

A STUDY ON QUALITY WORK LIFE OF EMPLOYEE

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Abstract:

The main objective of this paper is to study the quality work life of employee, which is all-inclusive notion of life and living conditions. It is the quality of the content of relationship between employees and their total working environment, with human dimension. A process through which the stakeholders in the organization, management, unions and employees-learn how to work together better. Employees should be treated in a fair and supportive manner, to open up communication channel at all levels, to offer employees opportunities to participate in decisions affecting them, and to empower them to carry through assignments. Moreover, quality of work life through employee involvement consists of a variety of systematic methods that enable employees to participate in the decisions that affect them and their relationship with the organization. The paper suggests that strengthening the employees working environment work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experience in the organization.

Key words: Employee, environment, management, communication, quality & organization.

INTRODUCTION

The **Quality of Work Life (QWL)** movement aims at integrating the socio – psychological needs of employees, the unique requirement of a particular technology, the structure and process of the organization and the existing socio-culture milieu. It seeks to create a culture of work commitment in organizations and society at large so as to ensure higher public service and greater job satisfaction of the employees. Picking up the trail left by Karl Marx’s hypothesis of labour alienation from his service researchers, theorists, consultants, practicing

managers, union stalwarts and government agencies worldwide, have been concerned with exploring ways and means to influence the quality of an individual's on the job experience. Several experiments indicate that the interest in improving the QWL is not accidental. It parallels and even reflects societal changes. The developments include, among others, the Hawthorne studies a host of subsequent research which formed basis for human relations school; the socio – technical system approach of industrial democracy.

DEFINITION OF QWL

Quality of work life refers to the level of satisfaction, motivation, involvement, and commitment individual's experience with respect to their lives at work. QWL is the degree to which individuals are able to satisfy their important personal needs (e.g., need for independence) while employed by the firm. Companies interested in enhancing employee's QWL generally try to instill in employee the feelings of security equity, pride family democracy, ownership, autonomy, responsible and flexibility.

Definition

QWL means different things to different people

The degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experience in the organization”

J.Richard and J. Loly

Quality of work life improvements are defined as any activity which takes place at every level of an organizational, which seeks greater organizational effectiveness through the enhancement of human dignity and growth.

Alderfer, C.P.

A process through which the stakeholders in the organization, management, unions and employees-learn how to work together better.

It refers to determine for themselves what actions, changes and improvements are desirable and workable, in order to achieve the twin and simultaneous goals of an improved

quality of life at work for all members of an organization and greater effectiveness for both the company and the unions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QWL

- Employment conditions (safety, healthy, physical environment)
- Equity of pay, benefit, and other rewards
- Social interaction
- Self – Esteem
- Democracy (participation in Decision making)
- Worker Satisfaction
- Income adequacy
- Voluntary participation by Employees
- Training provided to employees, managers and support staff
- Team building

i) Fair and Responsible pay

QWL is basically built around the concept of equitable pay. The employees must be paid their due share in the progress and prosperity of the firm compensation has got twin objectives, firstly, it should create favorable environment whereby the organization utilized the human capital to the maximum extent. Secondary, the Compensation should help the employees to maintain himself and his family with a standard in the society.

ii) Favorable and safe environments

According to Walton QWL is nothing but provision of a work environment absolutely free from various hazards arising out of natural and unnatural things. He further emphasizes the need for reasonable hours of work, favourable physical conditions of work, age restrictions, etc., to be followed by the organizations. In India, we have the Factories Act, 1948 which provides

the various rules and regulations of protecting the workers from the health hazards like noise, air, water pollutions at the working site.

iii) Employment Benefits

Workers have raised their expectations over the years and now feel entitled to benefits that were once considered and part of the bargaining process. They want a share in the profits of the organization in addition to medical housing and welfare facilities.

iv) Job Security

Employee's want stability of employment. They do not like to be victims of whimsical personnel policies of employers. The workplace should offer security of employment. Layoffs and retrenchment are opposed tooth and nail by all categories of employees these days.

v) Job Satisfaction

The workers are living beings. They want to work on the jobs that will utilize their talents and thus satisfy them. The management must enrich the jobs and redesign the jobs in such and manner that the workers feel satisfied.

vi) Provisions of autonomy as well as control for developing human resource

As the nature of work has become highly monotonous, today the worker becomes more mechanical towards the machines and lacks controls on them. According to Walton, when sufficient autonomy as well as controls is given to workers, who in turn will use their innate skills and abilities for developing the organization. This will lead to improvement of QWL in the organization.

vii) Scope for better career opportunities

Nowadays workers are not only concerned with their pay prospects, but also the scope for improving their technical and academic skills. Therefore, it becomes imperative on the part of management to provide facilities for improving such skills. The management should always think of utilizing the existing human resources for expansion and development of the organization.

