

ROLE OF FNPO ON GDS

Dear Colleagues,

Of late both NFPE and AIPEDU claim that benefits which GDS avail now are due to them only. But what is the reality? I feel that it is my duty to explain what actually happened in the past and how GDS got these benefits. Who sacrificed for GDS? But who are the gainers today? The FNPO is compelled to reveal the past history.

RIGHT FROM THE INCEPTION TO TILL DATE

Before formation of NFPTE, an all India convention was held in Madras on 6-6-1954. K.R. demanded a separate union for EDAs and also ED Enquiry Committee in order to improve the service conditions of EDAs.

On 5-9-1954, a Supreme Council was called by K.R. as Secretary-General of UPTW. In that council, he placed the re-alignment scheme which was circulated by the Govt. on 30-8-1954. The Council approved the Government's proposal.

KR Demanded separate union for EDAs along with nine unions. The then DG Sri L.C. Jain assured that the demand of K.R. would be considered at the appropriate time. Unfortunately K.R. was defeated in the Secretary-General's election.

Thereafter NFPTE did not bring pressure on the Govt. for separate union for EDAs. Why there was no pressure from NFPTE?

When NFPTE was formed, there were two unions representing class III and PM & Class IV.

The EDAs were allowed to be members of above two sections depending upon their nature of duties. This method helped the NFPTE to manipulate the voting systems **to gain the power battle**. How they indulged in manipulation is required a separate book-let to explain.

In the year 1957, the Govt. appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Sri C.V. Rajan, retired Postal officer to review and submit report on the service conditions of EDAs. Though NFPTE ignored KR, K.R. submitted separate memorandum wherein he demanded separate union for EDAs.

While KR was General Secretary, P III in the year 1960, he was arrested during the general strike launched by all Central Govt. employees. Disciplinary proceedings were initiated against KR and his pay was reduced by three stages as punishment. He rejoined duty on 19-3-1962 after a gap of 20 months.

KR formed FNPTO in 1968. The Govt. as usual recognised P III & P IV unions only. But KR refused to accept the Govt. decisions and pleaded for recognition for separate union of EDAs. At last the Govt. acceded to the request of KR and gave recognition for EDA union on 10-10-1968. Thus the recognized ED union was formed in the Postal industry for the first time under the banner of FNPTO.

At that time there was no EDA union under the banner of NFPTE.

First duty on EDA union

EDAs who took part in the one-day token strike in the year 1968 were removed from service by the Govt. At that time, there were two punishments-one was removal and the other dismissal. KR fought severely

against this discrimination and the Govt. at last relented and all the EDs were ordered re-instatement in service. This was a major achievement after formation of separate union for EDAs. (NUEDA)

Madan Kishore Committee

The Govt. appointed Pay Commission for Central Govt. employees in the year 1970. K.R. Demanded that the Pay commission should also look into EDA's problems. But the Govt. did not agree with K.R. and they appointed Madan Kishore committee for EDAs. K.R. submitted Memorandum and also tendered oral evidence before the Madan Kishore committee. The Govt. rejected all the favourable recommendations of Madan Kishore committee. Orders were issued for revising basic allowance and not pay structure.

Security of Service for EDAs

At that time there was no security of service for EDAs. Affected EDAs approached the court of Law. Favourable judgments were given by the High Court. K.R. supported one EDA who got a judgment in his favour. He rendered financial Assistance and also advised how to face the Govt. in apex court. At last the Supreme Court delivered judgment on 22-4-1977 declaring the EDAs are holders of Civil posts within the meaning of Article 311(1) and 311(2) of the constitution of India, but they are no Agents or Casual Labourers. The Supreme Court said that EDA is a holder of Civil post outside the civil service. In accordance with the Supreme court judgment, the P & T Board issued orders that an enquiry should be held as in the case of regular employees if it is proposed to dismiss/remove an EDA from service and thus security of service was assured and whimsical dismissals were averted.

Before this judgment, even an IPO can dismiss ED employees on flimsy grounds without an enquiry. Principle of natural justice was not applied to ED employees. Therefore, the first major and vital issue solved by KR and NUEDA was security of service. Another aspect of security of service was that unless warranted none should be put off duty (suspended) KR's persistent endeavours yielded results.

