

RESOLUTION ON WAGE REVISION

The much awaited wage revision for the BSNL non-executives has been finalized on 15th January'2010 in the Wage Negotiation Committee. The settlement is well appreciated by the non-executives. However, the process of finalizing the wage settlement has been a grueling experience for the BSNLEU and the United Forum.

In the Central Govt. departments, wage revision for the officers and the employees are done simultaneously, as per the recommendations of the Central Pay Commission. But in the Public sector undertakings, the picture is totally different. Here wage revision for executives and non-executives never take place simultaneously for various reasons. This fact did not percolate into the minds of the non-executives, which became the root cause for misunderstanding and confusion.

As far as the present round of Wage revision is concerned, it is implemented for executives in BSNL in February'2009 itself. Management has not even started serious wage negotiations for non-executives at that time. This created irritation as well as frustration among the non-executives. Thus, when the wage negotiations started in April'2009, the atmosphere in BSNL was very hostile unlike in any other PSU.

BSNLEU and the UF seriously tried for an early negotiated settlement. However, the total negative attitude of the Management created road-blocks. It was adamant in imposing a ten year wage settlement on the Non-executives, while BSNLEU vigorously tried for a five year settlement. Having understood that the wage settlement would be delayed, BSNLEU and UF raised the demand for interim relief. Not accepting of the demand of the BSNLEU, management issued unilateral order for adjustable advance equivalent to four months basic pay.

To break the stalemate, notice for two days strike on 19th & 20th May'2009 was issued by BSNLEU and other UF partners. In the talks that ensued, management agreed to increase the quantum of the adjustable advance to six months and also agreed to implement the new HRA rates w.e.f. 27-02-2009. Based on this, the strike was deferred.

In the talks that continued, management took a strong position that 30% fitment i.e. at par with the Executives, would be given only if a ten year validity period for the wage revision was agreed to by the union. Our sincere efforts to build united actions for a just wage settlement was turned down by NFTE and FNTTO. Instead, they vigorously campaigned among employees for accepting the terms and conditions, as dictated by the management on wage revision. Thus the so called BSNL Workers Alliance and management joined hands and made a vicious campaign amongst employees that BSNLEU was intentionally delaying the wage revision.

The above development forced BSNLEU and the UF to revive the call for two days strike. The strike that took place on 19th and 20th August'2009 drew tremendous response from the workers including those belonging to NFTE and FNT0. There is no doubt that this strike is a milestone in our trade union movement. However, NFTE and FNT0 informed the management in writing that they were not participating in the strike. Thus they have created an indelible stain on their unions.

Even after the strike, management continued to drag its feet, with the hope that BSNLEU would succumb to the pressure and accept a ten years wage settlement. However, BSNLEU was determined not to accept that condition. Meanwhile NFTE and FNT0 started campaigning among the workers to fill up declaration forms accepting the terms and conditions of the management on wage revision. However, workers gave a fitting reply by ignoring them.

The determination of BSNLEU and United Forum, not to surrender the interest of the BSNL non-executives finally compelled the management to come around for a settlement. Thus, a broad understanding was reached in the meeting of the Wage Negotiation Committee, held on 17-11-2009. Management gave up their insistence for a ten years wage settlement. Both sides agreed that the next wage revision of the non-executives would be done together with that of the executives.

It took few more weeks for finalization of the new pay scales, since the scales proposed by the management did not contain sufficiently long spans to avoid stagnation. Because of the tough bargaining made by BSNLEU and the UF, settlement on pay scales was reached in the meeting held on 15-01-2010. Agreement on recommendations of the Wage Negotiation Committee was signed both by the management and the staff side on that day itself.

It is pertinent to mention here that wage revision is still not settled in many major PSUs. Hence, this meeting of the CEC congratulates the CHQ for finalizing the best possible wage revision under the given circumstances. This CEC also places on record it's full appreciation for the Circle, district, branch unions as well as for the entire membership of BSNLEU, and also for all the constituents of the United Forum for bestowing their steadfast faith on the organization and also for successfully implementing all the calls for action for settlement of this landmark wage revision.

Proposed by :- Com. P. Abhimanyu, Dy. G.S. BSNLEU

Seconded by :- Com. Swapan Chakraborty, AGS, BSNLEU