SPECIFIC ISSUES IN QWL

Trade unions claim that they are responsible for the improvement of various facilities to workers, where as management takes credit for improved salaries, benefits and facilities. However, P/HR manager has identified specific issued in QWL besides normal wages, salaries, fringe benefits, etc., and also takes lead in providing them so as to maintain higher order QWL. Klott, Mundick and Schuster suggested 11 major QWL issues they are:

1. Pay and stability of employment

Good pay dominates most of the other factors in employees' satisfaction. Stability of employment is guaranteed to a certain extend in India. However, stability to a greater extent can be provided by enhancing the facilities for human resources development.

2. Occupation stress

Stress is a condition of strain on one's emotions, thought process and physical condition. Stress is determined by the nature of work, working conditions, working hours, pause in the work schedule, worker's abilities and nature and match with the job requirements.

Stress is caused due to irritability, depression, unstable behaviour fatigue, stuttering, trembling, psychosomatic pains, heavy smoking and drug abuse. Stress adversary affects

employee productivity. In order to minimize the stress, they should identify, prevent and tackle the problem. The organization may arrange for the treatment of the problem with the health unit of the company.

3. Organizational health programmes

Organizational health programmes aim at educating employees about health problems, means of maintaining and improving of health etc. these programmes cover drinking and smoking cessation, hypertension control, and other form of cardiovascular risk reduction, family planning etc. effective implementation of these programmes result in reduction in absenteeism, hospitalization, disability, excessive job turnover and premature death. This programme should also cover relaxation, physical exercise, diet control etc.

4. Alternative work schedules

Alternative work schedules including work at home, flexible working hours, staged hours and reduced work week, part time employment may be introduced for the convenience and comfort of the workers, as the work schedule which offers the individual the leisure time, flexible hours of work is preferred.

5. Participative management and control of work

Trade unions and workers believe that workers' participation in management and decision – making improves QWL. Workers also feel that they have control over their work, use their skills and make a real contribution to the job if they are allowed to participate in creative and decision – making process.

6. Recognition

Recognizing the employee as a human being rather than as a labourer increase the QWL. Participative management, awarding and rewarding systems, congratulating the

employees for their achievement, job enrichment, offering prestigious designation to the jobs providing well furnished and decent work places, offering membership in clubs or associations, providing vehicles, offering vacation trips are some means to recognize the employees.

7. Congenial worker - supervisor relations

Harmonious supervisor worker relations give the worker and sense of social association, belongingness, and achievement of work results etc. This in turn, leads to better QWL.

8. Grievance procedure

Workers have a sense of fair treatment when the company gives them the opportunity to ventilate their grievances and represent their case succinctly rather than settling the problems arbitrarily.

9. Adequacy of resources

Resources should match with stated objectives; otherwise, employees will not be able to attain the objectives and these results in employee dissatisfaction and lower QWL.

10. Seniority and merit in promotions

Seniority is generally taken as the basis for production in case of operating employees; merit is considered as the basis for advancement for managerial people, whereas seniority – cum – merit is preferred for promotion of administrative employees. The promotional policies and activities should be fair and just in order to ensure higher QWL.

11. Employment on permanent basis

Employment of workers on casual, temporary, probationary basis gives them a sense of insecurity. On the other hand, employment on permanent basis gives them security and leads to higher order QWL.

QWL EFFORTS

Achievement of QWL involves, conscious efforts to be pursued tirelessly by an organisation, some of them are discussed below:

The personnel department, by winning the support of key managers takes up QWL programmes like orientation, training and development, career planning, counseling, safety and health policies, compensation practices, other policies and practices, which influence the levels of satisfaction and motivation for both supervisors and employees; QWL through employee involvement consists of a variety of systematic methods that enable employees to participate in the decisions that affect them and their relationship with the organisation; quality circles; a key part of the QWL efforts which consists of small groups of employees, who stand for productivity through recognition, involvement and development; socio – technical systems, and rearrangement of the social and technical relationship on the job offers the workers an opportunity for greater QWL; co – determination is a form of industrial democracy, in which workers’ representatives are allowed to discuss and vote on key decisions that affect the workers, with company management; autonomous work group typically include collective control over the pace of work, distribution of tasks, organisation of breaks and collective participation and joint worker management participative co – operative projects, participative work design and new design plants, gain sharing, profit sharing and worker ownership or employee stock ownership.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND PERSONNEL/HRM

Quality of work life is broader than motivation though these two terms seem to be similar. All personnel related activities affect quality of work life. Some examples are:

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

Quality of life in general is the degree of satisfaction people find in their life, family, work, friendship and health. The enhancement of the quality of life will reduce the incidence of social, mental and physical pathology. The core symptoms of dysfunction in quality of life is operationally defined on freedom from discomfort, psychological boredom and stress, having satisfaction and happiness pertaining to material, physical, psychological and spiritual aspects. Hence, quality of life in macroscopic view evaluates the individual's physical and mental health and social health, too. In short it is the concept of self – esteem, self-worth and feeling of security.