Rajya Sabha Petitions Committee:

Smt. Leela Damodaran M.P. presented a petition signed by Sri B.K.Samantha Ray and 33 other EDAs of Orissa Circle to Rajya Sabha on 11-5-1978 and it was accepted and referred to the Petitions Committee. NUEDA led by KR submitted a detailed Memorandum on all the problems and tendered evidence before the Committee on 13-8-1978. The report of the Committee was placed on the table of the Parliament on 11-5-1979.

The Committee recommended a Rent of Rs.10 p.m for the accommodation of the B.O at the residence of the BPM. But this proposal was rejected by the Government. However, when Sri CM.Stephen became Minister (C) and at the pursuance of KR, orders were issued to grant Rent of Rs.10 p.m. and also a special allowance of Rs.5 to other ED Class IV.

KR was pressing the Government to consider all other recommendations favourably. But, supply of umbrellas, enhancement of the rate of gratuity, employment to the dependants of ED employees who die in harness and payment of adhoc increase in wages (D.A) annually from the 1 of September of every year, were only accepted.

NUEDA under the able leadership of KR conducted many struggles. Due to the persuasion of KR, nearly 8000 BOs were upgraded as EDSOs, if a PCO is Installed in the BO, and thus there was enhancement of the Basic Allowance etc.

When 4th Pay Commission was appointed, KR urged that revision of wages and service conditions of the EDAs should also be referred to the 4th Pay Commission. The Pay Commission was agreeable and KR got a reply from the Pay Commission to that effect. But under the pressure from the P&T Board, the proposal was not accepted by the Government and the 3rd ED Enquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Sri R.R.Savoor, Retired Member (P) was appointed on 5-11-1984.

Immediately after appointment of Savoor Committee, KR demanded Interim Relief to EDAs also. The Committee granted a relief of Rs.40 to EDSPMs and to the rest Rs. 30 w.e.f 1-12-1984.

Wage structure, service conditions and trade union rights of ED employees were projected in the forum of ILO, when he attended the ILO Committee Meeting held at Geneva from 27 November to 5th December, 1984.

KR through NUEDA submitted an exhaustive memorandum to ED Enquiry Committee.

The important recommendation was on wages - prorata minus a percentage plus 16% as compensation for non grant of leave.

There were some benevolent recommendations, such as, grant of DA as and when Departmental employees are paid and cent percent neutralization, treating DA as separate segment, Increase in gratuity to 16½ times the allowance but no pension, introduction of contributory group Insurance, Increase In FSC, Increase in the rate of cycle maintenance allowance, payment of bonus on the basis of individual emoluments etc.

KR had discussions with the Postal Board on 17-10-1986, 17-11-1986 and 17-12-1986. The Board agreed not to implement the major adverse recommendations, and also agreed to fix wages on a prorata basis upto 2 hours and not beyond.

JCA was formed in March 1987 under the leadership of KR Strike notice was served on 1-5-1987. KR along with other leaders of all unions visited some circles and the response was tremendous.

Before strike commenced, settlement was reached and signed on 11-7-1987 and in TV it was shown as KR handing over settlement letter to the then D.G Sri Raghavachari.

The D.G (P) issued orders on the major recommendations on 15-7-1987. Wages were increased to all EDAs. Another important settlement was payment of DA along with the C.G. employees twice a year and increase in combined duty allowance, cycle maintenance allowance and office maintenance allowance.

As a result of further struggles jointly by FNPO and NFPE, Directorate agreed to forward to Ministry of Finance, recommendations for further increase in wages, increase in the rate of gratuity to Rs.6000, coverage of group insurance scheme, payment of subsistence allowance and grant of pension.

On the advice of KR, Sri N.G. Shirolkar, Former C/S NUEDA Karnataka Circle had filed an application on behalf of some EDAs for grant of subsistence allowance to EDAs when put off duty in 1985 in the High Court of Karnataka and won the case.

Another most outstanding achievement in 1989/90 was the payment of Bonus to the ED employees on the basis of individual emoluments.

Group Insurance scheme was also accepted and implemented. In this way, KR was able to succeed in making the ED employees on par with the Departmental employees in the case of i) security of service, ii)

D.A as and when announced, iii) Bonus payment and iv) Group Insurance Scheme, though departmentalization of ED was not possible.

KR out of his rich experience advised us instead of sticking on only to one item of Departmentalisation of ED system, it would be better to fight for departmental facilities to ED employees and get them solved one by one.

