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BHARAT PENSIONERS' SAMAJ

(All India Federation of Pensioners' Associations)
(Registered No. 2023 of 1962-63)

A SYMBOL OF PENSIONERS' UNITY
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An Apex Body Federation of Pensioners' Associations

No. BPS/BDPA(I)/P.A.Vanathi/FP/2026 **Dated 25th November, 2026**

To,
Shri Robart Ravi Jerard,
Chairman-cum-Managing Director,
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL),
Bharat Sanchar Bhawan,
New Delhi.

Subject: Request for immediate intervention to resolve the unjust denial and prolonged delay in sanction of family pension to Smt. P.A. Vanathi, divorced daughter of Late Shri P. Ayyamalai, Retired CTS, Trichy – PPO No. 602002061113006.

Respected Sir,

Bharat Pensioner Samaj (BPS), the apex organisation representing pensioners' associations, wishes to draw your kind attention to a distressing case of denial of family pension to Smt. P.A. Vanathi, divorced daughter of Late Shri P. Ayyamalai, a retired employee of BSNL, Trichy.

The case deserves your personal intervention, as the claimant has been running from one office to another for several months without any meaningful resolution, despite the availability of relevant documentary and legal records.

1. Background and sequence of events:

1. Late Shri P. Ayyamalai retired from service on 01.07.2002. His daughter, Smt. P.A. Vanathi, had obtained a divorce through proceedings initiated before the Principal Subordinate Judge, Tiruchirappalli, in HMOP No. 153/2008.
2. The matter was referred to the District Legal Services Authority, Tiruchirappalli, and was amicably settled before the Lok Adalat on 08.07.2008 in Case No. 604/2008. The settlement was recorded by the Lok Adalat through a formal award.
3. During his lifetime, on 07.06.2021, Shri P. Ayyamalai requested BSNL, Trichy, to include the name of his divorced daughter in the family details for the purpose of family pension.

4. Significantly, the Accounts Officer (Pension), BSNL, Trichy, vide letter dated 05.07.2021, acknowledged his request and informed him that his daughter could apply for family pension as and when the situation arose, subject to eligibility conditions.
5. After the demise of her father on 18.03.2025 and her mother on 09.12.2025, Smt. Vanathi submitted her claim for family pension on 24.01.2026.
6. However, instead of processing her claim, the BSNL authorities, vide letter dated 06.05.2026, rejected it on the ground that the divorce proceedings had been settled through Lok Adalat.

2. Unwarranted insistence on further ratification of the Lok Adalat Award:

1. The Circle Secretary, BDPA (INDIA), Tamil Nadu Circle, representing the claimant, has repeatedly brought to the notice of the BSNL authorities the relevant provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. However, the basic nature and legal history of the proceedings appear not to have been properly appreciated.
2. **It is important to clarify that Smt. P.A. Vanathi had not independently approached the Lok Adalat with a separate or fresh dispute.** Her matrimonial proceedings had already been instituted before the competent judicial forum, namely, the Principal Subordinate Judge, Tiruchirappalli, in HMOP No. 153/2008. The pending matter was thereafter referred through the District Legal Services Authority to the Lok Adalat for an amicable settlement, in accordance with the statutory procedure prescribed under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
3. Thus, the claimant had pursued her remedy through the regular judicial process. The matter reached the Lok Adalat by way of a statutory reference; it was not a private arrangement independently created outside the judicial system or an attempt to bypass the competent court.
4. Section 20 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, provides the statutory framework for referring appropriate pending cases to Lok Adalats for settlement. The present matter was dealt with through that process, and the settlement was formally recorded by the Lok Adalat on 08.07.2008 in Case No. 604/2008.
5. More importantly, Section 21 of the Act provides that every award of a Lok Adalat shall be deemed to be a decree of a Civil Court or, as the case may be, an order of the other court. It further declares that such an award shall be final and binding on all parties to the dispute and that no appeal shall lie against it.
6. There is also a relevant judicial pronouncement concerning the subsequent restriction on referring divorce-related matters to Lok Adalats. In Mrs. Raj Kumari v. The Presiding Judge, Lok Adalat, Samjhauta Sadan, Panchkula & Anr., L.P.A. No. 432 of 2013, decided on 18.02.2014, the Punjab and Haryana High Court considered the proviso to sub-regulation (2) of Regulation 10 of the National Legal Services Authority (Lok Adalats) Regulations, 2009, which provides that matters relating to divorce shall not be referred to Lok Adalats. The Court specifically observed that the Regulations came into force on 20.10.2009 and that the said restriction would apply only to references or proceedings initiated on or after that date. In the present case, HMOP No. 153/2008 had already been instituted before the competent judicial forum, and the matter was referred to and settled before the Lok Adalat on 08.07.2008, much before the 2009 Regulations came into force. Therefore, the subsequent restriction cannot be applied retrospectively to question the legality of the proceedings or award in this case. The factual setting in that case involved a Permanent Lok Adalat and was not identical to the present court-

referred matter; nevertheless, the Court's interpretation of the prospective application of the 2009 restriction is relevant to the present proceedings.

