posts.

**8.15 Request for charging CGHS subscription at pre-revised rates till the pension revision of BSNL IDA pensioner takes place:** AIBSNLREA, in a letter addressed to Minister of Communications & IT on 15.06.2020, drew his attention to a serious injustice meted out the BSNL/MTNL IDA pensioners, who has no pension revision, by charging them CGHS subscription at the revised rates which were ordered consequent to revision of pay scales/pension of the C.G. Employees/pensioners as recommended by 7th CPC. The Association had requested that DOT issues a corrigendum to its order dated 01.07.2019 revising the mapping to determine rates of CGHS subscription and Ward entitlement for the BSNL/MTNL IDA pensioners and allow charging of CGHS subscription only at the pre-revised rates till their revision of pension takes place. However, DOT replied to the issue, vide its File No. 4-12(12)/2018-PAT-Part (1) dated 15.09.2020, expressing its inability to accept the request stating that different subscription charges cannot be proposed for availing same facility under CGHS.

**8.16 Review of rate of contribution for availing Lifetime CGHS facility by pensioners retired earlier but joining the Scheme late:** AIBSNLREA wrote to the Minister of Health & Family Welfare on 08.06.2020 requesting that “the rates of contribution for lifetime CGHS facility in respect of pensioners need to be made tapering with gradual reduction in the rate of contribution based on age factor, say after each five years, to benefit the aged pensioners joining the Scheme late. To begin with let the pensioners with 70 years of age and above joining the scheme late be allowed to have CGHS Cards with life-time facility on payment of 5 years of monthly subscriptions in place of 10 years as at present.” Our request was not accepted in view of annual subscription facility which is also available.

**8.17 Family pensioners who get CGHS facility by surrendering BSNL MRS card/facility are also eligible to claim reimbursement of one-time subscription paid to CGHS:** BSNL Corporate Office, vide its Office letter No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12(12)/4/2021-ADMN dated 26.03.2021, clarified that “The family pensioners (dependents of the deceased BSNL employees) who get CGHS facility by surrendering BSNLMRS card/facility are also allowed for one time reimbursement of CGHS subscription fee paid to CGHS authority for migrating to CGHS facility”.

**8.18 CGHS Directorate responds to AIBSNLREA letter suggesting improvements in functioning of CGHS:** In response to AIBSNLREA letter dated 29.06.2022 suggesting improvements in functioning of CGHS, CGHS Directorate on 22.07.2022 has acknowledged our valid suggestions in different aspects of health delivery system of CGHS and has stated that “The point no. 1 to 5 as policy matters are under the jurisdiction of higher authorities of Ministry of Health & FW which will be intimated to the notice of the competent authorities for necessary action. The point No.6 regards to incidences not getting credit facility to the pensioners, this office have issued memo recently and reiterated the CGHS guidelines for credit facility to all empaneled hospitals under CGHS Hyderabad and in case of any specific complaints against HCO, this office shall initiate necessary action to rectify the issue. The pendency of bill payment is getting reduced significantly

now because of the new bill clearing agency i.e. National Health Authority clearing the bills in fast & time bound manner and working towards NIL pendency goal in near future."

**8.19 Increasing Fixed Medical Allowance from Rs.1000/- per month to Rs.3000 per month:** In February 2022, Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 110th Report had made recommendations for enhancement of Fixed Medical Allowance from Rs.1000/- to Rs.3000/- per month. In this connection, the DoP&PW vide its letter No. 04/04/2022-P&PW(D) dated 16.01.2022 had also called for information from the Central Government Departments as to how many Central Government Civil Pensioners/Family Pensioners are getting Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA). The matter was last discussed in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of SCOVA and as per the official minutes of the meeting held in May 2022 "JS (Pension), DoPPW informed that a proposal to increase the amount of Fixed Medical Allowance is under consideration. Based on the data received from the concerned Departments, financial implications on the proposal are being worked out and a reference will be made to Department of Expenditure shortly." The minutes had mentioned that action was required to be taken by DoP&PW. Accordingly, AIBSNLREA has taken up the issue with Secretary (Pension), DoP&PW requesting early resolution of the issue.

**8.20 Revised entitlement of wards in Private Hospitals empanelled under CGHS:** DoH&FW vide its OM No.S.11011/11/2016-CGHS(P)/EHS dated 28th October 2022 has issued an O.M. revising the entitlement of wards in private hospitals empanelled under CGHS from the date of issue of the O.M., i.e 28.10.2022. Subsequently vide its OM No.S.11011/11/2016-CGHS(P) dated 22nd November 2022 DoH&FW has issued an O.M. clarifying that there is no change in the subscription rate as already fixed vide OM dated 09.01.2017 and that there is no linkage between CGHS subscription and ward entitlement.

**8.21 CGHS Directorate issues instructions to all CGHS Wellness Centres and Units to follow CGHS guidelines issued from time to time:** CGHS Directorate, vide its Office Order No.Z.15025/7/2022/DIR/CGHS dated 15th December 2022, has asked the CMOs in charge and other Medical Officers and staff of all CGHS Wellness Centres and the staff working in the administrative offices of CGHS to keep themselves with the guidelines/orders issued under CGHS and implement the same in discharging their duties. In this regard, CGHS Directorate has reiterated that special attention be paid to some issues like punctuality in attendance, validity of CGHS card in any CGHS Wellness Centre in the country, issue of medicines for three months in case of chronic illnesses etc.

**9.0 Revision of pension/family pension of the absorbed BSNL IDA pensioners- issue of delinking pension revision from pay scale revision:** Given the big noise being made from time to time by the same groups of self-proclaimed highly knowledgeable leaders that as if they are going to clinch the pension revision of BSNL IDA pensioners within no time even without pay scale revision of the serving employees, we feel the need to recollect, though briefly, what we reported and discussed at length in our earlier AIC held at Madurai and to assess where the issue for revision of pension rests at this moment. These known leaders had always been found to be in race with each other to establish that they alone are in close proximity with the Management in DoT and BSNL and even with the Ministers. Though they often mention about using 'some sources' to get the opportunity to meet the higher ups but always refuse to name their 'sources'. These leaders, as all know, while in service were also leading some unions/association of serving employees/executives but

failed to get the revision of the pay-scales of the Executives as per 3<sup>rd</sup> PRC recommendations implemented. But now they are making a claim as if, they are going to get pension revision even without pay scale revision. Their repeat show reminds us that one of the great players of a Retired Executive Welfare Association and involved in the ongoing game- joyously claimed and posted in their website on 03.12.2018 under the caption “FLASH FLASH FLASH” that DoT has taken a decision to delink pension revision of BSNL pensioners from pay revision of employees and then went on narrating how they could get it done. They might be thinking that people have forgotten what they scripted on the same issue five years back, but to their dismay it is not always true. Now, again another Welfare Association of BSNL Pensioners in the company of some other pensioners Association from BSNL and MTNL, loudly made the same claim and declared that DoT has agreed for de-linking of pension revision from pay scale revision and proudly declared this as their VICTORY. But despite their repeated persuasion, DoT has not confirmed their claim on this issue. As a result, the Member(S) whom they had been hailing till the other day as the savior of the pensioners, has now become the villain in their eyes.

**9.1 Pay Scale revision and pension revision are inter-linked:** No one can deny that pay scale revision and pension revision are interconnected. The historic judgment of Hon’ble Supreme Court in D S Nakara case made pension revision even for all past pensioners to become a reality. Otherwise, earlier there was no pension revision of past pensioners even for those who retired from Government services. Even in another judgment delivered on 10.07.2015 in CA No. 1123 of 2015, the Hon’ble Supreme Court has inter-alia recognized that the revision of pension and revision of pay scales are inseparable. In this case, the Court also recognized that pension is equal to wages paid to retired employees. Hence, whenever wages are revised, pension should also be revised. Now the Government also goes only with this concept and orders revision of pension only after every pay scale revision of its employees is ordered.

**9.2 Rule-37A of Pension Rules does not have provision for pension revision:** Contrary to the claims being made by some people, fact remains that there is no provision of any kind in the law or rule for revision of pension even for the retired Government employees. The CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 (Now 2021), which many refer to too often, also has no provision for pension revision. Pension is revised only when revision of pay scales of the serving Government employees is ordered. We must always remember that Pension revision is only a fruit of the Supreme Court judgment in D S Nakara case which has attained finality and has become the law of the land. The essence of this judgment is that there cannot be any disparity between pension drawn by the present pensioners and future pensioners. Citing this judgment, the V CPC, for the first-time recommended pension revision for all the past pensioners with the same fitment benefit as allowed to the serving employees in their revised pay scales and also directed revision of pension even for all pre-1986 pensioners. Since then, the pay scale revision and pension revision have moved together. In fact, pension revision is never independent of pay scale revision.

**9.3 Replies in Parliament by Hon’ble Minister of Communications & IT and Hon’ble Minister of State for Communications on Pension revision issue:** A perusal of the replies given by both Minister of Communications & IT and Minister of State for Communications on the floor of Parliament and even when replying to the letters of MPs from time to time on pension revision have always been found consistent. They always reiterated that pension of BSNL IDA pensioners can be revised only after revision of pay scales. We now take opportunity to quote a few of those replies given on the floor of Parliament for record and information of this August House:

(i). Former Minister of Communications & IT, in reply to the Unstarred Question No.1751 in Lok Sabha, stated on 4.5.2016 that “Pension of the BSNL employees is regulated under sub-rule 37-A of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. The Department of Public Sector Enterprises issues instructions/orders for revision of pay of the employees in Central Public Sector Enterprises which are extended to the working employees of BSNL from time to time. On the basis of the pay revision orders issued by Department of Public Enterprises, pension/family pension of DOT employees absorbed in BSNL are revised with the approval of the Cabinet from time to time”.

(ii) Former Minister of State for Communications Shri Manoj Sinha in a D.O letter dated 23.10.2017 addressed to Shri Ajay Nishad, M.P. (Lok Sabha) had stated that “... the employee who were permanently absorbed in BSNL from DOT are getting pension on the basis of combined service in DoT and BSNL on IDA pattern in terms of Sub-Rule (10) of Rule-37-A of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. It is stated that pension revision follows pay revision. Earlier also, pension of permanent absorbees in BSNL drawing pension in IDA pattern has been revised on implementation of 2<sup>nd</sup> PRC in 2007. Accordingly, case of pension revision of the employees permanently absorbed in BSNL will be taken up as and when 3<sup>rd</sup> PRC is implemented in BSNL”.

(iii) Former Minister of State for Communication Shri Sanjay Dhotre had tabled a reply in Rajya Sabha on 18.03.2021 in response to the unstarred question No. 2570 on the issue of wage revision for BSNL employees vis-à-vis revision of pension of BSNL IDA pensioners. The MOSC stated in the reply that BSNL is incurring losses since 2009-10 and does not fulfil the criteria under affordability clause as per DPE guidelines dated 03.08.2017 on pay revision in CPSEs w.e.f. 01.01.2017 and as such the pay revision was not considered. MOSC has further stated in his reply that BSNL continues to incur loss despite many employees opting for VRS. In regard to pension revision, it has been stated that since it is linked with pay revision of serving employees, this has to wait implementation of 3rd PRC in BSNL.

Thus, the Department of Telecommunication is consistently taking the same stand that pension revision of IDA pensioners may take place only when pay revision of serving employees takes place. We are to keep in mind that no Minister will ever say anything outside which is contrary to what he stated on the floor of Parliament. This may invite privilege motion against the concerned Minister.

**9.4 Pension revision not feasible without pay scale revision- Laws on the subject say so:** Now the million-dollar question is that whether the Government can allow pension revision without pay scale revision? The answer is ‘NEVER’. First of all, it is against the Supreme Court order on pension revision issue, and again it cannot allow any disparity to crop up between pension drawn by the present pensioners and future pensioners. Further, there cannot be separate rule for pension revision for BSNL IDA pensioners and for rest of the other pensioners in Central Government and also in State Governments. Laws are always equal to all.

**9.5 False claims and propagation of lies:** But to-day, some known leaders are again repeating their old claims that they are about to clinch pension revision by de-linking it from pay scale revision. The big claims that these groups are now making are nothing new. We have been watching them make same tall claims, in one form or the other, for the last five years or so. As such, we are not amused at all. But there are some hapless pensioners who are being carried away by such high-voltage drama. After their big show again failed to deliver, they expressed their disappointment in their letter dated 09.09.2022 to DoT for sending a proposal, to DoP&PW, with zero% fitment benefit and requested the Secretary (Telecom) to send “a concrete, fresh proposal

with 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment factor to DoP&PW.” On the same day i.e. 09.09.2022, they wrote yet another letter to Secretary (Telecom) requesting to “ensure pension revision at par with C.G. Pensioners”. But here also, DoT has clearly stated in a letter, vide its No. 47-63/2022-Pen(T)/part dated 17.10.2022, addressed to all of them, that “the recommendations of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC are applicable only to the Central Govt. Employees who are getting pay/pension on CDA pattern” and “..... the orders issued by DoP&PW for revision of pension are not applicable to the BSNL/MTNL retired employees.”