On 15-7-1991, strike notice was given, strike to be commenced from 11-8-1991. On the intervention of the Hon'ble Minister, the strike was postponed. NUEDA and FNPO under the able guidance of KR conducted several agitational programmes along with the other Federations, and also FNPO and NUEDA separately conducted Pay Strike on 31-7-1992, Dharna on 1-9-1992 and hunger strike on 13-10-1992.

Again Strike notice was issued for indefinite strike and strike took place from 7-12-1993 to 10-12-1993. It was also successful and called off on the written assurance. Due to this strike only, the Department agreed to appoint an ED Committee headed by Justice Talwar.

KR submitted Memorandum to Justice Talwar Committee. NUEDA submitted a joint Memorandum along with NFPE as a policy matter at that time under the able guidance of Late Shri T.P. Kothandaraman, the then G/S NUPE Class III and Shri R.A.P. Singh, the then G/S AIPEU Class III. KR's Memorandum was well received.

When the Govt. kept the recommendations in cold storage, JCA decided to go on strike again from 18-11-1997. It was postponed.

NUEDA individually served a strike notice, strike to be commenced from 4-12-1997. Due to the fall of the Government at the Centre, the strike was withdrawn. Then, both FNPO and NFPE conducted indefinite strike w.e.f. 8-7-1998. On the 16th the strike was called off. At every time, ED officials enblock joined the strike and wanted to continue till their legitimate demands are solved. Again the JCA wanted to go on strike for 2 days on 21-12-1998 and 22-12-1998. As the Department conceded the strike demands to some extent, strike was withdrawn on 18-12-1998.

On 17-12-1998, the Department revised the remunerations payable to various categories of EDAs. It is a step forward though not satisfactory.

Another separate union for EDAs were formed later by BPTEF and then by NFPTE in the year 1999, that too due to new recognition Rules 1997.

OUR ROLE AFTER THE YEAR 1999

Increase of TRCA

The Govt. merged 50% DA with the basic pay for Central Govt. employees. It was not extended to GDS. Sri S.S. Mahadeviah General Secretary AIPEDU undertook fast and the NFPE also subsequently supported it but there was no result. Thereafter FNPO and NFPE jointly served strike notice on 7-2-2005 demanding 50% DA merger with TRCA.

On 14-3-2005, Secretary-Generals of both the Federations met the members of Parliament at Delhi and requested them to take up our genuine issue in the Parliament by giving a call attention notice.

On 14-3-2005, Sri Ajay Makhan M.P. of congress party joined the M.Ps delegation and met the Prime Minister and demanded in favour of merger of 50% DA with TRCA. A video-conference was called by the

then communication Minister, Sri Dayanidhi Maran and assured for appointing a committee to look into the above issue. The committee was formed and the committee met twice. FNPO was represented by SG FNPO and GS, NUGDS. The committee did not accept the merger of 50% DA but recommended to give increase of 2% of TRCA. It was not accepted by both the Federations. Finally the Govt. agreed to increase 5% in TRCA.

R.S. Nataraja Murthi Committee

The Govt. appointed VI Pay Commission for Central Govt. Employees. As usual the Govt. refused to discuss GDS issue in the VI Pay Commission. Both Federations decided to go on indefinite strike in this regard from 24-7-2007. Meanwhile, the Dept. appointed Natarajamurti Committee to look into new pay structure for GDS.

Both NFPE and Sri Mahadeviah, General Secretary tendered oral evidence and memorandum before the R.S. Natarajamurthi committee.

The FNPO and NUGDS submitted joint Memorandum and also tendered oral evidence.

GDS Bonus

The Dept. reduced the bonus ceiling to GDS from Rs. 3500/- to RS. 2500/-. Both Federations opposed this. Meanwhile 90% of the recommendations of Natarajamurti committee were implemented. Whatever the recommendations which are against the GDS, FNPO and NUGDS jointly protest.

In regard to cash handling, our union filed a case against the Department.

From the fore-going it is found crystal clear that the role of FNPO in the improvement of service conditions of GDS is not lesser compared to the role of NFPE and AIPEDU.

Postal employees know very well why the NFPE and AIPEDU is now fighting each other. We do not want to interfere in their internal affairs. But we cannot remain a silent spectator when NFPE and AIPEDU attempt to hide our role in the joint struggles for GDS.

Yours Fraternally,



(D. THEAGARAJAN)
Secretary General