



AIGETOA
All India Graduate Engineers & Telecom Officers Association
Karnataka Telecom Circle
 (Recognised Representative Association of BSNL)

Circle President
Ashok Y Shigli
+91-9449857589

Circle Secretary
Chandran D.Thomas
+91-9449850480

Circle Finance Secretary
K. Sivakumar Boppe
+91-9449809450

All communication at e-mail: aigetoaktk@gmail.com

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To
 The Chief General Manager,
 BSNL, Karnataka Telecom Circle,
 Bengaluru-08.

Respected Sir,

Subject: The problem of staff shortage coupled with the challenges faced by Executives in Karnataka Circle and suggested solutions to overcome the same – Reg.

We thank you for your support has the head of BSNL family in Karnataka. We are privileged to have you at the helm of affairs during a very testing time for the organization and the general environment which is uncertain due to the global pandemic. In the midst of this, **the executives of BSNL Karnataka have managed the telecom network here in an exemplary fashion. In fact, they deserve a special mention as they are performing under huge pressure that is unseen by our counterparts in other Circles.** This is due to the acute shortage of staff faced at BSNL Karnataka - which we would like to highlight through the staffing data numbers in Karnataka vis-à-vis similar data of all states with which Karnataka shares its land borders with.

Background:-

Historically, the intake of Executives in Karnataka State in Government/PSUs such as BSNL has seen less applicants from among locals and more from neighbouring states and other parts of the country. Over a period of time, **there is a depletion of Executives due to the preference of staff to seek transfer to their home Circle via Rule-8/9 for JTOs and the Online Transfer Portal for SDEs.** This trend is witnessed in that the R-8/9 WL is consistently over 100 and this agenda point is listed on the top by all Executive Associations. While the Associations pursue aggressively for the transfer of their members, it also becomes our responsibility to suggest ways to run the show in Karnataka with only outgoing and zero incoming!

To put the matter of staff shortage among Executives in perspective, we have made a comparative study of the current staffing levels of Metro cities and Circles in the tables below. This will bring out the depth of the issue faced by and in Karnataka Circle.

Table 1 - Metropolitan Cities - Executive count

Metropolitan City	Bengaluru	Chennai	Hyderabad
Group A	38	37	25
Group B	267	463	433
Total	305	500	458

(# Excluding Accounts/ PA/ PS strength, all other streams strength from JTO to CGM included)

From the above table we see that Bengaluru BA which is no less in comparison to the other large cities in the South Zone, is largely under staffed. Both Chennai and Hyderabad have more than one-and-a-half times the Executive count as compared to Bengaluru.

The story is the same when we take our entire Circle into account. In fact, the contrast is even starker and brings out why Karnataka is truly suffering.

Table 2 - Circles - Executive count

Circle	Area (In Sq km)	Total Executive Strength (Excl Fin /PA/PS)	Executives Strength (Excluding Circle Office & Metropolitan District)	No. of SSAs (Other than Metropolitan SSA)	Average strength of Non-metropolitan SSA	Count of SSAs with Strength < 40	Particulars of SSAs with least strength
Andhra Pradesh	1,62,975	1282	1131	12	94	0	Cuddapah-45
Karnataka	1,91,976	1141	684	18	38	14	Bidar & Mandya- 19
Kerala	38,863	1804	1577	11	143	0	Tiruvalla- 91
Tamil Nadu	1,30,058	1375	1163	17	68	3	Nilgiris -25
Telangana	1,12,077	1139	482	8	60	0	Adilabad-44

(# Excluding Accounts/ PA/ PS strength, all other streams strength from JTO to CGM included)

The Karnataka Circle is territorially the **biggest circle** of South Zone in terms of **geographic area**, whereas the **working strength of executives** involved in operation, maintenance & sales activities is **least** among all Southern circles. **This is the prime reason for the poor show of Karnataka Telecom Circle in comparison with its neighboring Circles. This also results in stress due to the added work pressure on all Executives deployed in Karnataka Circle.**

It is clearly visible that a majority of Executives in Karnataka Circle are discharging multi-fold roles and responsibilities in comparison with their peers of other Southern circles. The sad part of this matter is that they are asked to manage it with bare minimum tools, bare minimum helping hands (Zero HKS) & bare minimum financial support in terms of Temporary Advances. This is squeezing our Executives to work beyond their capacity. Though we have cluster partner policy & transmission route maintenance policies on paper, in both cases, it is our Executives who are managing the show

instead of vendors taking ownership and responsibility. It is sad to say that our vendors are just doing the job of claiming their commission/charges & partially distributing that money among the workmen they are engaging.

