



## 2020 – A year in retrospect



While, we are stepping in to New Year 2021, with full enthusiasm and expectations to march ahead and to heal our wounds, we would like to peep into our miserable past so as to keep ourselves fully aware of by-one and to keep ourselves determined to face the challenges of future which are knocking the door of Pensioners destiny casting its black shadow trying to deter our march for better future.

In the year 2020; we have gone through very tuff and encumber some period of our lives since declaration of Lock Down1 from 20th March 2020. Never before in our memory lane, had we heard about hazardous COVID-19. In our war with other countries and worst to worst riots, we had never faced such situation.

In Gujarat in the year 1969, when Ahmedabad faced worst communal riots followed with 73 days curfew where Army was called. I had never missed a single day to attend office and ensure that the wheels of Telegraphs Services are running, but here everything was reverse and none can move even an inch from his abode as strict lockdown was imposed throughout the entire nation.

Everything came to standstill for months to gather. Even in 1974, during strike period, wheels of Railway were never halted for

such a longer period and that too cent percent through out without any exception. All Industries, big or small were closed making thousands of people job-less placing them in miserable condition forcing them to exodus to their own native with whatever the convenience available, by road, by truck, by rail, or even on feet. In absence of print-media, a source of information was only electronic media flashing dismayed picture from all directions.

Lock-down-one was followed with lock-down-two, making our condition more miserable. Our hundreds of pensioners could not get their pension timely, as they were forbidden to move from their homes and very limited arrangements were available for them to get their Pension at their doorstep. Government flashed numerous advises and warnings to citizens to restrict their movement. Publication of news was suspended for months to gather and very limited news was pouring in.

Common men earning their daily bread were forced to suffer as situation was beyond anyone's imagination. Govt. and numerous social institutions tried their best help such people, providing some relief. Worst affected were senior citizens, who are even to-day made and asked to stay in houses and not to move out. None has taken a glimpse of the mental status of the senior citizens to see that how horrifying life they living being at receiving end. We do not wish to debate on numbers of persons and percentage of how much people affected by pandemic were belonging to senior citizens group. This is brief picture of our by-gone.

Now switching over to our track, we the BSNL Pensioners had to pass through verytuff time facing numerous odds from our Corporate Office; as the mindset of the officers were not changed and not ready to follow the dictates of time. They were full of thoughts in their mind of olden days; ignoring pandemic situation; which did not permit them to mingle with need of hour and continue issue instructions multiplying agonies of BSNL Pensioners.

We tried to get maximum possible relief for BSNL Pensioners which they were facing and could solve some of them by providing them necessary guidance and sympathy. We would like to take on record that during pandemic period, our residence phone worked very satisfactorily and provided pensioners a track to maintain track with us.

Even in the time of such distress and agonies; we made all endeavour to ensure that the BSNL Pensioners are given maximum support and possible relief. We continued to work from Home, and made numerous electronic representations to various administrative heads and government to focus their attention towards our discomforts and sufferings. **We received sympathetic look from office of PMO, MOC and also from DOPW and could get some relief for our fellow pensioners. As a result of our representations, we got the following for BSNL Pensioners:**

1. The last date for renewal of Medical Identity Card extended up to 30.09.2020 in first phase and then up to end of year.
2. Submission of Option for outdoor Medical Reimbursement with/without voucher extended up to 30.09.2020.
3. The time limit for chronically disease prescription extended.
4. The time limit for submission of DLC extended up to 30.09.2020 and physical Life Certificate also permitted.
5. All VRS 2019 were given provisional pension till their pension was regularised.
6. On line Pension Adalat were conducted and still continued.

We had to suspend the publication of our Quarterly Magazine April, 2020 issue and also close our office for more than four months due to pandemic. Despite many odds, we published our magazine combined April-October, 2020 combined issue and managed posting of more than six thousand copies reverting to available resources as we can call our volunteers in office in view of serious threat of Corona-19. We are grateful to the printer for extending maximum help to

make possible publication of magazine through on-line working.

We tried to function from our C.T.O. Office but could not continue for want of hygienic conditions. The main gate which was closed during lock-down period is being kept even to-day for the reasons best know to the PGM A.T.D. Ahmedabad. Once we tried to draw their attention seeking their help to clean premises, ironically, orders were issued to close all Telecom Services in our premises and we accepted verdict as it was meaningless to represent at higher level in those critical days.

The circumstances compelled us to move fast to procure our own office from City Boundary as we cannot afford to take risk of pandemic. We were successful and from October 2, 2020 started provisional working from our new offices with limitations. We are thankful to pillar of our team who inspired us to maintain our net-work during the period and we will would like to mention names of S/Shri A.N. Patel, N.A. Patel, R.C. Sharma, R.R. Patadia, M.S. Dave and H.C. Bhatia, who stood like rock to support us.

We would like to take on our records, efforts made by the District Secretaries of Vadodara and Surat Districts who enrolled maximum numbers to our Association in Gujarat. AP & Haryana Circle also maintain its routine activities and Shri D. Chandrasekharan, VP also vigorously presented grievances of VRS-2019 in TN Circle. We also thank the Pensioners who extended their financial assistance to us for raising fund for PM CARE FUND to a tune of around 1,50,000/-.

Now, we have to move cautiously but with more speed to strengthen our Association as in democracy it is number that counts and we have to keep pace with providing our services to our members. Our burning issues are Revision of our Pension w.e.f. 01.01.2017 as per 3rd PRC, restoration of Freezed IDA, Regular Payment of our Medical Bills and ensure switching over all BSNL Pensioners to CGHS. We assure to serve your better with your cooperation.