**9.6 Pension revision with 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment factor or at par with Central Government Pensioners for BSNL IDA Pensioners not tenable:** We had a detailed discussion on the subject in our last All India Conference held at Madurai. Quoting and explaining the Law and Rules on the subject, we made it clear that such demands are not sustainable. We, however, do not want to repeat the same here. But we like to at least quote the same judgment of Central Administrative Tribunal, Hyderabad Bench delivered on 10.12.2018 in OA No. 21/813/2017 & MA 355 of 2018 in which a BSNL IDA pensioner wanted pension revision as per 7<sup>th</sup> CPC. In his Petition, the Petitioner tried to justify his case for pension revision as per 7<sup>th</sup> CPC with almost the same justifications that the “Committee on MTNL & BSNL Pensioners” formed by the same Group of leaders who had been demanding pension revision at par with CG Employees and its fitment benefit in 2017 and even now. The Tribunal in its judgment recorded that “The contentions of the applicant are that he was not given pro-rata retiral benefit for the service rendered in Dept. of Telecom after being absorbed in BSNL on 1.10.2000. The pension contribution for the entire service is paid to Government under FR 116 by BSNL for pension payment treating the combined service in Govt. and BSNL as Govt. service is the version of the applicant. Pension is a property and as per Article 300-A of the Constitution, no person can be deprived of the property without the authority of the law. Some pensioners of the Dept. of Telecom were paid pension as per 7<sup>th</sup> CPC and hence not paying him is discriminatory. As per CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 the applicant claims that he is eligible. Pension payment order does indicate that the pensioner is eligible for additional quantum of pension from time to time. BSNL employees are Govt. servants for the purpose of pension under Rule-37-A of CCS (Pension) Rules, is the assertion of the applicant”. The Tribunal then observed that “The applicant cannot seek application of rules selectively, of both Government and BSNL, in order to take advantage of the best among better of the rules in the two institutions. Being a BSNL employee the applicant cannot compare himself with the DOT employees and allege discrimination. One is a Govt. department and the other is a PSU. Therefore, no parallels can be drawn in regard to the issue in question”. The Tribunal finally ruled that “To sum-up, the applicant is not a government employee and hence he does not come under the ambit of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC. The norms for revision of pension are decided by the pay revision committee of public undertakings and not by pay commissions. Therefore, there is no reason for this Tribunal to interfere on behalf of the applicant, as his prayer cannot be acceded to as per rules on the subject. Therefore, the OA is dismissed. MA stands disposed. No orders on cost”. Thus, after going through this CAT Order, there is no room for any further confusion in the matter that are being created by the same group of leaders’ time and again. This judgment also negates their arguments advanced in their letters addressed to Secretary (Telecom) on the question from time to time.

**9.7 Chorus for revision of Pension without Pay Scale revision- Another routine ritual by a known group of pensioners’ associations reached the same climax point as before:** We are not amused but somewhat feel disappointed how a known group of pensioners’ welfare associations always finds it convenient to play with the sentiments of the hapless pensioners with their false promise



to bring them the moon even by ignoring the set rules and laws of the land on pension revision, and now and then claiming to achieve one break-through or the other in the matter. Whenever they move out for their fixed periodical pastime venture, some of their mouthpieces will extensively use the social media platforms like WhatsApp, e-mail, and websites to give wide publicity of their pastime venture and try to make the BSNL and even MTNL IDA pensioners believe, how close are they to the higher echelons in the Ministry and the Government, and how they arranged to use their 'sources' to their advantage. In the process, they did not hesitate even to mock their own activist having a different view and tell him that he is already delayed, and the 'Express train' is on its way to deliver pension revision without pay revision. It is not only that they have no faith in the rules/laws on pension revision, but even several Court Orders on the issue fail to bring them to their senses. We have discussed them at length in our last AIC and also here at Para 9.6 of this Report, we have briefly repeated them for the sake of clarity and conviction.

**9.8 DoT's bizarre action to move a proposal for pension revision of BSNL IDA pensioners with non-existent "NIL Fitment" benefit in the DPE OM dated 03.08.2017 revising the pay scales of the Executives of CPSEs:** When the noise generated by these known group of pensioners' associations reached its peak, it seems that DoT, either to calm them down or to hoodwink them, moved a proposal for pension revision with 'NIL Fitment' benefit. When we went through the contents of DoT proposals, we were shocked to find that DoT has worked out the entire proposals based on a wrong interpretation of DPE guidelines that as if the "3rd PRC recommended the formulations of fitment benefit of 15%, 10%, 5% and NIL, based on additional financial impact of pay package as a %age of average Profit Before Tax (PBT) of last 3 FYs of the PSU preceding the year of implementation." But the fact remains that the DPE OM vide No. W-02/0028/2017-DPE(WC)-GL-XIII/17 dated 3rd August 2017, has categorically specified that "No fitment or any other benefit of pay revision will be implemented in the CPSEs where the additional financial impact of the revised pay package is more than 40% of the average PBT of last 3 financial years." Nowhere in its said entire Office Memorandum, DPE has provided for "fitment benefit of 15%, 10%, 5% and NIL" as wrongly contended by DoT.

**9.9 Response of DoP&PW to the DoT's proposal:** DoP&PW, on its part, did not show any inclination – even remotely to be associated with the DoT's proposal. That is why DoP&PW returned the file requesting DoT "to consult Department of Expenditure before finalising their proposals in this respect." Although DoP&PW has said that it may not have any objection to the DoT proposals in view of the fact that DoT being the administrative Ministry for BSNL is in the best position to make a realistic evaluation of all relevant aspects and to decide the fitment benefit to be given to the pensioners for revision of their pension, it remained non-committal on DoT proposal for amending pension rules stating that it may be considered as and when the need arises. It also refused to be associated with any committee as suggested by DoT. DoP&PW, while returning the file, also reminded DoT that "some BSNL/MTNL Pensioners' Associations have filed a few Petitions seeking revision of pension based on 3rd PRC recommendations. DoPPW is also named as a respondent in these petitions. DoT/BSNL have filed replies in the CAT defending these petitions. This aspect may also be kept in view by DoT while finalising their proposal for revision of pension of BSNL/MTNL pensioners."

**9.10 AIBSNLREA's response to the ill-conceived proposal from DoT:** This intentional/unintentional totally wrong citation of DPE OM dated 03.08.2017 in a serious issue like pension revision by DoT, compelled us to write to Secretary, DoT cautioning against further proceeding

with the proposal with non-existent 'NIL fitment' benefit. We expressed the hope that the concerned authorities will realise the serious factual error that they made and make amends. We conveyed that DoT needs to give up its obstinate attitude in not moving the Cabinet proposal to relax the 'affordability clause' for BSNL which is being used by the Government to run services even in loss-making areas and thus meet its social obligation. The unjustified collection of pension contribution from BSNL under FR 116, in view of the fact that the absorbed employees are no more on deputation, needs to be stopped. Moreover, after being offered the BSNL VRS-2019, nearly 80,000 employees left BSNL, which is helping BSNL to have huge recurring savings on Establishment Head alone. Therefore, continued denial of pay-scale revision on untenable pleas is totally unjustified and unacceptable. We strongly feel that all the stakeholders must lay emphasis on pay revision of BSNL employees to achieve pension revision, instead of beating around the bush.

**9.11 Some irrefutable facts about the "Meeting" held by Member(Services) on 17.10.2022 with some BSNL/MTNL Pensioners' Associations:** The much-hyped meeting of DoT with some BSNL pensioners' associations on 17.10.2022 "to discuss the issues regarding request for revision of pension of BSNL/MTNL absorbed employees as per 3rd PRC w.e.f. 01.01.2017", ended with some pensioners' associations, thereafter, circulating their own versions of the discussions that were said to have taken place in the meeting. It is also claimed by one section that just on the eve of this "Meeting" held by Member (Services), nine Pensioners' Associations of BSNL and MTNL led by AIBSNLPWA submitted their wish-list which they called as their "memorandum" to DoT in which they stated that "(i) It is understood that DoT in consultation with DoP&PW has decided to delink revision of pension from pay revision. If that is so we are thankful for taking a pragmatic approach. This may be confirmed, (ii) It is also understood that DoT proposed for zero percent fitment for pension revision. If it is so, we are totally against it and in fact no one can accept because there is no benefit. (iii) We insist 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment factor for pension revision (the basic pension as on 1/1/2017 be multiplied by 2.515 factor) because there are enough justifications involving a principle and provides a permanent solution". They further tried to justify their claim for 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment formula for pension revision of the BSNL/MTNL absorbed pensioners with their off-repeated old logic which, in all earlier occasions, were outrightly rejected by the authorities based on the Rules/Laws on the subject. On the other hand, another important participant in the meeting i.e. BSNL & DoT Pensioners' Association (BDPA), which also acknowledges that pension revision and pay scale revision are inter-linked, circulated a few photo of the slides displayed by DoT in their power-point presentation in the said meeting. In these slides, DoT referred to three CAT cases in which the claim of the petitioners (BSNL IDA pensioners) for application of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment benefit for pension revision was turned down by the Tribunals. Surprisingly, one of these cases had been filed in CAT, Ernakulam by none other than AIBSNLPWA itself through its All India President Shri P S Ramankutty. But the said Association for its own reasons has kept this information under covers till now, not divulging this fact even to its own members. But now the "Cat is out of the bag." We would certainly like to give a brief account of these three failed OAs in different Tribunals later for the information of all concerned.

**9.12 Much touted claim by AIBSNLPWA and its associates to have achieved delinking of pension revision from pay revision found untrue:** After the meeting held by DoT on 17.10.2022, AIBSNLPWA and its associate Associations from BSNL and MTNL were also seen expressing their satisfaction that delinking pension revision from pay revision is decided. However their claim that DoT has agreed to delink pension revision from pay revision has been busted with DoT in its letter

No.47-63/2022-Pen(T)/part dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022 addressed to “All Heads of Associations”, categorically stating that “On delinking pension revision from pay revision in BSNL/MTNL it is clarified that at present the proposal is to revise the pension by merging Basic + IDA as on 01.01.2017 without any fitment factor for pensioners as well as future retirees, who are working at present. However, as and when pay revision as per 3<sup>rd</sup> PRC takes place in BSNL/MTNL the same fitment factor which is extended to serving employees will be given to pensioners”. Now they lament that It is totally different from the declaration of Member (S) on 17.10.22 and that finally the DoT officers have come out in their true colour. Thus ended a sensational and emotional drama with turns and twists that was staged by this group of associations.

**9.13 Facts about three Court cases on pension revision displayed by DoT in its Power-point presentation in the meeting held by Member (Services) on 17.10.2022:** Now let us have a brief account of three Court cases filed in CAT Hyderabad, CAT Bangalore and CAT Ernakulam that DoT displayed in its Power-point presentation in the Meeting that Member (Services) had on 17.10.2022 in which the AIBSNLPWA and its associates also participated: -

**(1) The OA No. 21/813/2017 & MA 355 of 2018 in CAT Hyderabad followed by the Review Application No. 021/02.2019 in the same CAT:** - We have already discussed in detail the judgment of this OA delivered on 10.12.2018, in our last AIC held at Madurai and now again briefed it at Para 9.6 of this Report. Thus, we do not like to repeat the same here. But we would certainly like to apprise all about the subsequent development. The Applicant in this case, moved a review petition in CAT Hyderabad vide Review Application No. 021/02/2019. The judgement on this Review Application was pronounced on 11.01.2019. The Hon’ble CAT, Hyderabad held that “The applicant cannot seek application of rules selectively, of both Government and BSNL, in order to take advantage of the best among the better of the rules in the two institutions. Being a BSNL employee the applicant cannot compare himself with DOT employee and allege discrimination. One is a Govt. department and the other is a PSU. Therefore no parallels can be drawn in regard to the issue in question. The pay and allowances of BSNL employees are revised as per the recommendations of Pay Revision Committee (PRC) of Public Sector Undertakings. Accordingly the applicant has been granted pensionary benefits as per 2nd PRC recommendations. PRC has no relation to the 7th CPC. Thus there is a separate system altogether to deal with the pay & allowance and pension of public sector employees like BSNL. To sum up, the applicant is not a Government employee and hence he does not come under the ambit of 7th CPC.” The CAT also observed that “... there are no grounds which have been brought in the review application to review the case. The details presented in the review application have already been comprehensively gone into while delivering the judgment in the OA. Facts of the case in all respects and the rules prevailing have been reckoned and on merits the OA was dismissed. Hence, there is no merit in the review application and is dismissed in circulation. No order as to costs.”

Anyone going through the judgments delivered in the above stated Original as well the Review Application would thus find that there is no room for any further confusion in the matter that BSNL IDA pensioners are ineligible to receive 7<sup>th</sup> CPC benefit of pension revision as being created by the same group time and again. This judgment also negates all their arguments advanced in their recent letters addressed to Secretary (Telecom) claiming 7<sup>th</sup> CPC benefit of pension revision to the BSNL/MTNL IDA pensioners.

**(ii) OA No. 170/00116-134/2018 in CAT Bangalore filed by 19 Petitioners:** This case was filed in CAT Bangalore by 17 applicants (BSNL IDA pensioners) claiming parity with the Government pensioners. The judgment of this OA was delivered by CAT, Bangalore on 27.11.2019 in which the CAT held that “When the BSNL was formed as a commercial entity and a new corporate entity in order to, probably entice the employees to work for them, special benefits like IDA pay scale and other commercially related benefits were made available to the BSNL employees. As a result, a person who had opted to continue in DOT received lesser benefits than the BSNL employees. Consequently, the benefits received by the DOT employees were upgraded on the Finance Commission recommendation. But then this in itself will not give a pre-dominating right on the BSNL employee to claim parity because their existence and enhancements depends on commercial viability of their organisation and not on the parity to be provided to the government employees universally across the board in government service. Therefore, having elected to be in BSNL, they are now estopped by the implied promise that they had given to go by the BSNL tenets and to grow on it. If the BSNL cannot grow on it, naturally the employees will suffer a little diminishment. At this point of time, they cannot turn around and say that the DOT employees may have stolen a march over them. As they have already made their choice, they have to abide by it. Therefore, there is no merit in the OA. OA is dismissed without cost”.

The essence of the above judgment is also that once absorbed in BSNL, former DoT employees cannot claim parity with Government pensioners.