For years now, many Executives of Karnataka Circle are working in a single profile and now in the post-VRS scenario their work load is increasing by periodically adding more portfolios to them. **Instead of regular rotational transfer within the station, the Executives are suddenly transferred to fill a void, that too in an unfamiliar place, situation & work profile, where they don't even get a reliever for their leave requests itself let alone returning back after completion of their term.**

To overcome this situation, we had earlier suggested pursuing with Corporate Office to declare 3 SSAs of Karnataka viz. Madikeri, Bidar and Karwar as soft tenure stations. We are not sure of the progress in this matter. It is necessary to further emphasize that - without declaring some station as soft-tenure we can't overcome the problem of shortage of Executives in Karnataka Circle.

With the bulk promotions through DPC for JTO to SDE, we are seeing two trends related to the situation we have described above. One is that the SDE count assigned to Karnataka Circle is noticeably less in comparison with the neighbouring states and second is that there is a heavy rush to use the OTP facility to apply for transfer out of Karnataka. This is a reflection of the continued shortage of Executives and their pent-up distress and the feeling of being stuck in Karnataka Circle for years. Also, as per the realities on the ground which we have highlighted above, even those who may consider settling in Karnataka are not eager to do so due to the sustained work pressure which creates a huge dis-incentive to stay back.

In the light of the emerging scenario, we feel that the time is ripe for us **to declare the entire Karnataka Circle as a soft tenure state.** There is precedence in BSNL where such policy decisions were taken by BSNL CO to overcome similar staff shortage scenarios. The 2 most popular decisions are:

- a) Declaration of entire Bihar & Jharkhand Circles as soft tenure station.
- b) Declaration of A.P. Circle Office as a soft tenure station at the time of formation of A.P. Circle.

The BSNL Corporate Office has recently circulated norms for manpower strength a.k.a Restructuring and asked all stake holders to convey their views on it. The proposed manpower strength for Karnataka Circle seems to be appropriate considering that we are actually running with much below strength to what is proposed there. In other Circles, the suggested norms are closer to their current working strength. Even though there is a void here and relative surplus in other Circles, the existing options are not generating any interest among other Circle Executives to come and serve in Karnataka. **There exists a huge potential for BSNL Executives to serve in Karnataka to boost the revenues of this Circle and create a larger positive impact to the organization.**

Another related aspect is that Karnataka is home to other units who serve the pan-India network through NOCs, DCs and Circle HQs. Such units are tabulated below to give a snap-shot

of the pressure on Karnataka Circle to deploy staff to these units too.

Table 3 – Other units located in Bangalore, Karnataka

Unit	Circle	Scope
MPLS NOC	STR	All-India
OTN NOC	STR	All-India
CPAN NOC	STR	South
VSAT Hub	STP	All-India
SCR Installation	STP	All-India
MP NOC	BBNW	All-India and South
FTTH NOC	BBNW	All-India and South
P3	BBNW	All-India and South
ISC	BBNW	All-India
SSTP NOC	BBNW	All-India
WiFi NOC	BBNW	All-India
BB NMS	BBNW	All-India
RC NGN	BBNW	All-India and South
Circle HQ	QA	All India
Circle HQ	BBNW	All-India

Besides the above units, the traditional STR and STP units that serve to maintain the Core OFC network of Karnataka are also dependent on Karnataka Circle for staff. They too report a severe staff crunch post-VRS.

Karnataka Circle is fortunate to share its borders with all Southern Circles & another mighty Circle - Maharashtra. It is essential for us to attract talented but under-utilized Executives from these Circles to get posted in Karnataka for a short-period of 3 years to break their home circle & station long-standing by way of granting Soft Tenure status to Karnataka.

By getting this implemented through our BSNL CO, we will be able to overcome the problem of acute shortage of Executive staff in Karnataka Circle and also we will be able to facilitate transfer of existing Executives who opt to apply for transfer on Rule-8, Rule-9 and Inter-Circle via the recently introduced OTP.

Therefore, we request you to kindly pursue with BSNL Corporate Office to declare the entire Karnataka Circle as a soft tenure state, so that the acute shortage of Executives may be managed effectively in Karnataka.



Circle Secretary
AIGETOA KTK

Copy to:
Shri. Wasi Ahmad, General Secretary, AIGETOA CHQ