

- **Introduction**

With the opening of the telecom sector, the provisioning of telecom services which was hitherto within the domain of government monopoly was deregulated and paved way for the entry of private sector. Expectedly, this has promoted a competitive environment in the telecom sector. To respond to the competitive telecom environment, the then incumbent government telecom operator was corporatised as Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) with effect from 1st October, 2000. To take care of the pension concerns of the BSNL absorbed staff and officers, they were assured government pension under Rule 37-A of C.C.S. Pension Rules. To translate this assurance in to a definitive action, a focused organizational set up was formed with a nomenclature - DOT Cell. We can say that this niche organization was born out of a vortex of change.

The office of the DOT Cell, Tamil Nadu was one among the multiple DOT Cells created on 1.10.2000 in this entire change process. As mentioned before, the role of DOT cell, to start with, was pension focused. But in due course, many new important functionalities such as USO regulatory oversight- physical and financial, license fee assessment and collection, communication accounting, working as a legal arm of the DOT legal cases at the field level were added and having regards to this diversified role, the erstwhile DOT cells have been redesignated as Controller of Communication Accounts (CCA) offices. The Pr. CCA / CCA circles, have now outgrown their pension focused role and evolved further as *a critical professional interface between Department of Telecommunications (DOT) Head Quarters and its various stakeholders* at the ground level on various policy issues such as license fee management, USO Fund management, USO activities progress review etc. Within a short span of time, the CCA circles have carved out a niche for themselves by serving the different stakeholders of DOT – telecom service providers and in particular BSNL employees – and bringing them closer to DOT with their lean structure and professional working.

The office of *Pr.CCAtn* is an upgraded circle from 29.09.2008. The jurisdiction of Principal *Pr.CCAtn* covers the pension settlements of BSNL absorbed employees of four BSNL circles headed at the level of Chief General Manager.

- *Tamil Nadu Telecom Circle*
- *Chennai Telephones*
- *Southern Telecom Projects (STP)*
- *Southern Telecom Region (STR)*

Tamil Nadu Telecom Circle comprises the entire state of Tamil Nadu (except Chenglepet SSA which has henceforth been made the part of Greater Chennai) and the state of Puducherry. Chennai Telephones now covers the entire Chennai metro including the SDCAs (Short Distance Charging Areas) covered under the erstwhile Chenglepet SSA. The two BSNL functional circles – Southern Telecom Project and the Southern Telecom Region cover the four southern states. The pension settlements of the retired DOT officials also vest with this circle.

Besides pension settlements which basically relate to BSNL/DOT, this circle deals with – telecom operators, ISP operators etc for the purpose of license fee assessment and collection. As regards the USO regulatory oversight, this circle is vested with the authority over the operators in Andaman & Nicobar Circle also, besides the operators in Tamil Nadu license area (Chennai and Tamil Nadu license areas have since been merged).

• **A Brief Profile**

- *Principal Controller of Communication Accounts, Tamil Nadu Circle serves four BSNL circles for the purpose of pension settlements of retired BSNL absorbed officials/officers.*
- *Chennai Telephone District*
- *Tamil Nadu Telecom Circle*
- *Southern Telecom Region*
- *Southern Telecom Project*

This circle is also in charge of pension settlement of retired DOT officials/officers at Chennai and in Tamil Nadu (including Puducherry)

- *This circle serves about 35359 serving employees of BSNL for GPF and other loans and advances such as HBA and about 21561 pensioners of BSNL and DOT*
- *This circle serves Tamil Nadu Telecom Circle and Andaman & Nicobar Telecom Circle for the purpose of USO disbursements*
- *This circle is in charge of collecting license fee and spectrum charges from 17 licensees - both, UASL and Cellular. Besides, it deals with 13 ISP operators 3 CMRTS operators, 1 ILD and 1 NLD operator for collection of license fee*
- *Table 1 shows a profile of important licencees and Universal service Operators (USPs) currently operating in Tamil Nadu Circle.*