**(iii) OA No. 180/00346/2018 in CAT, Ernakulam filed by All India BSNL Pensioners’ Welfare Association (Represented by its President, Shri P S Ramankutty):** This is really a very interesting case filed in CAT Ernakulam by AIBSNLPWA represented by Shri Ramankutty President of AIBSNLPWA. The judgment of this OA was delivered on 30.10.2019. In their petition they submitted that the DoP&PW OM dated 12.05.2017 (which is issued for pension revision of pre 2016 pensioners on the basis of recommendations of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC) be made applicable to them and “to direct the respondents to extend to the pre-2006 DoT absorbed BSNL IDA pensioners, the benefit of Annexure A-5 OM, revise their pension by applying the pension formula of 50% of the last pay drawn or 50% of the last ten months average pay whichever is advantageous to them and disburse all the consequential benefits to them with arrears and interest”. Referring to the respondents (i.e DoT, DPE, DoP&PW, CCA Kerala) drawing attention to Sub Rule 4 of Rule 37A of CCS (Pension) Rules, which states that “The permanent absorption of the Government servants as employees of the Public Sector Undertaking shall take effect from the date on which their options are accepted by the Government and **on and from the date of such acceptance, such employees shall cease to be Government servants and they shall be deemed to have retired from Government service**” (emphasis supplied), the CAT observed that “In the present case w.e.f. 1.10.2000 i.e. the date of the presidential order of absorption of the applicants in BSNL, they shall cease to be Government servants and shall be deemed to have retired from Government service. Therefore, w.e.f. 1.10.2000 the applicants are not Government servants after their absorption and shall be treated as employees of the public sector undertaking.” The court further referred to the respondents pointing out to the provisions in Sub Rule 8 of Rule 37 A and observed that “The respondents in their reply statement submitted that Annexure A5 OM [i.e. DoP&PW OM dated 12.05.2017 for revision of pension for pre 2016 Central Government pensioners- *explanation added by us for the sake of clarity-GS*] is meant for Central Government CDA pensioners and pro-rata pension optee of BSNL absorbees drawing pension on CDA pattern for Government service period only and not for combined service pension optee BSNL IDA pensioners like the applicants. **This fact has not been denied by the applicants by filing any rejoinder** [*emphasis ours-GS*]. In

view of the above, this Tribunal does not find any merit in the OA. Accordingly, the OA is dismissed. No order as to costs”.

A quick perusal of the judgment in the above case, speaks volumes of double speak of AIBSNLPWA on their real stand in regard to applicability of Sub-Rule 4 and 8 of Rule-37A of CCS (Pension) Rules 1972. In this particular case in CAT Ernakulam, which was filed only by themselves, they did not consider it necessary even to file a rejoinder opposing DoT's submission referring extensively to Sub Rule 4 and Sub Rule 8 of Rule 37 A and contending that the DoP&PW OM dated 12.05.2017 for pension revision of pre 2016 pensioners is applicable only to CG pensioners and pro-rata pension optees of BSNL absorbed employees drawing pension on CDA pattern only, and it is NOT applicable to combined service pension optees like the applicants in the above OA i.e. the AIBSNLPWA. But the funniest part of their double speak is that even after quietly accepting DoT's stand on Sub-Rule 4 and Sub-Rule 8 of Rule 37-A in the CAT Ernakulam, now they continue to shout from the roof top that sub-Rule 4 and sub-Rule 8 are “irrelevant and there are enough justifications for getting 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment benefit to BSNL pensioners”. Consequently, it is the members of these associations who are being betrayed and taken for a ride by their own leaders.

Though it may be found as amusing, but not surprising that even after receiving a big slap on their faces from the CAT Ernakulam and other Tribunals, these failed warriors are now set to be ready to receive another slap again from the Court. They are said to have decided in their AIC held in December 2022, to even engage senior advocates irrespective of the cost involved to fight the case filed by them in Principal Bench of CAT in Delhi with the same demand for pension revision by applying 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment factor on IDA both for pre-2017 and post-2017 retirees which has already been turned down by as many as three CATs as detailed above. They are also said to have decided that, in case the above demand fails, they would pursue the demand for pension revision on the basis of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC fitment factor by conversion of IDA pension to CDA pension as an alternative proposal which again, according to them, requires amendments to existing rules. Sooner than later every BSNL absorbed pensioner will call their bluff.

**9.14 Pay Scale revision of BSNL Executives is still possible:** We strongly believe that even to-day, the pay scale revision of BSNL Executives is feasible provided all make a concerted move instead of trying to play to the gallery. Let wisdom dawn upon all unions and associations that pay revision is still realisable, if seriously pursued. Let them stop fooling the pensioners and start focussing on realising pay revision. It is never too late to change course or make amends for the past mistakes. In our opinion, following measures can open up the gate for pay scale revision:

(i) Pay revision of BSNL employees is being denied mainly on the ground of ‘affordability’ of BSNL to bear the additional expenditure on account of pay revision. There are solutions to this issue, but no one has shown any interest to pursue these solutions. The affordability clause itself can be got relaxed for BSNL. Regrettably, so far, DoT did not pay heed to numerous representations for relaxation of ‘affordability clause’ on the genuine ground that BSNL has to meet the social obligation of the Government of India to provide services in rural and remote areas and thus cannot aim at profit. Earlier, when BSNL submitted a proposal for pay revision of its executives with 15% fitment, explaining in detail the justifications for relaxing the affordability clause, DoT just forwarded it to DPE without supporting the proposal, seeking only comments from the DPE as to whether the affordability criteria be relaxed for implementing pay scale revision in BSNL as per 3rd PRC. DPE, on its part, had clarified that this would “require approval of Cabinet for which DOT

may examine the issue at its end for necessary action". But DoT never took any action for seeking cabinet approval for relaxing the affordability clause. At that crucial juncture, all these so-called champions for the causes of BSNL employees and pensioners, instead of putting pressure on DoT for follow up action, went into hiding.

(ii) BSNL has been paying pension contribution in respect of employees absorbed from erstwhile DoT on the maximum of the pay scales, citing an irrelevant Fundamental Rule 116, which is meant for only those who are on deputation. Even otherwise, DoT did not implement the DoP&T O.M. dated 19.11.2009, which allows payment of pension contribution on actual pay w.e.f. 1.1.2006 under the same FR 116. BSNL Executives are covered under time bound financial upgradation Scheme after every 4/5 years and the non-executive employees after 7/8 years. Thus, none of the BSNL employees remain on the maximum of the scale in a particular grade for more than 4/5 years in case of the executives and 7/8 years in case of the non-executives. Thus, there is no justification at all to calculate pension contribution for the BSNL Employees basing on maximum of pay scale instead of their actual pay. Had BSNL been allowed to pay pension contribution on actual pay in accordance with DoP&T OM dated 19.11.2009, and the excess payment made by BSNL to this date is refunded, BSNL will be able to implement its proposal for pay revision of its employees and executives with 15% fitment benefit without any financial constraints. Neither the recognised unions and associations in BSNL nor the DoT ever pursued this issue with the seriousness and fiscal importance that it deserved. It is also to be noted that according to the BSNL Financial Results for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, other recoverable from DoT, after netting off the claims payable to them by BSNL, is Rs. 1593.22 crores which is quite substantial and could have helped further in resolving the issue of pay scale revision.

**9.15 Issue regarding implementation of Government's decision to achieve pay scale parity of MTNL and BSNL by bringing down the pay scales of MTNL to the level of BSNL pay scales at the time of next wage revision:** While circulating the copy of the Gazette Notification issued by DoP&PW, vide GSR 135(E) dated 03.03.2014 amending Rule-37A of CCS (Pension) Rules 1972 to the effect that "Payment of pensionary benefits to all categories of the erstwhile employees of the Government (Group A, B, C and D) absorbed in MTNL who have opted for pension in combined service will be made by the Government in the same manner as in BSNL with effect from 01.10.2000...", MTNL vide its OM No. 42-4/2012-Pen(T) dated 28.04.2014 had communicated some important decisions of the Government on the subject. At Para (c) of this OM dated 28.04.2014, it was stated that "The liability of the Government for the payment of aforesaid pensionary benefits shall be restricted to the amount arrived at by calculating pensionary benefits of MTNL absorbed employees based upon the equivalent pay-scales of similarly placed employees of BSNL. As most of the pay scales in MTNL are higher than that of BSNL, the additional liability arising out from the same shall be borne by MTNL, by making one advance payment to the Government". Again, at Para (d) of this OM, it was stated that "The arrangement as specified in para (c) above shall continue till next wage revision by which time MTNL and BSNL shall achieve pay scale parity by bringing down the pay scales of MTNL to the level of BSNL pay scales". This implied that at the time of 3<sup>rd</sup> PRC implementation, BSNL pay scales will have to be brought up to the level of MTNL. AIBSNLREA has since drawn the attention of Secretary (Telecom) to the above decisions of the Government and requested that the Pay Scales of BSNL Executives be raised at the level of MTNL Executives w.e.f. 01.01.2017, since implementation of 3<sup>rd</sup> PRC Recommendations are getting unduly delayed.

**9.16 Enhancing the quantum of pension on attaining the age of 65, 70 and 75 years:** In February 2022, Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 110th Report had recommended to consider the demand of Pensioners' Associations for additional quantum of Pension to the Pensioners/family pensioners @ 5%, 10% and 15% on attaining the age of 65 years, 70 years and 75 years respectively. In this connection, the DOP&PW vide its letter dated 20.01.2022 had also called for details of age-wise number of pensioners, amount of pension paid in December 2021 with DR and without DR, for working out the financial implications. Referring to this DOP&PW letter, even Department of Telecommunications had requested the CGCA, New Delhi to provide the information in respect of telecom pensioners by 07.02.2022. The matter was last discussed in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of SCOVA and as per the official minutes of the meeting held in May 2022 "On the issue of Enhancement of Additional Pension on attaining age of 65 years, 70 years and 75 years, JS (Pension), DOPPW has informed that the proposal is under consideration in consultation with DoE and DoEA on the aspects of funds availability in the Budget." Thereafter, AIBSNLREA wrote to the Secretary (Expenditure) GOI on 18.08.2022 requesting him to get the issue resolved at the earliest. In response to this letter, DoE had replied to us on 09.09.2022 that "As per the comments of E.V section, the grievance pertains to DoPPW. It is therefore requested that the grievance may directly be filed with DoPPW for timely resolution of the same." AIBSNLREA has now represented to the Secretary (Pension) DoP&PW referring to the DoE reply.

**9.17 DoP&PW issued OM on counting of periods spent on training as qualifying service for Pension and Gratuity under CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021:** DoP&PW, vide its O.M. No.28/90/2022-P&PW(B)/8297 dated 02.10.2022, requested all Ministries/Departments to bring to the notice of the personnel dealing with the pensionary benefits that where the period of interruption in excess of joining time is due to the training and regular appointment being at different stations, such period of interruption in excess of joining time is required to be regularised by grant of leave of the kind due or if no such leave is due, by grant of extraordinary leave by the Head of the Department. The period of interruption regularised by grant of extraordinary leave in such cases is required to be counted as qualifying service.

**9.18 Restoration of commuted value of pension earlier to 15 years:** AIBSNLREA has taken up this matter with Secretary (Pension), DoP&PW, requesting restoration of commuted value of pension in 7 years pointing out that "The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in its judgment passed in December 1986 while disposing of a batch of Writ Petitions No. 3958-61 of 1983 had directed restoration of the commuted value of pension once the commutation amount along with the interest element thereon was recovered fully" and that "fact that in the past six years, the interest rates on loans given by banks have come down drastically and the commuted amount of pension will have been recovered in full along with the interest element thereon, in less than 7 years." While we are yet to receive a response from DoP&PW, it is reported that the Staff Side of JCM National Council had demanded restoration of full pension after 12 years instead of 15 years and that the case been sent to the DoE which has agreed to examine the issue.

**10.0 Petition of AIBSNLREA in Courts challenging DoT's Presidential Directive dated 10.06.2013 to allow the revised fitment benefit by merger of 78.2% IDA from a prospective date and DoT OM dated 18.07.2016 for Revision of pension/family pension by notional fixation of pension/pay w.e.f. 1.1.2017 and seeking arrears of pension and arrears of pay w.e.f. 01.01.2007**

**and other pensionary benefits like DCRG, Leave encashment, CVP on last pay drawn:** We may recall that in our first AIC held at Bhubaneswar on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2013, we decided to move courts to challenge DoT's Presidential directive dated 10.06.2013 and any other Orders likely to be issued denying BSNL IDA Pensioners of their legitimate arrears of pension and other pensionary benefits from a retrospective date.

**10.1 Status of Court case on pay/pension arrears as reported in Madurai AIC:** We may recall that in our Report placed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIC held at Madurai, we reported that following the decision in our first AIC held at Bhubaneswar, AIBSNLREA filed a Writ Petition under Article 32 of the Constitution in the Supreme Court and challenged DOT's Presidential Order dated 10.6.2013 and the DoT's OM dated 18.07.2016 on pension revision and also prayed for orders to get the (i) arrears of pension between 1.1.2007 and 9.6.2013 for the pre-2007 pensioners, (ii) arrears of pay and pension and other pensionary benefits like enhanced DCRG, Leave encashment, Commuted value of Pension (wherever admissible) for the pensioners who retired between 1.1.2007 and 9.6.2013 and (iii) pay arrears w.e.f. 1.1.2007 to those who retired after 10.06.2013. The case was first listed on 25.01.2018 before the Bench of Justice Kurian Joseph and Justice Mohan M. Shantanagoudar. But Justice Kurian Joseph recused himself, though it appeared that he was otherwise inclined to admit the Writ Petition but ordered that the case be listed in another Bench in which he would not be a member. On 05.02.2018, the case was listed before the Bench of Justice M B Lokur and Justice Deepak Gupta. But Justice Lokur was not inclined to entertain the Writ Petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India and then our Advocate sought Leave to withdraw the petition and approach the appropriate High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. This Leave and Liberty was granted. We then, moved Delhi High Court which, on being told by the Advocate of the Respondents that a similar case is already pending in Principal CAT, the High Court ordered that we may also move the Principal CAT. Accordingly, AIBSNLREA filed an Original Application, on representative capacity, with the same prayers i.e. for orders to get the (i) arrears of pension between 1.1.2007 and 9.6.2013 for the pre-2007 pensioners, (ii) arrears of pay, pension and other pensionary benefits like enhanced DCRG, Leave encashment, Commuted value of pension (wherever admissible) for the pensioners who retired between 1.1.2007 and 9.6.2013 and (iii) pay arrears to those who retired/retiring before/after 10.06.2013, in the Principal Bench of Central Administrative Tribunal. Our OA was tagged with another OA already filed by another Association in which the DOT's Presidential Order dated 10.06.2013, implementing DPE OM, allowing fitment benefit by merger of 78.2% IDA w.e.f. 10.06.2013 and denying pay arrears, was not challenged. The OA filed by another association did not ask for pay arrears too. This OA by other Association was heard first and then our OA was heard on 30.07.2019 and CAT then dismissed both the OAs. The above was the position of the court case just before we met at Madurai for our 2nd AIC held on 11th and 12th November 2019.