7. Further, the BSNL communication dated 06.05.2026 refers to Rule 54 of the CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972, and sets out the administration's interpretation of the eligibility condition relating to the institution of divorce proceedings during the lifetime of the employee/pensioner. It is important to note that HMOP No. 153/2008 was instituted during the lifetime of Late Shri P. Ayyamalai, and the matter was also settled through the Lok Adalat award dated 08.07.2008, again during his lifetime. Thus, the original matrimonial proceedings were initiated before the competent judicial forum well before the demise of the pensioner. However, the subsequent BSNL communication dated 12.08.2026 insists upon separate ratification of the Lok Adalat award by another competent court, without identifying any specific statutory provision or pension rule requiring such additional ratification. We, therefore, request that the claim be examined on its merits under the applicable pension rules, and that any ground for denying the claim or insisting upon further legal proceedings be supported by a specific provision of law and communicated through a reasoned decision.
8. We wish to make it clear that BPS is not seeking automatic sanction of family pension merely on the strength of the Lok Adalat award. The request is that the award be considered in its proper legal perspective and that the family-pension application be examined on its merits under the applicable rules. **If BSNL considers that the award is insufficient, or that any specific provision disentitles the claimant to family pension, it should clearly identify that provision and communicate a reasoned decision. The claim should not be rejected or kept pending merely because the settlement was recorded through a Lok Adalat.**

3. The CCA has clarified its position:

1. The Circle Secretary, BDPA (INDIA), Tamil Nadu Circle, also approached the Office of the Principal Controller of Communication Accounts, Chennai, seeking clarification.
2. In its communication dated 27.08.2026, the Pr. CCA, Chennai, clearly stated that the family-pension sanction was yet to be received from BSNL and that the case would be taken up for scrutiny only after the relevant claim papers and sanction were forwarded by the concerned unit.
3. Thus, the claimant is caught in an avoidable administrative impasse. BSNL is not forwarding the claim papers, while the CCA cannot examine the case until those papers are received.

The responsibility for breaking this deadlock rests with the BSNL administration of Tamilnadu Telecom Circle.

4. A case deserving sympathetic and expeditious consideration

1. It is particularly unfortunate that the deceased pensioner had approached BSNL during his lifetime in 2021 and was informed that his divorced daughter could apply when the need arose.
2. Had the administration considered the documents and clarified its position at that stage, the present hardship could have been avoided.

3. The claimant has already suffered the loss of both her parents. She is now facing financial hardship and prolonged uncertainty over a claim that deserves proper consideration under the applicable pension provisions.
4. The matter has also been brought to the notice of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes by BDPA (India), Tamil Nadu Circle, through its representation dated 18.11.2026.
5. BPS firmly believes that pension administration must be governed by fairness, transparency, consistency and compassion, particularly when the claimant is a dependent family member seeking relief under the applicable rules.

5. Our earnest request:

In view of the foregoing facts and circumstances, Bharat Pensioner Samaj requests your personal intervention and would urge BSNL Headquarters to:

1. Direct the concerned BSNL administration, Trichy, to immediately accept and process the family-pension claim of Smt. P.A. Vanathi, without insisting upon an additional ratification of the Lok Adalat award unless a specific legal provision requiring it is established.
2. Obtain an appropriate legal examination of the Lok Adalat award dated 08.07.2008, particularly in the light of Sections 20 and 21 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, giving due consideration to the fact that the matter originated as a pending judicial proceeding and was referred to the Lok Adalat through the statutory process.
3. Direct the BSNL administration, Trichy, to forward the complete family-pension claim papers, together with its recommendation and all supporting documents, to the Office of the Pr. CCA, Chennai, without further delay, enabling the competent pension sanctioning authority to examine the claim on merits.
4. Ensure that the claim is examined under the applicable DoT/BSNL family-pension rules and instructions governing divorced daughters, including the relevant conditions of eligibility, rather than rejecting it merely on account of the settlement having been recorded by a Lok Adalat.
5. If any additional document or clarification is considered necessary, the same may kindly be communicated specifically to the claimant, with a reasonable opportunity to furnish it, instead of keeping the matter pending through repeated correspondence.
6. Consider the claimant's entitlement to family pension and consequential arrears from the admissible date, in accordance with the applicable rules, after verification of the prescribed eligibility conditions.
7. Arrange for a time-bound review of the entire case at BSNL Corporate Office level and communicate a reasoned decision to the claimant as well as the Association.

6. Concluding appeal

1. Sir, this is not merely a question of interpretation of a pension rule. It concerns the livelihood and dignity of a bereaved daughter who has already lost both her parents.
2. Her late father had approached BSNL during his lifetime, disclosed the relevant family circumstances and received a written response from the department. The

subsequent denial, despite the existence of judicially recorded settlement documents, has caused avoidable hardship to the claimant.

3. Bharat Pensioner Samaj sincerely hopes that BSNL, as a public sector organisation, will demonstrate a humane and fair approach and ensure that a legitimate family-pension claim is not defeated by procedural objections unsupported by a clearly established legal requirement.

We, therefore, request your personal intervention to resolve this matter expeditiously and render justice to Smt. P.A. Vanathi.

An early and favourable response will be highly appreciated.

With regards,

Yours faithfully,



(D. D. MISTRY)
Secretary BSNL/PSU
Bharat Pensioner Samaj (BPS)

Copy for kind information and necessary intervention to:

1. Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Government of India, New Delhi.
2. Controller General of Communication Accounts, Department of Telecommunications, New Delhi.
3. Principal Controller of Communication Accounts, Tamil Nadu Circle, Chennai.
4. Chief General Manager, BSNL, Tamil Nadu Circle, Chennai.
5. National Commission for Scheduled Castes, New Delhi.
6. General Secretary, BDPA (India), Ahmedabad, for information and necessary follow-up.

Encl.: Copies of relevant correspondence, pension claim documents, original court petition, Lok Adalat settlement memo and award, and relevant provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Relevant provisions of the National Legal Services Authority (Lok Adalats) Regulations, 2009, and a copy of the judgment in Mrs. Raj Kumari v. The Presiding Judge, Lok Adalat, Samjhauta Sadan, Panchkula & Anr., L.P.A. No. 432 of 2013, dated 18.02.2014.