

PATTABI WRITES

Some Questions concerning VRS of BSNL / MTNL

1. Whether VRS Idea is bolt from blue in BSNL?

No. This has been a talk in the corridors of BSNL, DOT, GOM of 'Congress Govt' and the present BJP Govt and as per the various recommendations right from Pitroda committee, BRPSE recommendations, BCG- Deloitte, BSNL Core Committee and finally IIM Ahmadabad. VRS becomes part of the revival plan as a measure of cost cutting expenditure on staff item. The present Govt has taken the decision to pump financial support for VRS expenditure and so the realized VRS.

2. Is there any change in tone in communicating the decisions of cabinet between PIB release and DOT OM?

Yes. DOT OM prioritise VRS as its first item where as PIB has given 4G as its first item

3. Whether VRS decision can be stopped?

It is near impossible to stop unless all refused in one tone- like a kind of non cooperation to avail the offer.

4. Whether Trade Unions can give guidelines for wholesale acceptance or rejection of the VRS proposals?

It is not possible to give any 'one size fit formula'. They can share and express their collective experiences in various industries. But individual alone should take responsibility of availing or unavailing the offer after knowing the details of the offer. TUs would help them to understand the offer and the pros and cons.

5. Whether Trade Unions address the grievances of VRS optees?

Definitely, it is the duty of TU to address the grievances / issues that the VRS optees are subjected to face

6. Whether Gujarat Model is correctly followed in calculating the exgratia and restricting the eligible exgratia?

Yes and NO. The calculation was done as per Gujarat Model. But restrictive clause limiting the eligible amount is not according to DPE guidelines. The eligibility amount that they are proposing finally is less than Gujarat formula. They are managing to fine tune the exgratia by linking pension of initial years in calculation and restriction.

7. Whether the concept of 125 % is based on any existing guidelines?

No. It is violation of Existing guidelines restricting the eligibility criteria linking with lump sum Pension. There is no concept like lump sum pension except the form of Commutation. Exgratia payment is a lump sum concept. Pension payment is monthly concept.

8. Whether VRS optees get pension?

Yes but up to 60 years (without commutation) full pension that is 50 % of your last pay after that according to your availing of Commutation.

9. Whether deferring Commutation is as per any guideline?

No. It is violation of the existing guidelines. One can postpone upto the period of one year only

- 9.a Whether the family can be given the benefit of 40 per cent commutation if a pensioner dies before exercising option?

Since the commutation does not become absolute in such cases the benefit cannot be given to the family

10. Whether Gratuity can be delayed or deferred?

Yes - but they have to pay GPF interest for the delayed period but with the concurrence of Secretary GOI level. Action will be taken against those who are all causing the delay. This one is the existing guideline.

11. Whether GOI is having right to modify the guidelines / rules of commutation, Gratuity etc?

Yes, they are having right to modify. But modification should be notified publicly before it is implemented .

12. Whether VRS is compulsory to those 50 and above aged employees?

No. It is voluntary and availing the offer is as per the wisdom of the individual

13. Whether Exgratia is to be paid by GOI/DOT?

No. BSNL will pay it in two installments after getting money from GOI. DOT should seek that as budgetary amount from MOF for this current year and for the next year. Exgratia is guaranteed one as it has a backing and sanction of cabinet.

14. Whether VRS is good for the employees in the current scenario?

It is good and bad. Good as they are going to be relieved from the day to day concern of BSNL, its viability etc and they are assured of monthly Pension as per 37A. It is bad because of the psychological pressure mounted to leave earlier to their date of superannuation from the organisation that has been dear to them all along and it is a kind of assault on their Job security

15. Whether VRS is good for BSNL?

It is good and bad again. It is good because as a loss making organisation it is being relieved from the burden of higher staff cost. Even if 40 % of the targeted gone on VRS , cost will be reduced to that extent. It is bad because, it is going to be denuded of best and skilled manpower which one is need of the competitive environment. Danger of more outsourcing would loom large.

16. Whether the conditions for paying pension for the absorbed employees – 37 A is applicable to VRS optees?

Yes. But Govt/ BSNL should spell whether VRS optees are being allowed to take VRS as that of sub rule 11A of 37 A or as 8 of 37 A. As per the DPE guidelines and as per DOPT guideline for Spl VRS for CG Employees the compensation under VRS will be addition to terminal benefits.

17. Whether VRS optees are eligible for wage revision and pension revision?

Yes, they are eligible. It is better to get assurance from the concerned authorities. But as per DPE 20th July 2018 “ Arrears of wages due to revision etc will not be included in computing the eligible amount”. This was the stand of DPE in earlier guidelines also. So no extra exgratia if any wage revision.

18. Whether availing Commutation is a must at 60 years or 2024-25?

Not necessary. If willing then they have to prefer the relevant form for that otherwise they can continue with the same Pension as fixed on their date of VR as per VRS.

19. Whether Post VRS situation is tough to the remaining Employees?

Talks may be like that by the management/ DOT/GOI. But as on date no change in service condition is spelt either in Transfer rules or CDA etc.

20. Whether any new Manpower planning would be there after VRS?

There may be chance for that to share the work load judiciously and they may try for even distribution of manpower. Organizational structure may be changed.

21. Whether financial viability will be restored immediately after VRS as there are 4G market and reduction of staff cost?

It is difficult to give any assurance on the financial viability of BSNL immediately after VRS. Assurance can be possible only when we find improvement in revenues.

22. Why DOT OM dt 29-10-19 is spelling 60 years as current retirement age? Is there any agenda for reduction of retirement age to 58 years?

Intention is not revealed transparently. Earlier Draft Cabinet Note was having that 58 proposal but there is no official pronouncement regarding this as on date - that is in the Cabinet note dt 22-10-19 whether any approval sought for the same - any decision given is not known publicly.

23. After VRS Abolition of vacancies due to VRS?

Already the GOI abolished all the posts while transferring the employees to BSNL on absorption during oct 2000. In the case of Non Executives in 2003 itself all the posts like SrTOA P stands abolished as and when they retire. In 2011 almost 19 cadres were

declared as wasting cadres and their posts abolished as and when they retire. Again now they are going to abolish the posts when VRS optees vacate.

24. Whether 80000 /90000 in number is possible to avail VRS?

It means a big ticket VRS- unless doubts are well clarified it is difficult to implement. Even if 40000 availed VRS, it will be construed as a big victory for the promoters and planners.

25. Tax exemption?

For Exgratia IT exemption is 5 lakh.

26. Whether wage revision is part of revival plan?

As per the DPE Guidelines issued on 24-11-2017 (8th round for workmen) it is spelt in para 2 iii " In those CPSEs for which the Govt has approved a restructuring / revival plan, the wage revision will be done as per the provisions of the approved restructuring/ revival plan only" It is not publicly known whether this guideline was taken into account while approval was given by cabinet . It seems that DPE has given some positive comment to DOT to examine the issue of 3rd PRC . But DOT OM issued communicating the decision of Cabinet about revival was silent on this matter.

27. Is there any social impact because of big number VRS?

Yes. Studies on VRS are galore. Experiences are different. Making 'working people' idle will have its own social effect.

More questions may arise after seeing the order for VRS issued by BSNL. More light can be seen once we obtain the cabinet note and approval copy. Let us hope for the best.

2-11-19 23.30 hours - Posted by PATTABI WRITES at 11:21 AM