**10.2 Developments after Madurai AIC:** The Appeal filed by AIBSNLREA in Delhi High Court against the CAT Order came up before the Court on 04.12.2019, 24.01.2020 and 11.03.2020 which finally directed to issue Notice to the respondents allowing 4 weeks' time to file counter-affidavit and thereafter giving two weeks' time to the petitioners to file rejoinder-affidavit. The matter further came up before the Court of Registrar on 07.09.2020 which allowed another six weeks' time to the Respondents to file their counter-affidavit with the rider that failing which, they will forfeit the right to file the counter-affidavit and the Appeal will be listed for hearing. But on 18.01.2021, the Respondents pleaded for some more time to file their counter affidavit. Though strongly objected by our Advocate, the Registrar allowed 4 weeks more time subject to payment



of costs. The matter, thereafter, was put up before the registrar on 15.03.2021 for physical hearing. Since the Respondents again failed to submit their counter-affidavit, our Advocate strongly pleaded not to allow further time and the Registrar was pleased to order that the Respondents forfeit their right to file counter affidavit and the matter be listed before the Hon'ble Court.

Our Writ Petition was then listed before the Hon'ble Court (Virtual Court No. 6) on 06.08.2021 and then on 23.11.2021 but could not be heard due to want of time. The case was scheduled for hearing on 12.05.2022 but again could not be heard due to Full Court Reference scheduled in the afternoon and was ordered to be re-notified on 05.07.2022. To our fortune, on 05.07.2022 our petition was heard at length and then posted for 02.08.2022 with directions to both sides to file their respective written submissions. Our advocate duly submitted the written submission in time, but hearing could not take place on that day i.e. 02.08.2022 since a judge was on leave. The case was last listed for 14.09.2022. On that day, the court did not take up any matter where the hearing could take more than half an hour, as the court was taking up some enquiry post-lunch. Our advocate pleaded for fixing the next date early. After much persuasion, the court listed the matter to 23.01.2023. While DoT has not filed any reply or written submission in our case, it has filed a reply in the Writ Petition by another BSNL pensioners association which had also been listed for the same day.

**11.1 Denial of benefit of extra-increment on post-based promotion permitted under BSNL Executive Promotion Policy, 2007 to the executives who retired between July 2017 and April 2018 – Status as reported at the time of Madurai AIC:** BSNL Executive Promotion Policy, 2007 provided for an extra-increment to the Executives on their post-based promotion. But DoT, after a gap of 10 years from the date of issue of the said Promotion Policy, issued an Order vide its letter No.40-12/2004-Pen (T) (Pt) dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017, rescinding the provision in the Promotion Policy to grant an extra-increment. DoT further advised, in the same order, not to reopen the cases of the past pensioners who had already been allowed the said benefit before the issue of the said order. BSNL then revised the pay of the Executives retiring in July 2017 and onwards by withdrawing the extra-increment already granted to them and their pension was also re-fixed at lower stage. However, Principal CAT, Delhi passed an Order on 31.12.2017 quashing the above stated DoT Order dated 05.07.2017 rescinding the provision to grant extra-increment on post-based promotion. Based on the PCAT Order, BSNL issued an Order vide its No. 400-55/2016-Pers.I dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018, wherein all Heads of Circles/Units were advised that "Pay/pension cases of the affected executives may be settled accordingly and concerned CCAs may accordingly be intimated please". But DoT referring to its earlier Order dated 05.07.2017 again issued an Order, vide No. 40-12/2004-Pen(T)/Pt dated 17.05.2018, which stated that "Accordingly, the implementation of the said order has been reviewed and it has been decided to process pension cases of absorbed BSNL executives, who are immediately retiring or retiring within the ensuing months, ignoring DoT order No.40-12/2004-Pen (T) (pt) dated 05.07.2017 after obtaining an undertaking from the retiring executives". DoT also moved Delhi High Court with an Appeal against the Principal CAT Order. In this whole episode, only those pensioners who retired between July 2017 and April 2018, have been discriminated against since they have not been given back the benefit of one extra-increment that they had earned while in service. Whereas those who retired before July 2017 and after April 2018 got the benefit of extra-increment on their post-based promotion which was duly accounted for in fixation of their pension. The Association has been time and again taking up the issue. But the matter remains still unresolved. It appears that DoT is waiting for the decision of

Delhi High Court on its appeal. However, we cannot leave this issue at its present stage and shall continue to raise the issue at all forums and follow it up till the issue is resolved to our satisfaction.

**11.2 Post-AIC Madurai development on the issue:** Even though we made series of representations to all concerned to remove this injustice being meted out to a limited number of unfortunate affected Executives, DoT remained adamant and the matter remained unresolved. The Writ Petition/Appeal by DoT in Delhi High Court is still pending. The Petitioners, who went to Pr. CAT in the case and an Order was issued restoring the benefit for grant of one additional increment, are the respondents in the Writ Petition/Appeal by DoT, but they remained silent on the issue throughout the period till two months back. Now stating that DoT in a letter to BSNL issued on 07.02.2020 has insisted withdrawal of the extra increment to all, these petitioners have filed a Miscellaneous Application in Delhi High Court.

**12.1 Revision of Seniority Lists of TES Group B Officers in compliance of Supreme Court judgments dated 21.01.2015 and 14.12.2017 in CA No.(s) 4389 of 2010 – Status as reported in Madurai AIC:** The Hon'ble Supreme Court delivered its final verdict on 14.12.2017 on the above matter for revision of Seniority Lists No 1 to 17 of the TES Group B Officers based on the principle of Para 206 of P&T Manual Volume-IV. The Supreme Court accepted the recommendations of the Expert Committee appointed by it and duly incorporated them in the final Order. The Expert Committee had recommended that based on the seniority lists submitted by the BSNL and also the officers working in MTNL who were originally under the control of DoT and all officers similarly situated may be granted the consequential monetary and service benefits. However, the Supreme Court made it clear that no arrears will be payable in terms of the impugned judgment. Consequential benefits of pay fixation including the pensionary benefits, if any, will be payable in terms of the impugned judgment only w.e.f. from 01.01.2018 and not for the past. The Court also added a few more safeguards for those who were earlier promoted based on earlier rulings of the court. BSNL circulated the final revised Lists vide its No. 56-04/2015-Pers(DPC)/Pat/10 dated 07.08.2018 and called for missing information, if any. BSNL thereafter circulated a list of some promotion orders of AGMs(T), issued by it since 2001 after its formation in the year 2000, vide its No. 412-03/2019-Pers.I dated 16.07.2019, and also communicated its intent to extend consequential benefits to them. But BSNL is completely silent in respect of those who were promoted by Department of Telecommunications before formation of BSNL and whose names appear in the same revised Seniority Lists as seniors to these later promotees. The matter was taken up with DoT on few occasions. But no action/clarification was issued in the matter of extending the consequential benefits, as ordered by Hon'ble Supreme Court, to those TES Group Officers who were promoted by it. Moreover, the modalities to extend the consequential benefits, as ordered by the Supreme Court, was also not been spelt out.

**12.2 Post-AIC Madurai development on the issue:** DoT not only took no action to extend the consequential benefits to the TES Group B Officers promoted by it from time to time through duly constituted DPCs and thus implement the Orders passed by Hon'ble Supreme Court, it simply passed on the buck to BSNL. Following this, BSNL conducted a few Review DPCs in the AGMs grade who were promoted after the year 2000 by BSNL itself and issued revised orders of promotion. But the TES Group B Officers promoted earlier by DoT and who are senior to the Officers promoted after the year 2000 by BSNL, have not been extended the benefit as ordered by Hon'ble Supreme Court judgment. This is a clear case of discrimination against the TES Group B Officers promoted by DoT and violation of Hon'ble Supreme Court Orders. Since, we were not the

applicant in the Cases before Hon'ble Supreme Court, we are unable to file a Contempt petition and as such continuing to represent to all concerned and following them up. BSNL too is yet to complete the process by conducting review DPCs in respect of the remaining DE promotion orders issued by it.

**13.1 Wrong interpretation of BSNL Corporate Office order No. 5-32/2013/Estt.IV dated 22.12.2015 and revising the pay fixation of Executives who were not covered under the order leading to huge recoveries – Case of Calcutta Telephones:** Some Executives who opted for VRS in Calcutta Telephones were in for a rude shock when several lakhs of rupees were recovered from their retirement dues, on the plea that their pay in revised second PRC pay scale from the date of their promotion to JTO grade in 2008 was earlier wrongly fixed and is being corrected now. The affected Executives, who were in the cadre of TTA as non-executives at the time of revision of pay scales of non-executives w.e.f. 1.1.2007 but officiating as JTO as per old RR, had been offered an option vide para 3.6 of BSNL Corporate Office order dated 07.05.2010 as “the non-executives can opt for the revision of pay on 01.01.2007 or from the date of promotion after 01.01.2007, or from the date of next increment in the existing scale”. This option was available only to those non-executives who got promotion/financial upgradation between 1.1.2007 the date of effect of revised pay scales and 07.05.2010 the date of issue of orders for pay revision for non-executives. All these affected Executives had opted for pay fixation in revised pay scale from the date of their promotion as JTO and got their pay fixed accordingly. But based on some observations by Audit, the CCA Calcutta, quoting an irrelevant BSNL letter dated 22.12.2015, directed BSNL CTD to re-fix their pay retrospectively from 2008. This resulted in reduction of their pay from 2008 onwards, consequent recovery as over payment running into several lakhs of rupees.

AIBSNLREA tirelessly pursued the issue with all concerned, particularly with Establishment Section of BSNL Corporate Office, for more than a year to convince CCA Calcutta that their interpretation was wrong. CTD BSNL and CCA Calcutta refused to relent even after Establishment Section of BSNL CO in its letter dated on 16.02.2021 had observed that the pay-fixations done by Calcutta Telephones ‘did not seem to be correct’ and even called for details how the pay-fixations were carried out. Both BSNL Calcutta Telephones and the CCAs remained adamant pointing to one or other irrelevant orders, refusing to admit their faulty interpretation. We had a prolonged struggle further and numerous visits to Corporate Office, till Establishment Section of BSNL CO vide its letter No. BSNLCO-A/16(29)/2/201-ESTAB dated 17.09.2021 issued clarification to CTD BSNL, specifying the correct methodology to be followed for pay fixation as per Para 3.6 of BSNL order No. 1-16/2010-PAT(BSNL) dated 07.05.2010. It took another few months to get CTD BSNL act correctly, and issue revised pay fixation orders.

**13.2 Non-inclusion of increments drawn during officiating period for pay fixation in the revised 2<sup>nd</sup> PRC scale in respect of the TTAs from the date of their promotion in 2008 to JTO grade:** The issue of non-inclusion of the increments earned by the above said VRS optees while officiating as JTOs, for the purpose of their pay-fixation remain unresolved, since BSNL had earlier clarified vide its letter No.400-11/2011-Pers I (Pt) dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 that “The pay availed under any Local Officiating Arrangement put in place or continued after 18.01.2007 i.e the date when EPP was promulgated, shall not be protected in any future time bound upgradation or post based promotion under the EPP.” Meanwhile the affected VRS retirees have moved to CAT, and they are waiting for the Orders from court on this point.

**13.3 Cases of non-release of withheld retirement benefits and non-grant of Regular and Time bound promotions even after acquittal in a CBI case:** Several Executives belonging to both Engineering and Accounts wings of BSNL Gulbarga Division of Karnataka Telecom Circle, faced the toughest time in their lives, following a complaint regarding irregularities in passing of contractor bills during the period 2003-04. CBI ACB took cognisance of the alleged offence in 2005, which resulted in denial of time bound and regular promotion to these Executives afterwards. Chargesheet was filed by CBI ACB in the year 2013 leading to continued sufferings even after retirement with denial of retirement benefits. After years of mental agony, all of them were acquitted by the Special Judge for Lokayukta and CBI at Dharwad, vide his orders dated 25.10.2018. But Karnataka Circle delayed regularisation of their retirement and grant of withheld retirement benefits, on the plea that CBI had filed an appeal against the acquittal. With no relief forthcoming even two years after acquittal, some of the affected retired Executives, who were not our members, approached us. We pursued their cases citing different DoP&T instructions regarding release of retirement benefits and sealed cover procedure during pendency of criminal appeal, wherein it had been clarified that notwithstanding the appeal filed against the acquittal, the fact remains that with the acquittal the judicial proceedings should be considered to be concluded and the department may take action and issue orders accordingly. The only rider was that the acquittal should not have been stayed and any promotion ordered will be subject to the final outcome of the appeal. After protracted exchange of correspondence and visits to BSNL CO, things started moving with issue of regular retirement orders by BSNL CO. This encouraged the other retired Executives implicated in the same case to come to us with renewed hopes. AIBSNLREA took up the grievances of all of them and pursued them till final resolution.

**13.4 Taking up and settling of individual grievances:** During the period under report, a large number of individual grievances were brought to the notice of AIBSNLREA, pertaining to not only its members, but also by those who approached us after having tried everything within their limits for getting them resolved but failing to do so. Resolving these grievances was not that easy, due to unhelpful attitude of those responsible for settling them, sitting in offices, right from DoT to its CCA units, BSNL CO and its Circle/SSA administrations. But sincere and relentless efforts by AIBSNLREA, by taking up the issues with different authorities, citing appropriate rulings on the subjects repeatedly without getting exhausted, resulted in resolution of these grievances, except for a few, which we are still pursuing. In many of these cases, for effective persuasion and further follow up, visits to DoT Headquarters and BSNL Corporate Office became unavoidable.

**14.0 Migration of pre-January 2019 BSNL IDA pensioners to SAMPANN:** DoT has now started to migrate the pre-January 2019 BSNL IDA pensioners, presently drawing pension from different banks, under the ambit of its SAMPANN. The Principal Controllers of Communication Accounts and Controllers of Communication Accounts are gradually taking over the responsibility to draw and disburse their pension. However, the pension and other pensionary benefits will continue to be deposited in the same bank accounts of the Pensioners as before. The entire process is likely to be over by the end of the year 2023. The Comprehensive Pension Management System (CPMS), incidentally, covers all activities starting from pension sanction, authorization, and disbursement. It also enables the pensioner to track latest status of his pension. The retiring employees are given user ID and Password on their mobile number to enable them logging on to [www.dotpension.gov.in](http://www.dotpension.gov.in). In this System, pension continues to be credited to the designated bank account of the pensioners. However, Controller of Communication Accounts (CCA) became the

pension disbursing authority (PDA) in place of Post Offices and CPPC of Banks. Thus, the CCA became the single window authority dealing with all pension related activities.

