



# ALL INDIA BSNL PENSIONERS' WELFARE ASSOCIATION

[Regd. T 1833/09]

**Central Head Quarters**

**H. No 6, G No 12th Street, Jogupalya, Halasuru, Bangalore 560008**

**Website: [www.bsnlpensioner.in](http://www.bsnlpensioner.in)**

**eMail: [bsnlpensioner@gmail.com](mailto:bsnlpensioner@gmail.com)**

**President: P S Ramankutty**

**General Secretary: P Gangadhara Rao**

**Phone: 9447551555**

**Phone: 9448088404**

**E Mail dated 26-4-2021**

**Copies to**

**To**

**Shri. P K Purwar,  
CMD, BSNL,  
New Delhi 110001.**

**Sh. Arvind Vadnekar,  
Director HRD, BSNL**

**Smt. Yojana Das,  
Director ,Finance, BSNL**

Respected Sir,

I write this letter to you to convey anger and anguish of BSNL retirees all over India with regard to lack of medical care in the present crisis created by Covid19.

In 2000, about 3.6 lakh DoT employees migrated to BSNL with the hope that the Government and Management of BSNL would honour their assurances regarding medical care to the employees who built up the telecom infrastructure in our country toiling day in and day out. Those sitting in the air-conditioned offices may not know how the field staff worked in difficult terrains like thick forests, deserts and remote villages etc encountering wild animals, facing inclement weather to erect telephone network. The pensioners of today had given profit of Rs 10000 Crore per year when they were in service. The very same heroes of Indian Telecom are being ignored, neglected, and rather harassed by BSNL by denying proper medical care violating the government policy and the directives from Apex Court.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020, in a case filed by senior lawyer and former Law Minister of India Shri. Ashwani Kumar, had directed government hospitals to give priority in admission and treatment of elderly people looking at their vulnerability to corona virus. Again on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021, a bench consisting of Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice R S Reddy extended its order to private hospitals also considering the surge of Covid cases all over India.

Government of India has adopted certain policies. Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana is one such scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to BPL category. This is a Central Sector Scheme, fully funded by the Central Government. The expenditure for implementation of the scheme is being met from the "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund". The Scheme is being implemented by the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), a PSU under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Benefits of RVY are not available to BSNL retirees because they are 'pensioners'.

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The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted to provide financial security, welfare and protection for senior citizens. It requires children to provide maintenance for their parents, and the government to provide old age homes and ensure medical care for senior citizens. It set up Administrative Tribunals and Appellate Tribunals to ensure maintenance. The BSNL retirees are out of purview of such Tribunals because they are supposed to be under the protection of BSNL Company.

**But, it seems that BSNL Management is unaware of such directives from the Apex Court and the government policy initiatives.**

BSNLMRS was one of the best systems made available to retirees in CPSEs in India. But, now we find it acts as most harassing weapon to punish the telecom pensioners who worked tirelessly for the nation.

One Mr. Chandrasekharan Nair, Retired Sr. TOA of Nedumangad in Trivandrum SSA died recently as he could not continue his dialysis. The Doctor who was treating in the empanelled hospital shifted to another hospital in the city which is not empanelled. He had no option but to go to that doctor for continuity of the treatment. After undergoing dialysis twice in every week he had been submitting bills for reimbursement. BSNL failed to pay the bills. He disposed all his properties for the payments already made. When the hospitals refused to continue the dialysis he stopped it and he died a premature death. There are many such cases.

In each Circle few hospitals were giving cashless treatment to BSNL retirees. But, now, despite the MOU remains valid, most of such hospitals ask the patients to pay the amount in advance and claim reimbursement on the plea that BSNL has not cleared their bills. Practically the 'cashless treatment' is absent and the BSNL retirees are denied treatment even in acute cases.

BSNL retirees are compelled to migrate to CGHS. Few thousand pensioners have migrated in areas covered by CGHS. Immediately their vendor codes are removed from the ERP and as a result they are denied reimbursement. The Data Centre at Ghaziabad has to be instructed to take corrective measures in the system to ensure payment of all bills pertaining to the BSNLMRS period of the concerned pensioners.

Most of the BSNL pensioners incur good portion of their pension for either indoor or outdoor treatment. Bills submitted by them for indoor treatment were ignored and the assured quarterly medical allowance has not been paid since April 2018 in many Circles like Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Punjab circles etc, to name few.

BSNL denied or delayed the medical care to its retirees on the plea of financial crisis. But the company is able to reimburse the expenditure incurred by serving staff. We do not suggest that bills submitted by serving staff should not be paid. **They should be paid, no doubt.** But question is who should get the priority in the matter?

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We strongly feel that the old people, the pensioners, should be given priority in the matter of medical care. It is the universally accepted fact that elderly persons require more and constant medical care. They deserve Priority over young people.

Affordability is also a factor to be considered in this regard. An official drawing salary of Rupees One lakh per month can manage, at least in normal condition, to meet his expenditure on treatment. Whereas a retiree drawing pension of Rs 20000 or so cannot manage it. Some times the amount runs in to lakhs.

**In military, the veterans are given priority. In many CPSEs the former employees are given priority in medi-care. Only in BSNL we find a different, discriminatory treatment.**

We have approached senior officers in Corporate Office several times to bring the matter to their notice. They used to make over the matter to some junior managers without giving any guidelines. When the Corporate Office allots funds to Circles it is always far less than required.

It is a crisis the nation never faced in the past. In spite of the inhuman attitude adopted by BSNL Management, the members of AIBSNLPWA had donated Rs 1.04 crore to the PMNRF and CMDRF to meet the exigency in the present crisis. We do not expect any gratitude for it. We have done it as our duty to the Nation. Ingratitude is quite common.

We only request you to kindly give priority to the seniors, the pensioners, in the matter of medical care, allot funds to clear all bills from pensioners and to pay the quarterly medical allowance up to date without any further delay. May we request you to kindly monitor utilization of funds allotted also? We passionately request you sir, to kindly pay some personal attention to the matter and do justice to the retired people on humanitarian ground.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

  
P. Gangadhara Rao, \*\*  
General Secretary.