



BSNL WILL BE BACK TO PROFIT BY FY-19 SAYS BSNL –CMD –  
SHRI.ANUPAM SRIVASTAVA

Tapping into new areas of business, collaborative competition and offering 4G services will be the focus areas for state-run telecom major BSNL in the current fiscal. BSNL chairman and managing director **Anupam Shrivastava**, in an interview with *Mansi Taneja*, talks about having least debt in the telecom industry and posting growth even in a hyper-competitive market and registering profits by the financial year 2018-19.

**The industry has witnessed high competition since the entry of a new player Reliance Jio. How well is BSNL placed to take on this competition?**

The competition in the industry was acute as it is and after the introduction of Jio, it has become even acuter. In mobile segment things are difficult but we are well placed to match every tariff offer in this industry. We offer value for money to our subscribers. We have started looking beyond mobile segment to boost our services portfolio, which will also enable us to generate an additional source of revenues.

### **What are the new areas/services that you are looking at?**

A. First, we are focusing on enterprise business this year. This segment is growing and has the potential to grow bigger. Currently, it contributes 27% to our topline of Rs 30,000 crore. We want to increase this share to 33% this fiscal. Enterprise business includes data services to corporates, leased lines, total solutions to an enterprise. We have been investing in our core network since last two years. Our capacity has increased to 200 Gbps (gigabits per second) from 10 Gbps earlier. We have also upgraded our routers.

Another new area is co-option – which is collaborative competition. We have been matching tariffs unveiled by competitors. We are actively pursuing infrastructure sharing -- passive infra towers and optical fibre, bandwidth, ICR (intra circle roaming) arrangements to efficiently utilise our spectrum. Lastly, we will be focusing on finding out new businesses which include satellite communications, which we have just launched and smart cities where we have won bids in few cities and plan to start rolling it out towards the end of this year.

### **Are you open to disinvestment or induction of a strategic player in BSNL?**

It is government's prerogative to decide on this. But, looking at BSNL financially, we are in a comfortable position. Our debt is around Rs 3,200 crore on a topline of Rs 30,000 crore, the least in the industry. If you look at MTNL, it has a debt of Rs 20,000 crore on a small topline of Rs 3,000 crore. We are able to meet our necessary expenditure on operation and maintenance, employee costs and others and not dependent on outside funding. Just that

when depreciation of assets is booked, we get negative profit, otherwise we are Ebitda (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation) positive and our topline is growing. We will be back to profits by FY18-19.

**How do you plan to expand your services in mobile space?**

We have completed phase 8 expansion plan where we have replaced old base transceiver stations (BTS). We plan to launch 4G mobile services in select circles on 2500 megahertz (MHz) where we are looking for a partner on a revenue-sharing basis and setting up of WiFi hotspots across India – already installed over 3,000 and another 25,000 would be set up in rural exchanges from USOF (universal service obligation fund). We have issued an expression of interest for rolling out 4G services on a revenue-sharing basis and will provide only bandwidth to technology service provider who will manage and operate 4G services. We have also written to the government asking for 700 MHz spectrum through equity route.