**14.1 DoP&PW issued O.M. summarising different modes available to the pensioners for submission annual Life Certificate:** DoP&PW, vide its O.M. No. 1(8)-2021-P&PW(H)-7468 dated 20.09.2021, once again summarised the different modes for submission of annual life certificate by the pensioners as reproduced below: -

An Annual Life Certificate can be submitted manually or digitally as per the convenience of the pensioner –

Life certificate can be recorded by Pension Disbursing Banks (PDAs), if the pensioner physically appears before the PDA.

- i. As per para 14.3 of the Scheme Booklet issued by CPAO, a pensioner who produces a life certificate in the prescribed form signed by persons specified is exempted from personal appearance. A list of designated officials specified for signing the Life Certificate as per the scheme booklet of CPAO is attached at Annexure. \*\*\*\*\*
- ii. Pensioners can submit Life Certificate online from home through **Jeevan Pramaan Portal**. The process of submission of Digital Life Certificate through "Jeevan Pramaan" may be seen at <https://youtu.be/nNMikTYqTF8>. UIDAI has provided details of all biometric devices which are permissible for capturing biometrics of a person. Pensioners may visit the site [www.uidai.gov.in](http://www.uidai.gov.in) to get information of all such devices.
- iii. India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) of Department of Posts along with Meity have successfully launched the initiative of the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare: "Doorstep Service for submission of Digital Life Certificate through Postman" in November 2020. In order to make this facility available across the country, DoPPW roped in the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to utilize its huge network of Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks in providing doorstep facility to pensioners for submission of life certificate digitally. IPPB is utilizing its national network of more than 1,36,000 access points in Post Offices and more than 1,89,000 Postmen & Gramin Dak Sevaks with smart phones and biometric devices to provide Doorstep Banking Services. For leveraging this facility through Mobile, a pensioner has to download "**Postinfo APP**" from Google Play store. The process of submission of Digital Life Certificate through Postman may be seen at [https://youtu.be/cERwM\\_U7g54](https://youtu.be/cERwM_U7g54).
- iv. DoPPW was also instrumental in roping in an Alliance comprising 12 Public Sector Banks which do "**Doorstep Banking**" for its customers in 100 major cities of the country under Ease of banking reforms. PSB Alliance has introduced the service for collection of Life Certificates under the umbrella of Doorstep Banking. DSB Agent shall visit the doorstep of Pensioner to render the service. Service can be booked by the pensioner through any of the 3 channels i.e. Mobile App, Website or Toll Free Number.

- Mobile App i.e. "Doorstep Banking (DSB)" can be downloaded from

Google Playstore.

- Pensioners can access through Web Browser I.e  
<https://doorstepbanks.com/> & <https://dsb.imfast.co.in/doorstep/login>
- Through Toll free Number: 18001213721, 18001037188.

**14.2 CGCA issues instructions regarding submission of Life Certificate/Digital Life Certificate by DoT Pensioners at any CCA office:** Office of the Controller General of Communication Accounts, DoT, vide its letter No.13-23/2020-21/BA&IT/236-267 dated 21.06.2021, issued instructions to all CCAs regarding the difficulties being faced by DoT pensioners in submitting their Physical Life Certificate when they reside in a Circle other than the Circle which issued the PPO and submission of Digital Life Certificate by any pensioner unknowingly to a CCA office other than the concerned CCA. According to the letter, the pensioners receiving pension via SAMPANN/FMS can submit their physical life certificate in any nearby CCA office. The recipient CCA should scan the Life Certificate and send the soft copy to the concerned CCA via an official email ID. For Digital Life Certificate via Jeeva Pramaan submitted incorrectly by the pensioner, the recipient CCA shall identify and share the details with the concerned CCA in his official email ID immediately.

**14.3 Issue of Pensioners Identity Card to the Pensioners:** It may be recalled that Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare had earlier issued a few instructions to all Ministries/Departments to issue Pensioners' Identity Card. At that time, BSNL was issuing Identity Card printed on paper. Our Association had then requested both BSNL and DoT to issue Pensioners' Identity Card to the BSNL retirees in the line of the DoP&PW instructions. But for reasons best known to the authorities concerned, no action was taken on our request. Now all the Pr. CCAs and CCAs of Department of Telecommunications have started issuing plastic Pensioners' Identity Card even to the old BSNL IDA pensioners under their respective jurisdiction.

**14.4 Instructions issued for marking of PPO Number in the Savings Bank Pass Book of the Pensioners/Family Pensioners:** The CPAO, under Department of Expenditure, issued an instruction vide its Order No. CPAO/IT&Tech/Bank Performance/37(Vol.III)A/2020-21 dated 23.11.2020 to all the Banks to mark the PPO Number of the Pensioners/Family Pensioners in their respective Bank Pass Book.

**15.1 Reimbursement of Telephone Bills to the BSNL retirees residing in MTNL-served areas:** This is an issue exclusively with the BSNL retirees residing in the areas served by MTNL in Delhi and Mumbai. Here, the BSNL retirees having their concessional residential landline connection from MTNL are to pay the Telephone Bills and thereafter claim reimbursement. BSNL was not clearing these bills on the same plea of paucity of the Fund. AIBSNLREA was taking up the issue from time to time with BSNL Management and others. Thereafter, BSNL Corporate Office made payment of some old long pending bills in the month of September 2021. We again took up the issue with Sr.GM (CA/ERP-FICO), BSNL Corporate Office for getting the remaining bills cleared. We also received a reply that payment of telephone bills would be made during the month of November 2022 and accordingly, some payments have already been made.

**15.2 BSNL agreed to consider the request of AIBSNLREA to shift all official and concessional telephone connections of its retired employees from the network of MTNL to the proposed network of BSNL in Delhi and Mumbai:** Based on media reports that BSNL was to start its own

landline services in Delhi and Mumbai service areas, AIBSNLREA had earlier requested CMD, BSNL to shift all official and concessional telephone connections of its retired employees from MTNL network to proposed BSNL network in Delhi and Mumbai. The Association had argued that this would not only help BSNL to avoid incurring expenditure in reimbursing the telephone bills of the retirees but also would help the retirees by not having to pay the bills themselves to MTNL and then wait, without any positive result, to get the reimbursement from BSNL. Further, once BSNL starts operation of its own network, there is no justification at all to use the telecom services from other operators by incurring huge expenditure. In response to the above request, BSNL stated in its reply that BSNL is yet to start its services in Delhi and Mumbai and the suggestion of the Association is noted for consideration after services are started by BSNL.

**15.3 Provision of Mobile connections to the BSNL retirees residing in Technically Not Feasible (TNF) areas:** Though BSNL allowed provision of concessional telephones at the residence of the BSNL retirees, many of these retirees were not provided the facility since the area in which they had been residing were declared as TNF area. We then requested BSNL to provide mobile connections to these affected employees in lieu of concessional landline connections at their residences. Initially, BSNL was not agreeable to this proposal. But we continued to pursue the case. Fortunately, later two Circles, without waiting for the decision of BSNL Corporate Office, provided mobile connections to the affected BSNL retirees. Thus, our task became easy and BSNL had to concede to our demand and issue Orders, vide No. 2-1/2019-PHA dated 03.01.2020, allowing the benefit to both serving and retired/retiring BSNL employees.

**15.4 Provision of concessional FTTH connection at the residences of the retired BSNL Employees:** Pointing out that the grounds on which concessional land line connections, mobile connections in lieu of landline in TNF areas and Broad Band connections were allowed to the retired BSNL employees at their residences equally hold good in the case for provision of FTTH connection, AIBSNLREA, vide its No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2020/ dated 30.12.2020, requested Director (HR), BSNL Board to allow provision of concessional FTTH connection to the retired BSNL employees at their residences. In response, BSNL vide its letter No. BSNLCO-ADMN/18-5/2020-ADMN dated 08.02.2021, replied stating that "your suggestion to extend the facility to the retired employee is welcome and the same may be considered an appropriate time in future taking into account its viability and market dynamics etc." Finally, BSNL vide its No. ADMNCO-ADMN/80/2-ADMN dated 05.07.2021, conveyed the approval of Management Committee of BSNL for provision of concessional FTTH connection to the serving/retired Executive as well as non-Executive employees only in BSNL area. The concession will be 40% on plan charges with ceiling of Rs. 300 per month. In MTNL area, the existing guidelines for providing concessional broadband only will continue. FTTH connections already working in private capacity or availed under 10% concession will be allowed to be migrated to eligible concessional plan if requested by the employee. GSM in lieu of RSTC/CTC provided in TNF area will be withdrawn after provisioning FTTH.

**15.5 Discrepancy in Broadband bills of BSNL Pensioners residing under Chennai Telephones area:** AIBSNLREA had taken up the above issue with CGM ITPC Pune on 15.07.2021 pointing out discrepancy in broadband bill for the period 01.06.2021 to 30.06.2021 wherein only 10% concession had been allowed instead of the 60% hitherto being allowed and had requested remedial action. CGM ITPC responded with the reply from DE (Admin) SDC Hyderabad vide No. ITPCSD-11/12(2)2/2021-ADMIN-SDC dated 07.08.2021 which stated that 60% discount scheme is inactivated and 10% discount is activated against 279 Retired DoT connections w.e.f. 01.06.2021

as per data available in SZ CDR database and that if any connection referred to by AIBSNLREA belongs to retired BSNL officials, the concerned SSA may attach the applicable discount after verifying the records and the same may be updated in SZ CDR system also.

**16.1 Government notified Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021:** Government notified the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021 in the Official Gazette of India vide G.S.R. 868(E) dated 20.12.2021. A complete reading of these CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021 reveals that all the amendments issued earlier to the CCS (Pension) Rules 1972 have been duly incorporated in it. Thus, Rule 37A has been incorporated in Rule 37 itself. However, there is one addition in Rules, which was not available in CCS (Pension) Rules 1972. Under Rule 66 of CCS (Pension) Rules 2021, below the heading "Revision of pension after authorisation", it has been stated that "(1) The pension authorised under rule 44 and family pension authorised under rule 50 may be revised by the Government in accordance with any general order issued in implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Central Pay Commissions, or otherwise....". Here the word 'otherwise' is likely to include instances where a retrospective promotion is ordered by the department on its own or based on a court direction. However, in order to have some more clarity on the issue, AIBSNLREA requested DoP&PW to intimate, apart from implementation of the recommendations of Central Pay Commissions, the other methods/grounds for revision of pension/family pension which come under the ambit of the term 'otherwise' as provided in Rule 66 of CCS (Pension) Rules 2021. DoP&PW has since replied that "... The revision may be in implementation of decision taken on the recommendation of the pay commission or it may be for some other reason which has not been specified in present."

**16.2 Gazette Notification by DoP&PW amending CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021 substituting sub rule (1) of rule 8 providing powers to withhold or withdraw pension:** DoP&PW, Vide its Gazette Notification dated 7th October 2022, made amendments to CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021, substituting sub rule (1) of rule 8, providing powers to withhold or withdraw pension to Secretary of the Administrative Ministry or Department in the case of a pensioner who retired from a post for which an authority subordinate to the President is the appointing authority and to the CAG of India in the case of a pensioner who retired from the Indian Audit and Accounts Department from a post for which an authority subordinate to the President is appointing authority. President will have these powers only in the case of a pensioner who retired from a post for which the President is the appointing authority.

**16.3 Clarification regarding Commutation value for Government servant whose date of birth is the first of a month and who retires on the afternoon of the last day of the preceding month:** DoP&PW vide its OM No.42/15/2022-P&PW(D)/2 dated 25th October 2022, has clarified that in the case of such Government servants who retire on attaining the age of 60 years, the age next birthday will be 61 years, including cases where the date of birth is first of a month and the Government servant retires on the afternoon of the last day of the preceding month. Therefore, the commutation value of 61 years (i.e. age on next birthday) will be applicable in this case.

**16.4 Clarification regarding pension to be taken for commutation after retirement:** In order to clear doubts raised as to which pension i.e. pension authorised at the time of retirement or the pension revised subsequently and payable at the time of application for commutation shall be allowed to be commuted, DoP&PW vide its OM No.42/15/2022-P&PW(D)/3 dated 25th October 2022, has clarified that those who retired from 01.01.2016 till 04.08.2016 i.e. the date of issue of



orders for revised pay/pension based on the recommendations of the 7th CPC, may be given an option, in relaxation of Rule 10 of (CCS (Commutation of Pension) Rules 1981, not to commute the pension which has become additionally commutable on revision of pay/pension on implementation of recommendations of the 7th CPC. The cases where the additional pension after 7th CPC has already been commuted will not be re-opened. In cases where the pension was authorised on retirement before 01.01.2016 and the pensioner applied for commutation on or after 01.01.2016 the pension which was originally sanctioned at the time of retirement only shall be allowed to be commuted.

**16.5 Deduction of Commuted pension from the pension revised in implementation of recommendations of pay commission etc.:** DoP&PW vide its OM No.42/15/2022-P&PW(D)/4 dated 25th October 2022, has clarified that in such cases the portion/amount of pension which was originally commuted shall only be deducted from the revised pension.

**16.6 Clarification regarding whether deductions towards commutation are required to be made from Family Pension for the remaining period in cases where the Pensioner dies before the restoration of commuted pension:** DoP&PW vide its OM No.42/15/2022-P&PW(D)/5 dated 25th October 2022, has clarified that in such cases monthly commuted amount of pension is not required to be deducted from family pension and family pension shall be paid in full without any deduction in this regard.

**17.0 Lok Sabha passed bill to clarify that retired judges are to receive additional pension from the first day of the month in which they complete the minimum age under the concerned age bracket:** Following a judgement of Gauhati High Court accepting the claim of a retired Judge and ordering enhanced pension from the first day of 80th year instead of on completing 80 years, in respect of the petitioner and Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dismissing the SLP filed by the Union of India, there were voices demanding extension of the benefit to other central civil service pensioners including BSNL IDA pensioners. Since both the courts were considering the term "from 80 years to less than 85 years" under Section 17B of the High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1954, this Association was aware that the benefit of the judgment cannot be extended to those who are drawing pension under CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. We, therefore, represented to the Prime Minister of India requesting removal of the conflicting term "after completion of eighty years of age or above" under Sub rule (2A) of Rule 49 of CCS (Pension) Rules 1972. However, the Lok Sabha has passed a bill to clarify that the retired judges will receive additional pension from the first day of the month in which they complete the minimum age under the concerned age bracket. During discussions on the bill in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of Law, and Justice Mr. Kiren Rijju had stated that "we are not reducing the entitlements of judges in terms of their salary and pension. We are only clarifying the intention of the legislature."...."If on the basis of Gauhati HC judgement, all civil servants start claiming pension it will be a huge problem for us". Thus, the issue was put to rest.

