

The Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for employees of Government-owned telecom firms, BSNL and MTNL will take some more time as the Telecom Ministry is yet to take a final call on the same.

“It (VRS) is not going to be possible in this fiscal,” the Telecom Secretary, Mr R. Chandrasekhar, said on the sidelines of the Skoch summit on employment here on Tuesday.

“BSNL has formulated a proposal. That is something on which a view has not been taken. There is obviously a major financial obligation involved, which needs to be seen before any view is taken,” he said.

Both BSNL and MTNL had submitted a proposal approved by their boards to seek financial support from the Government for implementation of VRS. MTNL had submitted a proposal seeking 100 per cent financial support from the Government, while BSNL had sought nearly Rs 18,000 crore from the Department of Telecom.

On December 15, BSNL employees are planning a one-day countrywide strike against the VRS and other issues.

Earlier, Mr Chandrasekhar said the country needed to focus on enhancing skills, creating more jobs and equal opportunities to ensure that the demographic dividend does not turn into a ‘demographic time bomb’.

He said while scale was often achieved in the fields of information, communication and technology, the country was falling short of quality employment.

“ICT is one of the largest job creators in the country. To enhance the dormant potential of the youth, their skills need to be enhanced. Since the Government is not equipped to deal with quality issues, the private sector will have to step in”, he said.

The Member Secretary, Planning Commission, Ms Sudha Pillai, said the big problem that the country was facing was lack of reliable employment data. “Data for employment should be as frequent as inflation data,” she said.