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Interview

RAKESH UPADHYAY

'We are bullish about landlines, mainly due to broadband'

M Rajendran

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NEW DELHI: Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL), which has been facing stiff competition from private players, has worked hard to be a strong force in the market. It has had to face many hurdles to improve finances. Rakesh K Upadhyay, chairman and managing director of BSNL is steering his 2.44 lakh employees strong work force to achieve that objective. He spoke to HT on a range of issues. Excerpts:



Targets have been fixed for all circles. Progress is being monitored and accountability is being enforced. We would also be applying carrot and stick policy for performance management.

What are the challenges that BSNL faces?

The immediate challenge before BSNL is improving its top line and bottom line, by generating additional revenue and optimising capital and operational expenditure.

What measures has BSNL taken to remain competitive?

In a competitive scenario, greater customer care, qualitative and innovative service and affordable tariff determine the market position of an operator. We are offering the most competitive tariffs to our customers. Actions to upgrade and improve our networks are on our radar. I am hopeful that with the initiatives being taken by us to improve the network, we will improve in all areas of our operation. We will also improve the customer care and people's trust in the transparent functioning of BSNL that would enable us to beat competition from the private sector.

Can you explain some of the steps you have taken?

We have identified key performance indicators to improve the physical and financial performance.

BSNL has well qualified work force. How have you utilised it?

BSNL has inherited its workforce from the Department of Telecom Services and Telecom Operations. The size of workforce has come down from 3.66 lakh in 2000-2001 to 2.44 lakh in 2013-2014. The most critical aspect of our workforce is the age profile. The average age of our human resource is about 50 years and around 75% workforce is in the age group of more than 45 years. We do need a large workforce to maintain this network. But a comparatively younger and skilled workforce would prove to be an asset for the company.

What new initiatives are you planning for BSNL in 2014?

We are bullish about landlines and launch of Next Generation Network, because land line connections that were dwindling, in last quarter have shown a remarkable upside, mainly due to broadband. In 2014 we will expand 2G and 3G GSM network to ensure customer satisfaction and revenue growth.