**18.0 Revision of pension/family pension in respect of pensioners drawing compulsory retirement pension after compulsory retirement/dismissal/removal from service:** In addition to the existing instructions on the subject and based on representations from some pensioners and also some court decisions, DoP&PW reconsidered the above matter in consultation with Department of Expenditure and decided that provisions contained in various orders after 5th CPC, 6th CPC and 7th CPC regarding revision of pension/family pension, would also be applicable for

revision of pension/family pension in respect of pensioners who were drawing compulsory retirement pension or compassionate allowance, Pension/family pension of such pensioners will accordingly be revised w.e.f. 1.1.1996, 1.1.2006 and 1.1.2016. The Order on the issue has accordingly been issued by DoP&W vide OM No. 38/46/2017-P&PW(A)(4879) dated 14.06.2022.

**19.1 Disallowing full exemption under section 10(10AA)(i) of IT Act for leave encashment for the period served in Department of Telecommunications:** At one point of time, CPC Bangaluru started disallowing tax exemption permitted under Section 10(10AA)(i) of the IT Act to the BSNL retirees for leave encashment for the period served in DoT. The BSNL retirees who submitted their ITR for the FY 2019-20 and 2020-21 even started receiving Notice from the IT Department to pay additional amount as income tax. Here also, the Association had to forcefully take up the issue repeatedly and even with Minister of State for Finance and quoted several Orders issued by the competent authorities confirming that the BSNL retirees are entitled to get tax exemption for leave encashment even for the DoT period. Finally, we could get the issue favorably resolved.

**19.2 CPC Bangalore again found to harass the BSNL IDA pensioners by disallowing full exemption as allowed under section 10(10AA)(i) of IT Act:** On receiving fresh complaints from a few affected members that they have been receiving Notice from CPC Bangalore disallowing full exemption of leave encashments, which is otherwise admissible as per Rules, asking them to make payment of additional Tax. The Notice stated that “order u/s 154 was erroneously taken up for rectification again, whereby full exemption, as claimed in the return, was allowed. As the assessee’s claim of exemption, in excess of Rs 3 lakhs, is erroneous and is a mistake apparent from records, the exemption u/s 10(10AA) is restricted to Rs 3 lakhs in this order”. We again took up the matter strongly with Minister of State (Finance), vide our No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2021/75 dated 09.12.2021, explaining in detail the justifications for full exemption from income tax for the encashment of leave earned during service in the DoT as Central Government Servant and also requesting to stop harassment of BSNL IDA pensioners by CPC Bangalore. We had also requested the affected members to lodge their disagreement with the claim in the IT portal. Thereafter, IT department stopped sending further notices and according to the affected members, the said notice had been removed in the individual’s login page of the portal.

**19.3 BSNL’s wrong decision to treat one-time CGHS subscription as taxable invited unwarranted trouble to the BSNL IDA pensioners while submitting their ITR:** BSNL has created an extremely unnecessary trouble for the pensioners who switched over from BSNL MRS to CGHS, paid the one-time contribution and got it reimbursed by BSNL. BSNL issued a clarification in September 2021 that on a conservative basis tax may be deducted at source under the head salary for the amount reimbursed to BSNL absorbed retired employees on account of CGHS subscription. BSNL ignored our contention that any reimbursement cannot be treated as income and therefore not subject to income tax. We even submitted a copy of the booklet under the title “Tax payers information – Series 36 – VALUATION OF PERQUISITES” issued by the Income Tax Department and which is available in their website at <https://www.incometaxindia.gov.in/Booklets%20%20Pamphlets/1-Valuation-of-perquisites-05-CRC.pdf>. In page 23, under Para 4.5 b) it has been clearly stated in an unambiguous term that the **“Medical insurance premium paid or reimbursed by the employer is not chargeable to tax.”** BSNL merely responded to our letters stating that the matter can be revisited once decision is taken. But without providing an opportunity for us to revisit the matter, BSNL showed the amount as “Taxable Income” in Form 16, which is reflected in Income Tax Form 26AS. The concerned

pensioners were in a fix as the last date for filing ITR was fast approaching. We also advised a few who contacted us that the pre-filled data in ITR can be modified leaving out the CGHS reimbursement amount as income and proceed to file the return. Thereafter, based on the inputs we received from Shri R T Shah, Joint Secretary, CHQ, we charted a detailed GUIDANCE, showing step by step, the procedure to remove the amount from Taxable Income in the Annual Information Statement (AIS) of Income Tax, by submitting Feedback, before filing tax return. Once the procedure is completed, it reflects in the pre-filled data while filing ITR. Thus, another issue with the affected BSNL IDA Pensioners in regard to submission of ITR could be successfully resolved for the last Finance Year. However, BSNL continues to follow the same procedure of showing the amount as taxable in respect of those receiving reimbursement in the current Finance Year too.

**20.0 Anomaly in Pension of the BSNL IDA pensioners who retired within 10 months of their absorption with partly in CDA scale and partly in IDA Scale:** Immediately after absorption process of the DoT employees/Officers in BSNL was over, a case of anomaly was noticed while fixation of pay in IDA Scale for them. These employees drew their pay party in CDA scale and partly in IDA scale after their absorption. Though only a handful of BSNL Executives were affected, the numbers in non-Executives were a little higher. A few of them had already retired. In fact, a total of 4320 number of employees were affected in this case. Since pension was fixed for them taking into average of last 10 months pay, parts of which were in CDA and part in IDA, they received less pension compared to others who had their last 10 months pay only in IDA scale.

**20.1 AIBSNLREA approached the authorities with proposal to find solution to the above anomaly:** Having been reported by a few of the affected members, the matter was taken up by this Association with both with DoT and DoP&PW. In order to resolve the issue, we first proposed to allow pension fixation on one's last month's pay as has been made applicable to post 2006 Government/BSNL employees covered under CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. But DoP&PW, vide its No. 38/6/10-P&PW(A) dated 11.08.2011, conveyed to us that it had consulted Department of Expenditure and no change in the said order for revision of pension to pre-2006 pensioners is required to be made. Then we suggested that the said anomaly be removed by adopting a similar approach as available in DoP&PW OM F No. 45/86/97-P&PW(A)-Part-I dated 18.10.1999 to remove an anomaly which was noticed during implementation of the V CPC recommendation. In the instant case, we suggested that the CDA pay for the months prior to October 2000 forming part of 10 months average pay may be fixed notionally in the IDA pay by giving point to point fixation as was applied while fixing the CDA pay to IDA pay in October 2000. We even suggested that the notional IDA pay so fixed for the months prior to October 2000 forming part of 10 months average pay and the IDA pay from October 2000 till the date of retirement of the affected absorbed BSNL employees may be taken into account for calculating average pay for the purpose of fixation of pension. Meanwhile, we could get this issue, along with few other issues, included in the agenda items in the meetings of Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) under DoP&PW.

**20.2 Formula suggested by DoP&PW and final solution of the issue:** DoP&PW, on its part, had suggested a formula to resolve the issue and the DoE advised DoT to work out the financial implication on application of this formula. Meanwhile, CAT Principal Bench, in an Order passed on 16.12.2016 in OA No. 2173/2014, allowed a petition filed by a Pensioners' Association and some other individuals, directing to fix pension by granting notional benefit of IDA pay scales. In the

subsequent Meeting of SCOVA held on 27.01.2017, Department of Telecom informed that, as desired by Department of Expenditure, financial implication on the formula suggested by DoP&PW was being worked out in consultation with BSNL. In the SCOVA meeting, Department of Telecom was requested to examine the judgment of CAT. Since there was no progress in the matter, we again took up the issue and even addressed a letter to Prime Minister in August 2017. But DoT moved Delhi High Court with a Writ Petition against the Principal CAT Order and obtained a stay Order. Subsequently, DoT's Appeal was dismissed on 24.01.2020. Following this,, with the approval of the competent authority, DoT issued orders, vide its No. 38-16/2014-Pen (T) dated 07.10.2021, to remove the anomaly by refixing the pension of those who retired within the period of 10 months from 01.10.2000, from the date of their retirement, by adopting the formula as contained in DOP&PW OM F No. 45/86/97-P&PW(A)-Part-I dated 18.10.1999 by giving them notional benefit of IDA pay for the period their pay was drawn in CDA pay for the purpose of calculating average emoluments and thereafter granting all consequential benefits, thus bringing to an end the anomaly that was allowed to exist for two decades.

**21.0 Notional increment for Pensionary benefits in the cases where annual increment is due on the next day of retirement:** Following an Order passed on 15.07.2017 by Madras High Court in WP 15732 of 2017 filed by Shri P.Ayyamperumal granting a notional increment which was due on the next date of his retirement for the purpose of pensionary benefits alone, AIBSNLREA took up the matter to cause issue of general Orders to grant the same benefit to all similarly placed persons. However, Department of Expenditure/ Department of Personnel & Training did not agree to the request. On the other hand, DoP&T, vide its OM No. 19/3/2018-Estt (Pay-I) dated 03.02.2021, termed the judgment of Madras High Court as in personem' in nature. It also issued another O.M., vide No. 1396752/2019-Estt (Pay-I) dated 11.11.2019, circulating some guidelines and requesting all Ministries/ Departments to defend similar cases. BSNL also circulated the said DoP&T OM dated 11.11.2019, vide its No. 48-2/2021-Pen (B) dated 02.07.2021, requesting all Circles/Units to suitably incorporate the guidelines of DoP&T while preparing Counter Reply in court cases in their jurisdictions. \_Meanwhile, many Orders/judgments in CAT and High Courts were delivered in the line of Madras High Court judgment. But none of these judgments was implemented and the Government moved against all these judgments/ Orders in Supreme Court. Those cases are still pending before the Supreme Court. However, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has issued orders staying operation of one CAT Bangalore order allowing grant of notional increment and consequential pensionary benefits on the rationale of the order dated 15.09.2017 passed by Hon'ble High Court, Madras in WP 15732 of 2017 filed by Shri P.Ayyamperumal. Meanwhile, DoP&PW, vide its Dy.No.2455223/22-Estt.(Pay-I) dated 22nd November 2022, has clarified that "In the wake of recent orders of the Supreme Court of India in cases involving claims for grant of notional increment on 1st July/1st January to the Central Government employees having their date of retirement on 30th June/31st December respectively, the subject matter is under examination, in consultation with the nodal Ministries/Departments concerned."

**22.1 Freezing of IDA and consequent freezing of Dearness Relief of BSNL IDA pensioners:** Immediately after the Government issued orders on 23.04.2020 for freezing of additional DA and DR to the Central Government employees and pensioners becoming due from 01.01.2020 till 01.01.2021, noting that, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for major increase in the expenditure on health as well as on welfare measures for various affected sections of the society, the State Bank of India withheld the revised IDA @ 160.7% effective from 01.04.2020 from the pension for the month of May 2020 in respect of the BSNL IDA pensioners receiving pension

from SBI. After we took up the matter with CPPC of SBI, the withheld amount was paid by SBI. Later DPE too, vide its No. W-02/0039/2017-DPE(WC)-G-XVI/20 dated 19.11.2020, issued orders that the additional installments of IDA due from 01.10.2020, 01.01.2021 and 01.04.2021 will not be paid. As and when the decision to release the future instalment of Dearness Allowance is taken by the Government, the rates of Dearness Allowance as effective from 01.10.2020, 01.01.2021 and 01.04.2021 will be restored prospectively and will be subsumed in the cumulative revised rates effective from 01.07.2021. However, no arrears for the period 01.10.2020 till 30.06.2021 shall be paid. AIBSNLREA raised the issue with the Prime Minister of India on 23.11.2020 requesting him to exempt the CPSEs in which no pay revision has taken place for years together from the purview of the above DPE orders. This Order, however, was not applicable to the non-executives. Subsequently, after the government on 14.07.2021 restored the DA/DR for central government employees prospectively w.e.f. 01.07.2021, the DPE issued orders on 02.08.2021 granting additional installment of IDA due from 01.07.2021 but mentioning that the increase subsumes the additional installments arising on 01.10.2020, 01.01.2021 and 01.04.2021.

**22.2 DPE OM on calculation of Gratuity and cash payment in lieu of leave for the employees of CPSEs following IDA pattern retired on or after 01.10.2020 and up to 30.06.2021:** DPE had earlier issued Orders freezing Dearness Allowance from 01.10.2020 and up to 01.10.2021. During this period, many CPSE employees drawing pay in IDA scales retired. These employees, unfortunately, received lesser amount on account of their Gratuity and Leave encashment due to freezing of the IDA. It may be recalled that AIBSNLREA and some other organizations from different CPSEs had been protesting against the Order for freezing of DA and requesting its withdrawal. DPE also seemed to have perceived its adverse impact on the CPSE employees retiring during this period. As such, it issued an order, vide its OM No. W-02/0029/2021-DPE(WC)-GL-XI 21 dated 25.10.2021, on calculation of gratuity and cash payment in lieu of leave for the employees of CPSEs following IDA pattern, retired on or after 01.10.2020 and up to 30.06.2021 based on notional IDA rates for different categories of CPSEs to give monetary relief to such retired employees.

**23.0 DoT advises BSNL and MTNL to launch ZERO PENDING Cases for Pension/ Family Pension cases:** DoT, vide its No. 7-1/2022/Pension Policy/TA-I/7439-41 dated 12.08.2022, has advised BSNL and MTNL to take required steps/action to settle huge pending Pension/Family Pension cases, other than legal/vigilance clearance, in mission mode to achieve resultant ZERO PENDING for period beyond one month. The first stage of this mission i.e. retirees up to 31.07.2022 may be completed by 30.09.2022. This follows after Member (Finance), Digital Communication Commission, while reviewing the Annual Work Plan 2022-23 on 04.08.2022, expressed his concern on huge pending Pension/Family Pension cases. As a follow up action, BSNL, vide its No. BSNLCO-A/12(14)/2/2022-ESTAB dated 16.09.2022, has instructed its Circles/Units to comply with the above directions and also to devise a local mechanism so that complete Pension/Family Pension cases could be forwarded to the concerned CCA Office well in advance (at least 04 months before the date of retirement of the concerned BSNL retirees) for final settlement of Pension cases.

