

SAVE BSNL CAMPAIGN

Dear friends,

Era of public sector Raj has elapsed long back in India. We are in midst of globalization and privatization era. Attempt to reverting back to socialism is being tried every now and then by the hard core ideologists but without success. General mood of the people is for consumerism which empowers them both individually and collectively in each and every walk of life. Communication revolution in India is the best example to see for everyone how the life of millions is changed forever within less than a decade. This was made possible only by the liberalization policy which opened the gate for private players and for intense competition. One who could not compete eventually should give away. In this back ground let us try to analyse the situation we are into.

Post liberalisation India has seen vast change mainly in the field of communication and travel business because telecommunication, aviation and automobile sectors were opened to private competition and for the entry of global players. Though the business in telecommunication and aviation industry is growing leap and bounds we find that the Govt. sector companies BSNL, MTNL & Air India are consistently losing the market share, eventually incurring heavy losses year after year. On the other hand we find that Maruti which was Govt. company (Suzuki was minority share holder then) still ruling the small car industry despite intense competition from global players because it was privatized step by step by unloading Govt. share in a time bound manner. The advantages like the established nationwide network and the in depth knowledge of market in the country, experienced and skilled manpower were similar in comparison to all these Govt. owned companies but only the Maruti which was privatized could successfully compete with other private and MNC companies where as Air India, BSNL & MTNL failed miserably. The lacuna is in the policy of decision making in the Govt. sector and due to revolution in mobile wireless technology. In the democratic set up all major policy decision has to go through many checks and counter checks by various Govt. agencies hence the delay is an inbuilt characteristic of decision making process and cannot be done away. This can be improved slightly but cannot catch up with that of private sector. In this competitive and fast changing technology driven field of communication, Govt. sectors like BSNL & MTNL lagged behind and lost the market share as they are handicapped by delayed decision making process on some of the issues like procurements and indecision on many issues. This has hampered the growth severely. It is worth mentioning here that revolution in technology has out faced many established companies, classic example are : Kodak which was the world market leader for more than hundred years in films and camaras is on extinction and declared as bankrupt because of invention of digital camara people stopped using films both for still photography and for videos. SONY which was pioneer in portable music systems and in analogue colour TVs is unable to translate that success into digital era. In its TV business it is not able to recover from the delay in developing flat panel module and has lost market share and posted heavy losses in the recent years and now is not in a position to compete with Samsung, LG etc. In case of BSNL it seems revolution in wireless technology which resulted in decrease of wired lines and delay in procuring wireless (Mobile) equipments both have coasted dearly.

Now it seems that telecom boom in the country is coming to an end as the urban market is almost saturated and the rural market is not that much profitable. Exponential growth of any company in this field may not be there to see in the future unless otherwise from mergers and acquiring.

In such a situation all the companies started diverting their attention from grabbing the market share instead started focusing on maximizing their profits by increasing the revenue and reducing overhead expenditures. Same rule applies to BSNL also. The only way left out is to maximize the profit by increasing the revenue by various methods and by reducing the over head expenditures. Maximum chunk of over head expenditure in BSNL is on pay and perks of the huge strength of staff. In this background an attractive VRS package is worked out by the management. No doubt there is scope to improve the scheme. It is very unfortunate that the Unions & the Associations representing the majority of the employees are opposing the VRS scheme itself instead of trying to improve the scheme. Leaders of some of these Unions/Associations are obsessed with their obsolete ideology and others are unable to read the writing on the wall or playing politics. Together they are going to drown the entire staff of BSNL.

Friends, let us understand the ground reality and not nod our heads for each and every thing these leaders say. Otherwise we may have to repent for ever. Only if an honourable exit route is provided at an earliest for one third of employees by implementing an attractive VRS package then only the future of remaining employees who are going to continue will be safe and BSNL ship will sail otherwise there is an eminent danger that all will be drowned in this sinking ship.

Now let us take a look on another important issue of absorption of ITS Officers. An extra ordinary situation was created when majority of ITS officers have opted out as the terms and conditions are not acceptable to them. We should remember here that all of us got absorbed in BSNL only after the terms and conditions were acceptable to us. Let us remember that the terms and conditions were different for Group C & D and for executives when they got absorbed. There were lot of court cases and delay when executives got absorbed and they were granted time bound promotion which was not extended to C & D employees at the time of their absorption.

Hence it is quite natural that ITS officers used all available avenues including the legal one to get the terms & conditions which were acceptable to them and now they are getting absorbed through one time recruitment. Management also can not fill up the huge vacuum being created at middle and top level either through internal resources or from external market. We have to remember here that one post of CMD could not be filled up through external market though efforts were made by PMO, then how hundreds of middle and top level posts can be filled up from the external market. As far as internal resources are concerned there are not enough man power who are exposed to that level of working. More over ITS officers are as much part of this organization as any one else amongst us. Morally we do not have any reason to oppose their absorption through direct recruitment. This is the method adopted when a Govt. department was converted as Public sector and all MTNL staff got absorbed through this method only (i.e. technical resignation from Govt. settlement of pensionary benefit and fresh appointment in the newly carved public sector unit). But we rejected this offer and wanted best of both (i.e. pension to be paid after retirement in IDA scale for the entire service including the

service rendered in the public sector and public sector IDA pay scale) through amendment of pension rule 37A. Now ITS officers are accepting which we had rejected earlier. Hence there should not be any issue at all. But we find all three Associations coming together and calling for agitations and strike and making an issue on imaginable ground that their promotion avenues are curbed. It is unfortunate that the leaders of these Associations are resorting to strike on non issues and vitiating the atmosphere once for all by using intemperate, filthy and vituperative language against management and ITS officers.

Leaders of these Unions and Associations are resorting to strike on each and every sundry issue (a glance on the list of demands on which JAC resorted to strike in the month of Dec 11 is enough to prove this point) and hell bent upon to see that BSNL is not revived. The demands such as waiving of Tax, license fee etc and asking for more and more grants from the Govt. reminds us of a person who always demands money from his father's earning and never earns for himself. These leaders should understand that Govt. grants only will not make the BSNL viable. Many of these leaders lack rational thinking and pragmatic view on the subject. By sensationalizing the issue and by loud throat power these leaders are misleading the entire workforce of BSNL. It seems that the interest of these leaders lies in keeping the company sick and not allowing the employees to get benefit of VRS package and exit. The main reason is that if a large number of employees take VRS the revenue of these leaders gets drastically reduced and their VIP life style would be affected.

Friends, let us not fall prey for the greed, selfishness and false prestige of these leaders instead muster enough courage to say 'NO' to the strike called on the issues such as VRS, absorption of ITS officers etc. These leaders will mislead us till we are ready to get misled because of fear of muscle power of these leaders or because of our inability to analyse the issues in a rational manner and in its proper perspective. Now the time has come to save the BSNL from these strike mongers.

SAY NO TO STRIKE AND SAVE BSNL

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