

SANCHAR NIGAM EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION

KERALA CIRCLE

(Largest Association of Executives in BSNL)
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No.SNEA/Kerala/2021/19

dated 18th Aug 2021

To

The Chief General Manager,

Southern Telecom Region

Chennai

Respected Sir,

Sub: Deterioration of Optical Fiber Cable Network in Kerala STR – reg:

Kerala STR is maintaining more than 6250 KM of Optical Fiber cable network across Kerala, of which around 65% of the cables have completed more than 15 years of life. Due to aging, several cables have already lost its color coating and handling of the cable has become very difficult during maintenance activities, especially when cable is spliced after a cable cut/damage. Laying of new cables for replacing the old cables or in new routes are widely restricted due to fund constraints. Where as in the field, the developmental / infrastructure activities have increased many fold. External activities by different agencies are going on vigorously in almost all the cable routes across entire Kerala.

As you are well aware, the executives working in outdoor units are badly suffering due to nonpayment of temporary advance, insufficient fuel for vehicle and acute shortage of stores such as optical fiber cable and joint closures. The very purpose of temporary advance is to meet the exigencies in the field and to maintain precious BSNL assets intact. Earlier the temporary advances were projected at the beginning of the month after assessing field activities and it was generally paid before 10th of every month. Now this advance system has transformed to a reimbursement model and the field executives are not granted the required temporary advances for months together. This results in huge outstanding amounts pending towards field executives to the tune of Rs.50000/- to Rs.200000/-. The situation in the field compels them to spend this much huge personal money to restore BSNL cable before PWD or other external agencies completes their work. Otherwise our precious cables cannot be attended or even touched for years together. It is pertinent to mention that all of this is happening at a time when even their regular salaries are not getting paid on time. When officers are spending for

departmental purpose by setting aside their personal and family needs, management is taking it as a golden opportunity and conveniently making it as the order of the day. It is often found that, out of the meager fund allotted by corporate office for maintenance activities, a portion is set aside to carry out OF rehabilitation works, thinking that the normal maintenance activities will be carried out by officer concerned by utilizing their personal money itself. This wrong practice may be stopped immediately and henceforth utmost priority may be given to clear out all outstanding temporary advance dues and to regularize the HK pending salary payments.

Low quality joint closures purchased from open market is further spoiling the life of the cables and adversely affecting its loss parameters. Rehabilitation of optical fiber cable through patch work is totally stalled due to shortage of cable and fund constraints. 26KM Optical fiber cable already allotted to Kerala from Kanchipuram for patch work and other developmental activities have also been cancelled and diverted to Hyderabad region.

In all southern states, other than Kerala, two housekeeping staffs are deployed in each outdoor units to carry out the day-today maintenance activities, where as in Kerala most of the units are managing without any housekeeping services, except a very few outdoor units which are limited to one housekeeping staff on temporary basis for 6 months. In Kerala NHAI/KSTP road widening work are taking place in almost all districts. GAIL pipe laying work are in progress in central and northern Kerala. All these works are of permanent nature and staffs are to be deployed to monitor our cable and protect it safely. Further all these agencies are working almost round the clock and simultaneously at several locations. Under these situations managing the field without HKs has become a big challenge for field executives.

In view of the above constraints, working in outdoor unit especially in STR has become very difficult and JTOs/SDEs/JEs are generally not preferring to work in these outdoor units. Once Executives are posted to outdoor units, it becomes their sole responsibility to maintain the cable routes, despite tying their hands with lot of constraints such as temporary advance, fuel for vehicle, purchasing stores from open market, engaging labourers etc.

Under this grave situation this association is constrained to tell the management to take immediate action to address the following issues on top priority.

1. Clear all outstanding temporary advance dues with a one-time lump sum fund allotment.
2. Allot two HK services to all outdoor units in Kerala.
3. Make available sufficient stock of store such as OF cable, Joint closures etc.
4. Allot sufficient fuel fund for departmental vehicles and 2000KM ceiling limit for hired vehicles.

The cable network in Kerala is already in a deteriorating stage and if this situation is allowed to continue, it will decline to such a worst situation, from where nobody can bring it back to its original position. So it is requested that speedy action may please be initiated from the management side to implement the above suggestions on top priority and also to ensure the free flow of sufficient funds for future maintenance.

Sincerely Yours



Jithesh K P

Circle Secretary

SNEA Kerala Circle

Copy to: PGM STR Ernakulam