**24.0 Demand to issue Orders restraining the CCAs not to go back to a period earlier than 24 months preceding the date of retirement for passing observations relating to pay fixation which were causing undue harassment of the retirees in many cases:** AIBSNLREA had been drawing the attention of the Secretary (Telecom), Department of Telecommunications, in the matter of unending cases of harassment and huge financial loss to the retiring BSNL employees, whose pension papers are forwarded to the offices of Controllers of Communication Accounts for fixation

of their pension and release of other pensionary benefits. The Association maintained that this is only because that some CCAs, in violation of the Rules on the subject, are going back to a period earlier than 24 months preceding the date of retirement for passing observations relating to pay fixation. The Association also referred to the Orders issued by Department of Posts quoting from the provision in Rule 7.3.2 - Role of Pay and Accounts Officer in Chapter 7 of the Civil Accounts Manual for the HOD and Pay and Accounts Officer etc and directing its officers in DAP Delhi that the Officers should in any case not go back to a period earlier than 24 months preceding the date of retirement for raising observations relating to pay fixation etc as per the guidelines. The Association also was requesting DOT to issue clear orders to the CCAs, in the similar lines as issued by the Department of Posts, to protect the BSNL retirees from being unnecessarily harassed and put to financial loss. Meanwhile, in response to one of the letters addressed to DoT on the issue, the Pr. CCA, Delhi replied vide No. 6-1080/2006/PFP/1481 dated 15.03.2022, stating that "In this connection it is intimated that this office is settling the pension cases in accordance with the provisions available in Chapter 7 of the Civil Accounts Manual and not going back to a period earlier than a maximum of 24 months preceding the date of retirement for verifying the service records". However, being unsatisfied with this reply received from one of the many Pr. CCA/CCA Offices, we continued following up the issue more vigorously and finally, the DoT, responded to our letter No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2022/34 dated 13.09.2022 stating that the "the desired provision has already been disseminated vide this HQ letter No.7-45/2018/BSNL MISC/TA-1/2939-74 dated 2nd December 2020" and enclosed a copy of the letter. In this letter, the Controller General of Communication Accounts has been directed that "While applying the requisite checks, the Accounts Officer shall verify the correctness of emoluments for the period of twenty-four months preceding the date of retirement of a Government servant, and not for any period prior to that date'. Thus, a long pending issue, which was now and then found creating financial loss to the retiring employees due to its misuse by a few over-vigilant CCA Offices, at the time of fixation of their pension has been resolved.

**25.0 Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issue Notification conveying that Senior Citizens above 75 years of age need to submit Form 12BBA to get exemption from filing Income Tax Return:** The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), under Ministry of Finance, has notified in Official Gazette, vide No. G.S.R. 612(E) dated 02.09.2021, a new rule that mandates senior citizens above 75 years to submit form 12BBA for claiming the benefit of not filing an income tax return (ITR) under section 194P. The board has notified a new rule 26D, under which senior citizens are required to submit form 12BBA with the specified bank to claim the benefit of section 194P. The board has also amended form 16, form 24Q, form 26QC and form 26QD to incorporate necessary changes related to provisions of section 194P. Under section 194P, tax deduction at source (TDS) is deductible only for specified senior citizens above 75 years. These seniors need to submit a declaration of income in form 12BBA to the specified bank as notified by the Union government. The declaration contains information like total income, details of deductions under section 80C to section 80U, rebate available under section 87A and a declaration confirming receipt of income only from pension and interest. Once the specified bank deducts tax under section 197P, the specified senior citizens are not required to file ITR since section 139 will not apply to them. For the purpose of Section 194P CBDT notifies, specified Bank to mean a banking company which is a scheduled bank and has been appointed as agents of Reserve Bank of India under section 45 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (2 of 1934), vide another Notification No. 98/2021-Income-tax Dated: 2nd September 2021.

**26.0 Non-settlement of dues of its members who have retired from service and ceased to be members since long – case of the Government Telecom Employees’ Co-operative Society, Chennai:** AIBSNLREA addressed a letter to Joint Secretary (Co-Op) & Central Registrar, Govt of India, New Delhi regarding cases of serious irregularities in “The Government Telecommunication Employees’ Cooperative Society, Chennai” which resulted in non-settlement of dues of its members who have retired from service and then ceased to be the members of the Society. The Society had made recovery of dues in much excess of actual dues without taking into account the assets which include Share Capital, Thrift Deposit, Family Welfare Deposit and any credit on suspense account from the members who retired long back. Since these members were the employees of BSNL, BSNL recovered the dues as per the defective Statements of Dues issued by the Society from time to time and deposited the recovered amount with the Society belatedly. But the Society did not settle the dues running to lakhs of rupees, despite requests from these ex-members. The Society Management itself also appeared to have been caught in a web of controversy by attempting to sell a property and with another group vehemently opposing the move. In the mess thus created, it is the BSNL retired employees, including those who opted for BSNL VRS 2019, who were put into serious financial problems. The Association requested for an investigation in the affairs of the Society as the Management totally failed in managing the affairs and in the process the retired employees of BSNL, particularly those who took VRS on 31.01.2020, were suffering the most. Central Registrar, New Delhi conveyed his helplessness in the matter. With claims and counter claims between groups and some unions going to Court, the main issue of settlement of dues to retired members of the Society has been totally sidelined and the affected pensioners are still waiting with their fingers crossed whether they will get back their hard-earned money.

**27.1 Revival Plan for BSNL AND MTNL as approved in the year 2019:** Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 23.10.2019 approved a revival plan for BSNL and MTNL. The Press Information Bureau issued a Press Statement after that meeting, as given below, which outlined the various proposals included in the revival plan: -

“The Union Cabinet today approved the proposal for revival of BSNL and MTNL by administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services, debt restructuring by raising of bonds with sovereign guarantee, reducing employee costs, monetisation of assets and in-principle approval of merger of BSNL & MTNL. The following was approved by the cabinet:

1. Administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services to BSNL and MTNL so as to enable these PSUs to provide broadband and other data services. The said Spectrum will be funded by the Government of India by capital infusion in these PSUs at a value of Rs 20,140 Cr in addition; the GST amount of Rs 3,674 Cr to this spectrum value will also be borne by the Government of India through Budgetary resources. By using this spectrum allotment, BSNL and MTNL will be able to deliver 4G services, compete in the market and provide high speed data using their vast network including in rural areas.
2. BSNL and MTNL will also raise long-term bonds of Rs 15,000 Cr for which sovereign guarantee will be provided by the Government of India (GoI). With the said resources, BSNL and MTNL will restructure their existing debt and also partly meet CAPEX, OPEX and other requirements.
3. BSNL and MTNL will also offer Voluntary Retirement to their employees, aged 50 years and

above through attractive Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), the cost of which will be borne by the Government of India through budgetary support. The ex-gratia component of VRS will require Rs. 17,169 Cr in addition, GoI will be meeting the cost towards Pension, Gratuity and Commutation. Details of the scheme will be finalised by BSNL/MTNL.

4. BSNL and MTNL will monetise their assets so as to raise resources for retiring debt, servicing of bonds, network upgradation, expansion and meeting the operational fund requirements.

5. In-principle merger of BSNL and MTNL: It is expected that with the implementation of said revival plan, BSNL and MTNL will be able to provide reliable and quality services through its robust telecommunication network throughout the country including rural and remote areas”.

**27.2 Revival plan-2019 for BSNL and MTNL failed to deliver the desired result:** Except for the decision to downsize the staff strength through VRS and raising bonds for Rs.8500 crores through Sovereign Guarantee by the Government, no other item in the Revival Plan was implemented. The high hopes that it generated among all the stake holders that BSNL and MTNL would get a new lease of life following implementation of revival plan, evaporated with no times– mainly due to incompetence of the BSNL Management and the policy makers in DoT. Under the much-hyped BSNL VRS-2019, out of about total 1,53,000 BSNL employees available as in October 2019, a total of 78,569 employees including 13,310 BSNL Executives opted for VRS. Even this could not improve the financial position of BSNL and desertion of its customers continued due to its poor quality of service. Even delivering of 4G services by BSNL and MTNL still remains a distant dream.

**27.3 New Revival Plan for BSNL and MTNL as approved in July 2022:** In July, 2022, the Government cleared a Rs 1.64 lakh crore package for BSNL, with an aim to upgrade its network to 4G while de-stressing its balance sheet. The four-year turnaround plan included both a cash component and a non-cash component. The package is having three main focus areas. The government is to focus on upgrading BSNL services, wherein the company will be administratively allocated spectrum in the 900 MHz and 1800 MHz frequencies at the cost of Rs 44,993 crore through equity infusion. The government will fund capital expenditure of Rs 22,471 crore for deployment of indigenous 4G stack by BSNL, while further providing Rs 13,789 crore as viability gap funding for operating commercially unviable rural wireline operations done between FY15 and FY20. The DoT announced that the Government will provide sovereign guarantee to BSNL and also to MTNL for raising long-term loans. They will be able to raise long-term bonds for an amount of Rs 40,399 crore. In order to further improve the balance sheet, AGR dues of BSNL amounting to Rs 33,404 crore will be settled by conversion into equity, and the Government will provide funds to BSNL for settling the AGR/GST dues. Further, BSNL will re-issue preference share of Rs 7,500 crore to the Government. In addition to these measures, the Cabinet also approved BSNL’s merger with Bharat Broadband Nigam Ltd (BBNL)- the nodal agency for BharatNet rollout which will augment BSNL’s finer network.

**27.4 Privatisation of BSNL seems not imminent:** It is to be noted with a feeling of great relief that the present move by Government to further support BSNL and not to monetise it as has been done in the case of loss-making Air India, in fact, is a deviation from the Government’s laid down policy of privatisation. Further, by keeping BSNL afloat, Government aims to fulfil its three main strategies: -



(i) with BSNL, the Government intends to push forward with its rural broadband agenda. It is to be kept in mind that nearly 36 per cent of BSNL's optical fibre customers are in rural areas, and BSNL assists the Government in expanding to far-flung areas with low-income consumers for operations that are typically non-viable commercially.

(ii) unlike private telecom operators, BSNL has heavy dependence on domestic component manufacturers- something that also helps foster a vendor base in the country. With BSNL launching 4G services and subsequently 5G, this will also take the domestic component industry along with it.

(iii) the presence of BSNL's network assets in border areas and some extremism affected areas means that the Government considers it a strategically important company.

**27.5 Government's expectation on implementation of its revival package:** On implementation of the above measures, the Government expects that BSNL will be able to improve the quality of existing services, roll out 4G services, and become financially viable. It also expects that with the implementation of this revival plan, BSNL will turn-around and earn profit in 2026-27.

**27.6 AIBSNLREA conveyed its apprehension to Minister of Communications pointing out one major flaw in the BSNL Revival Package-2022:** After the above revival plan for BSNL was announced, AIBSNLREA addressed a letter to the Minister of Communications conveying that that Government is again and again missing one important step, without which all efforts to revive BSNL are bound to fail. The letter refers to IIM Ahmedabad recommendation that "The Board of Directors should also include professional who have had experience of running large businesses. The board should not have only civil servants and academicians as Independent Directors who have not been associated with running of business. Academicians for top-ranked Indian Management institutes or foreign institutes may be offered for board positions". It had specifically recommended that "The top leadership of BSNL should be evaluated by DoT and should be made accountable for the profits and health of the organisation. We even suggest that the top leader (CMD) should be a professional who has had experience of running business rather than a government servant who is appointed on a fixed tenure by the government". The letter further said that unless those in BSNL top Management and the policy makers in the DoT are made accountable for their action, mere providing funds by the Government is not going to help BSNL in any way. AIBSNLREA, therefore, requested to "set up an independent on-going review mechanism, with very low representation from the Government, for assessing the efficacy of BSNL Board decisions", as has been suggested by the IIM Ahmedabad.

