

TELECOM EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION OF M.T.N.L.

Notes on Revival of MTNL

Preface :

The customer base and revenue of MTNL has been declining steadily for last quite a few years. The quality of service being provided by MTNL is a big issue on both voice and data front. Both land line telephone service and broad band as well as connectivity and call drops of Mobile Telephone (Dolphin) are a matter of great concern. MTNL's market share is negligible.

A number of Expert Committees have since been constituted and their findings and suggestions are already available with DOT and MTNL.

Very recently Hon'ble Minister of Communications also has informed Parliament that Government is seriously looking at the issue of **Revival of MTNL**.

Therefore, authorities that be, are quite aware of the various factors ailing MTNL down the years. There is hardly any scope to throw light on this further. However, as our members are mostly working in the field, we, after consulting them, bring out certain very practical constraints, deficiencies and difficulties encountered in the day to day work in the field to ensure efficient service to the customers.

Land Line Telephone & Broad Band Service : Outdoor Area

1. On outdoor front, network is built mostly on u/g copper cables. Cables were laid long before. Cables were damaged by various agencies working on the roads from time to time, At present they are in a very poor shape.- almost unworkable stage.
2. Ageing and damaged cables are one of the serious hindrances that prevent from providing stable, uninterrupted and quality service for land line telephone and broad band
3. Maintenance work in this area is almost nil.. The proposal for retrieving cables is more talked about than acted upon. Shortage of spares, trained man power, vehicles and funds are the main bottleneck for efficient maintenance. It is not exaggerated to say that the situation is somewhat manage on what may be called as "jugar" basis.

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On such damaged network, even if voice communication is achieved with poor speech quality to the customers, Broad Band can not work.

4. The paucity of equipments and spares are the hindrances that new connections can not provided for Broad Band.

Land Line Telephone : Switching Equipments and other Indoor Plants :

1. Switching equipments are old and ,therefore, need frequent thorough maintenance or upgrade or replacements. But this is not being done so. Financial constrains and non-allocation of adequate funds in this area are the main hindrances.
2. The power plant including battery set have become very old in most of the important exchanges. The Diesel Alternators and A.C. Plants are outlived much before and in many cases they are declared as scrapped. It is being insisted to carry on work with these. But for this expenditures are disallowed frequently by the accounts for their own reasons for "ruling" and "guidelines" . Maintenance staff are hands-tied and almost helpless. Senior officers don't come forward to ease out constraints. In most of the cases, ageing switching equipments are running in improper environment and with inadequate maintenance.
3. There is a trend now to open more and more **SLU Exchanges (?)** depending on the density of the existing customers so as to depend on less length of u/g copper cables and by that way to reduce fault liability due cable fault. This should be supplemented by some backup provisions. The concerned officers should be provided with vehicle and manpower so that these **SLUs (?)** can be attended or visited promptly whenever faults developed. But that is missing.

Wireless - Switching & Outdoor Equipments

- 1 Some efforts are afoot to upgrade from 2G to 3G. It was long due. Now to come into competition, 4G is needed.

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- 2 More and more new BTS need to be installed. More and more existing BTS need to be reconditioned and upgraded to bridge up the grey areas of connectivity.
- 3 Vehicles and finance provisions need to be made for proper
- 4 maintenance of the BTS and power backups involved.
- 5 Existing Switching equipment's need to be upgraded and modernized to be compatible with all kinds of value added services and facilities being provided by the competitors. Cosmetic changes here and there will not do. Thorough augmentation is required.
- 6 We have received some feedback that some essential stores are available in our stock. But the same is not provided to the field staff by the officer-in charge apparently for no reason. If this feedback is correct, this needs to be addressed promptly.

OUR CONSIDERED OPINIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Apart from whatever constraints/ shortcomings mentioned herebefore, we further give our considered suggestions as follow:-

- 1) Apart from whatever constraints stated herebefore, the most important hindrances is that MTNL does not have PAN INDIA presence to provide service. This is a constraint on the sides of both MTNL and BSNL, but more on the side of MTNL. The various Expert Committees have also examined and recommended some options in this direction. This is required to be implanted.
- 2) MTNL should invest in the priority areas. If adequate investment is not made in the field that too with age old network, declining can not be arrested. **MORE AND MORE IMMEDIATE INVESTMENT IS NEEDED IN THE FIELD.**

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- 3) There is an urgent need to look at the side of available human resources – their number and effectiveness.
- 4) Every expert is tempted to say that the number of staff is more. They are eager to compare with the competitors. But they forget that MTNL is a converted PSU. Whosoever from DOT opted for MTNL, they were accommodated in MTNL. No wonder that this may not be need based, - number wise as well as qualification, skill and training basis. Without joining the “crying wolf”, MTNL should evolve a method to arrange possible practical utilization of this. For this MTNL should arrange elaborate in-service training for the existing staff.
- 5) Notwithstanding this, we must understand that average age of the existing employees is 50 years. Number of executive employees have fallen sharply due to retirement and VRS. This has become counter productive. Fresh recruitment is nil. **So young elements are not available in the field. So as to take on the challenges of technology, fresh recruitment in the JTO and equivalent cadres in the selective manner.**
- 6) The senior level management should be thoroughly revamped. Those who are dedicated and have sense of belonging to MTNL should remain. So that they identify their interest and existence with those of MTNL.
- 7) The minimum satisfaction and proper motivation should be kept in the minds of the employees. For this, their legitimates financial reliefs should be provided without asking as it is being done for those who, in the senior level, have not preferred to join MTNL's strength. **THIS IS NEEDED TO RETAIN MORALE OF THE WORK FORCE.**

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