**28.0 Status of Resolutions adopted in last All India Conference held at Madurai:** The last AIC held at Madurai adopted as many as 14 resolutions with detailed justifications in each case. These were taken up duly with Prime Minister of India and other concerned Ministers. The PMO, in turn, had forwarded the resolutions to Department of Telecommunications. Both DOT and BSNL had also given their responses. These resolutions were duly uploaded in our website and are still available on the top of our website under the heading 'AIC'. The present status of the resolutions, without repeating the justifications, as adopted in the last AIC, is as under: -

No	RESOLUTIONS	STATUS
01	1. (a) Revision of Pay Scales of BSNL employees following issue of DPE	Revision of pay scales of the serving employees of BSNL w.e.f. 1.1.2017 as per 3 <sup>rd</sup>

	<p><b>OM dated 03.08.2017</b></p> <p><b>(1). Pension contribution under FR-116 for the absorbed employees be calculated basing on “actual pay”:</b></p> <p><b>(2). Allow implementation of revised pay scales, fitment benefit, increment and Dearness allowance with temporary capping on other allowances for the time being:</b></p> <p><b>(3). Relax ‘affordability clause’:</b></p> <p><b>1. (b) Revision of Pension/Family Pension of absorbed BSNL Pensioners:</b></p>	<p>PRC remained un-resolved. None of the suggestions mooted by AIBSNLREA in the resolutions found favour with both DoT and BSNL.</p> <p>Dept. of Expenditure, (Ministry of Finance) did not agree with our contention.</p> <p>Did not find favour with BSNL and DoT.</p> <p>DoT was found to be in no mood to move a Cabinet Note, as requested and also as clarified by DPE that DoT may seek relaxation of affordability clause, due to severe financial constraints with BSNL to bear additional expenditure as a result of revision of pay scales.</p> <p>Since pay scale is not revised, pension also has not been revised as per Law on the issue.</p>
02	<p><b>Plan for revival of BSNL -Create BSNL’s own Managerial Cadres</b></p>	<p>BSNL continued to be manned by ITS Officers on deputation from DoT. The ITS-controlled DoT, as Policy makers, was found not interested in allowing BSNL to have its own managerial cadre.</p>
03	<p><b>Immediate payment of dues recoverable from the DoT and Government companies to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited:</b></p>	<p>BSNL Financial Results for 2020-21 reveals that DoT had made partial payment of the dues during 2019-20, 2020-21.</p>
04	<p><b>Payment of consequential benefits to the former TES Group B Officers of Department of Telecommunication since absorbed in BSNL and MTNL, following revision of their seniority, as ordered by Hon’ble Supreme Court in its final judgment delivered on 14.12.2017 in CA No(s) 4389 of 2010:</b></p>	<p>Despite repeated representations, DoT took no action to review the past DPCs conducted by it for promotion from JTOs to TES Group B and recast their seniority and also issue revised seniority lists. It seems that a contempt petition in Supreme Court could have forced DoT to see reasons and implement the Court direction. Since this Association was not a party in the case in Supreme Court, we could not consider taking</p>

		action on that line.
05	<b>Restoration of grant of extra-increment on their post-based promotion under “BSNL Executive Promotion Policy” to the BSNL Executives retired between July 2017 and April 2018 by the Department of Telecommunications and denial of their consequent pension revision by the Controllers of Communication Accounts:</b>	DoT remains adamant and the matter remains unresolved. The Writ Petition/Appeal by DoT in Delhi High Court is still pending. The Petitioners, who went to Pr. CAT in the case and obtained an Order restoring the benefit for grant of one additional increment, are the respondents in the Writ Petition/Appeal by DoT, but they remained silent on the issue throughout the period till two months back. However, we have not given up and following up the case with DoT/other authorities.
06	<b>Opening of “Pensioners’ Service Centers”, as ordered by DOT/BSNL, in all BSNL Units under Comprehensive Pension Management System (CPMS) introduced by Department of Telecommunications for the purpose of disbursement of pension:</b>	Some Pensioners Service Centres were duly opened. But the Service Centers have lost its importance following introduction of several other mode of submission of Life Certifications even digitally.
07	<b>Non-payment of pensionary benefits including Leave encashment along with fixation of pension on the date of their retirement to the BSNL IDA pensioners who retired between 01.01.2007 and 09.06.2013:</b>	AIBSNLREA has already moved Court on the issue and is following it up in Delhi High Court.
08	<b>Non-reimbursement of medical claims under BSNLMRS of the absorbed BSNL pensioners for their outdoor and indoor treatment by BSNL for over last one year despite deduction of TDS in most of the cases and also non-imbursement of one-time payment made to the CGHS authorities by the pensioners to switch over to CGHS facility:</b>	Reimbursement of medical claims under BSNLMRS and one-time payment made to CGHS has been restored. Practice of deduction of TDS against the bills processed but not paid has been stopped. BSNL has also issued Orders to gradually clear all the medical claims – payments of which be done on the date of payment of salary of the serving employees. Funds are also being allotted to the Circles.
09	<b>Allowing provision of Mobile connections to the retired BSNL employees residing in TNF areas in lieu of concessional land line connections:</b>	Conceding the demand, BSNL issued Ordered to provide mobile connections in lieu of concessional telephone connections in TNF areas.
10	<b>Wrong application of FR-116 to collect pension contribution in respect of the absorbed BSNL employees from BSNL:</b>	Department of Expenditure did not agree to our plea. We are still following up the matter.

11	<b>Non-settlement of the proposal for payment of pension contribution in respect of the absorbed BSNL employees on ‘actual pay’ basis instead of “maximum of the pay scale” as allowed for the Government employees on foreign service w.e.f. 1.1.2006:</b>	Though Dept of Expenditure once wanted to examine the issue of pension contribution under FR-116 and asked DoT to furnish clarification on some points, DoT and BSNL was found lacking in interest in following up the issue. After receiving the communication from DoE, DoT addressed a letter, vide its No.40-32/2011-Pen(T) dated 2nd January 2019, to CMD BSNL, listing five points to get examined and furnishing the clarification back to DoT for its examination and taking up further with DoE. But most surprisingly, BSNL did not consider it necessary to pursue the issue anymore and did not even reply DoT. AIBSNLREA, on its part, after receiving this information under RTI, has once again taken up the issue and is following it up.
12	<b>Grant of annual increment to the retired/retiring employees whose date of next increment falls on the following day of their retirement:</b>	The matter is now sub-judice. Supreme Court has stayed the operation of one Karnataka High Court judgment allowing the benefit. There are still a few Appeals pending in Supreme Court against earlier similar judgments by lower courts. Meanwhile, DoP&PW has since conveyed that the matter is now being examined in consultation with the concerned nodal Departments/ Ministries.
13	<b>Extreme hardship of the Senior Citizens in general and Pensioners in particulars due to drastic cut in the interest rates of the Fixed Deposits with Banks/Post Offices– Request to mitigate the same:</b>	We did not receive any favorable response from any quarters on this issue.
14	<b>Investigation to identify the persons in position and power who are responsible for the present crisis of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and taking action against them as per law:</b>	The ITS-controlled policy makers in DoT were not inclined to accept the request, since they might have to face many embarrassing and unpleasant situations because of their involvement in the matter. Some politician’s roles would have also come under the scanner.

**29.0 Detailed analysis of CHQ Quota, donation, and contribution (Legal) received from the Branches/Individuals during the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22:** In order to allow you to have a clear picture of our performance at Branch/State level in regard to the above, we are placing the required information in a Tabular form against each of the above stated financial years. We can understand that Covid-2019 played a dampener in our efforts to mobilize more

members, and to raise adequate fund for our organizational work. But we strongly feel that despite all the constraints that we faced; we could have fared well. After the AIC, we must make an all-out effort to reach out to the left out retired BSNL Executives- especially those who opted for VRS 2019 and those who retired during the period when Covid-19 reached its peak and get them enrolled as life-members. A glimpse into the Table would also help us to identify the Branches which need special attention to re-organize. It will be our collective responsibility to rise to the occasion and contribute to the growth of this Association. As per CHQ quota received during the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, we could add 432, 373 and 249 members in that order. Thus, in the current tenure of CHQ, we could add 1054 new life members till 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**DETAILS OF CHQ QUOTA RECEIVED, DONATION AND CONTRIBUTION RECEIVED DURING 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22**

SL	NAME OF BRANCH	MEMBERSHIP			DONATION			CONTRIBUTION		
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>1</b>	<b>ASSAM</b>									
	Guwahati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2</b>	<b>ANDHRA PRADESH</b>									
	East Godavari	11	75	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	11	75	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>3</b>	<b>BIHAR</b>									
	Patna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>4</b>	<b>CHANDIGARH</b>									
	Chandigarh	6	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	6	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>5</b>	<b>CHATTISGARH</b>									
	Raipur	2	1	-	500	1,000	-	500	1,000	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	2	1	-	500	1,000	-	500	1,000	-
<b>6</b>	<b>DELHI</b>									
	Delhi South-West	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Headquarters	1	25	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	1	25	1	--	--	-	-	-	-
<b>7</b>	<b>GUJARAT</b>									
	Gujarat State	100	7	93	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	100	7	93	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>8</b>	<b>HARYANA</b>									

	Ambala	28	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Faridabad	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-
	Kurukshetra	2	-	11	-	-	-	2,500	-	-
	Yamuna Nagar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
9	<b>HIMACHAL PRADESH</b>									
	Shimla	17	12	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
10	<b>JHARKHAND</b>									
	Dhanbad	1	-	1	-	-	-	5,000	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
11	<b>KARNATAKA</b>									
	Hubli	1	1	-	-	-	-	10,000	-	-
	Kalaburagi	-	-	12	--	--	-	-	--	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
12	<b>KERALA</b>									
	Ernakulam-Alleppey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Palakkad	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
13	<b>MADHYA PRADESH</b>									
	Bhopal	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Indore	8	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	--
	Jabalpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ujjain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
14	<b>MAHARASHTRA</b>									
	Ahmednagar									
	Akola									
	Amravati	14	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-
	Aurangabad	16	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-
	East Vidarbha (Nagpur)	8	18	4	7,000	-	3,000	2,000	-	2,000
	Kalyan	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-
	Kolhapur	19	-	-	-	--		-	--	-

	Mumbai	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Nanded	-	--		-	-	-	-	-	-
	Parbani	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Pune	21	--	-	--	-	-	5,500	-	-
	Wardha	1	-	-	2,000			5,500	-	-
	Yavatmal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>ODISHA</b>									
	Bhubaneswar	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>PUNJAB</b>									
	Bhatinda	-	1	--	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jalandhar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ludhiana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Sangrur	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>RAJASTHAN</b>									
	Jodhpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Sriganganagar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Udaipur	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-
	Alwar-Bharatpur	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>TELANGANA</b>									
	Guntur	-	--	-	--	-	-	-	-	-
	Vijayawada	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>TAMILNADU</b>									
	Chennai	13	16	31	-	-	-	2,500	-	-
	Coimbatore	6	8	-	-	-	--	6,000	-	
	Erode	17	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Madurai	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Thanjavur	8	7	-	-	-	-	6,000	-	-
	Tiruchirappalli	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Tirunelveli	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>31</b>	-	-	-	<b>14,500</b>	-	-
<b>20</b>	<b>UTTAR PRADESH</b>									
	Agra	-	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Allahabad	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ballia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Bareilly	10	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2,000</b>	-	-
	Ghaziabad	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Gorakhpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Jaunpur	6	1	-	-	-	-	<b>2,000</b>	--	-
	Kanpur	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lucknow	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Saharanpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Sultanpur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Varanasi	15	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>6</b>	-	-	-	<b>4,000</b>	--	-
<b>21</b>	<b>WEST BENGAL</b>									
	West Bengal State	33	78	57	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>57</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>17,200</b>	<b>2,050</b>	-	<b>55,100</b>	<b>1,500</b>	-

<b>CONTRIBUTION BY INDIVIDUALS</b>									
<b>1</b>	Smt Susila Maruthai Ponnu, (Life Member)	Retd DE Nagpur Maharashtra	200	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>2</b>	A V Ratnam (Well-Wisher)	Retd SDE Meerpetta Telengana	--	--	--	600	--	--	--
<b>3</b>	George Verghese, (Well-wisher)	Retd SDE Thiruvalla Kerala	--	--	--	5,000	--	--	--
<b>4</b>	Ravindra Kumar Tripathy, (Well-wisher)	Retd SDE Kota Rajasthan	5,000	--	--	--	--	--	--



5	K G Hungund, (Well-wisher)	Retd SDE- Koppal Karnataka	500	--	--	--	--	--
6	S B Mohare, (Life Member)	Retd CAO Gulbarga Karnataka	--	5,000	--	--	--	--
7	I S Navali, (Life Member)	Retd SDE Gulbarga Karnataka	--	5,000	--	--	--	--
8	N Raghavendra Deshpande, (Life-Member)	Retd DGM Bangaluru Karnataka	--	500	--	--	--	--
9	Sibnath Manna, (Life Member)	Retd DE Kolkata West Bengal	--	2,000	--	--	--	--
10	R J Christopher, (Life Member)	Retd SDE Thanjavur Tamilnadu	--	5,000	--	--	--	--
11	Smt Sobhana Lokande, (Well-wisher)	Family Pensioner Nagpur Maharashtra	--	2,000	--	--	--	--
12	Vasudev Sagar, (Life Member)	Retd DGM WTR Mumbai Maharashtra	--	--	1,000	--	--	--
13	Guruppa S Hugar, (Life Member)	Retd CAO Kalaburagi Karnataka	--	--	5,000	--	--	--
14	Akkem Subbarayadu, (Well-wisher)	Retd CAO Hyderabad Telengana	--	--	--	--	--	2,000

**30.1** Though all possible efforts have been taken to give a brief account of all the major activities of this great Association and other connected issues concerning the BSNL IDA pensioners in general and the members of this Association in particular, which took place after our Madurai AIC, we are afraid that some other important issues might have been missed. On behalf of my colleagues in CHQ and on my personal behalf, I apologize for the same. I can assert without any hesitation that during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21, this Association raised the bar to the maximum possible height to serve the interests of all the members who were looking at us for help. Several critical cases involving groups of members and even for other individuals were taken up with right earnest and vigorously pursued. There was no hesitation on the part of CHQ to visit BSNLCO, DoT Headquarters, CCA Office and even DoP&PW Office. We feel satisfied that in almost all the cases, we could deliver the results. Unfortunately, a few cases still remained unresolved and are being pursued. We are to admit that but for the unqualified support and cooperation from all our members, office bearers and other well-wishers, it would not have been possible to discharge our duties to the best of our ability.

**30.2** In the end, I express my personal thanks to Shri V Chinnappiah, President who continued to be my best guide and a source of inspiration. Both the Vice-Presidents contributed their best to safeguard the interest of the members. I thank both of them. I also thank Shri S

Ratnasubramanian, AGS for his invaluable advice from time to time. Shri R R Balasubramanian, Asst General Secretary extended his fullest support and even took upon himself my responsibility as the General Secretary without any hesitation whenever it needed the most. Shri V P Arya, the Assistant General Secretary with me at Headquarters was always found to be moving from one section to others in all the Offices and meeting the senior Officers to pursue the cases in mission mode. Even the unfortunate demise of his wife due to Covid-19 could not dampen his spirits. His, commitment, simplicity and endless energy need special mention here. All our Organization Secretaries did a splendid job, despite all the limitations on various counts. Our Financial and Assistant Financial Secretary including both the Joint Secretaries performed well as expected of them. I also express my sincere gratitude to all the State Secretaries, Branch Secretaries, other Office-Bearers at all levels for their unqualified support. Lastly, my heartfelt thanks go to all the members and well-wishers of this great Organization for their full co-operation and valuable support which I will always carry in my heart for all the times to come. It will be quite unfair, if I fail to convey my gratitude to all the delegates, their family members, and Guests for participating in the Conference, as well as the members of West Bengal State Branch to arrange this historic Conference. Now I seek your permission to stop here and take a long-awaited rest from all the activities in which I kept myself engaged over the last 55 years.

GOODBYE MY FRIENDS! GOODBYE!

LONG LIVE AIBSNLREA.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,



(S Basu)

General Secretary