'Quality Work Life' is ensured when members of an organization are able to satisfy their important personal needs through their experiences in the organization.

Successful organization support and provide facilities to their people help them to balance the scales. In this process organizations are coming up with new and innovative ideas to improve the quality and quantity of work life of every individual in the organization. Various programs like flex time, alternative work schedules, compressed work weeks, telecommuting etc, are being adopted by these organizations.

The concept QWL is not new if it is an approach to organizing work and managing people that has evolved over a long period of time. It is an alternative to the management of people through the tight measurement and control of work.

Its main contributions are:

- People will be better motivated if the work experience satisfies their social and psychological needs in addition to economic need.

- People work more effectively if they are managed in a participative way.
- Factor which satisfy people at work are essentially different from those factor which came dissatisfaction.
- Individual motivation and therefore grater efficiency can be enhanced by attention to the design of job and work organizations.
- There is a need to see an organization an a balance between at technical system (the way good and service are produced) and it rival systems (the way that people are organized, managed, trained, consulted).

Quality of Work life progammes have been designed by organization to create work situation that enhance employee motivation, satisfaction and commitment. They are the factors that may contribute to high level of organization performance. There progammes are designed to remove drudgery associated with any work situation.

There are many factors which can contribute to quality work life; they are-

1. Adequate and fair compensation, adequacy to the extent to which the income from a full – time work meets the need of the socially determined standard of living.
2. Safety and healthy working condition, including responsible hours of work end rest pauses, physical working condition that ensure safety, minimize risk of illness and occupational diseases and special measures for protection of warren and children’s.
3. Security and growth opportunities, inducing factor htce security if emplacement opportunity for advancement and self improvement.

4. Opportunity to use and develop activity, such as work autonomy, nature of supervision, use of multiple skills woken role in the total work process and his/her appreciation of the outcome of him/her own efforts and self – regulation.
5. Respect for the individuals personal rights, such as application of the principles of natural justice and equity, acceptance of the right to free speech, and right to personal privacy in respect of the worker's off the job – behaviours.
6. Work and family life, including transfer, schedule of hours of work, travel equipments, overtime requirements and so forth.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN QWL

The enterprises is a made or unmade by the quality and behaviour of its people the ability of human resources face up the challenges and use its vast potential to deliver required results. Empirical evidence about the Bolivar experiment suggests that QWL programmes can lead to improved productivity. In order to improve the QWL, the following strategies may be followed.

1. Self Managed Work Teams

These are also called autonomous work groups or integrated work teams. These work teams are formed with 10 to 20 employees who plan, co-ordinate and control the activities of the team, with the help of a team leader, who is one among them. Each team performs all activities including selecting their people. Each team has authority to make decision and regulate the activities. Group as a whole, is accountable for the success or failure. Salaries are fixed both on the basis of individual and group achievement.

2. Job Enrichment

It attempts to provide a person with exciting, interesting, simulating and challenging work. In other words, it improves the quality of the jobs. This motivates the employees with higher level needs.

3. Effective leadership and supervisory behaviors

For effective leadership and supervisory behaviour '9-9' style of managerial grid is suitable.

4. Career Development

Provision for career planning, communicating, and counseling and employees about the career opportunities, career path, education and development and for second careers should be made.

5. Opportunity for growth

Opportunity for growth is important for achievement-oriented employees. If the employees are provided opportunities for their advancement and growth and to develop their personality, they will feel highly motivate. Their commitment to the organization will also increase.

6. Flexibility in work Schedules

Employees demand more freedom at the workplace, especially in scheduling their work. Among the alternatives work schedules capable of enhancing the quality of working life for some employees are:

a) Flexitime	:	A system of flexible working hours
b) Staggered hours	:	Different groups of employees begin and end work at different intervals.
c) Compressed work -Week	:	It involves more hours of work per day for fewer days per week.e.g., five days a week.

7. Job Security

This tops the employee's list of priorities. It should be adequately taken care of.

8. Administrative or Organisational justice

The principles of justice fair and equity should be take care of in disciplinary procedure grievance procedures, promotions, transfers, demotion, work assignment, leave etc.

9. Employee's participation

People in organisation have a need for participation in matters affecting their lives. So they want participation in the decision-making process. Employee's participation in the form of suggestion system, management by objectives (MBO), quality circle etc. provides psychological satisfaction to the employees.

Suggestion System

Suggestion system satisfies psychological needs of the employees. Many organizations which have introduced some suggestion system make use of cash awards for useful suggestions. They sometimes publish the worker's name with his photograph in the magazine. This motivates the employees to be in search for something which may be of great use to the organization.

Conclusion

Employee motivation, satisfaction and commitment with an individual and therefore greater efficiency can be enhanced by attention to the design of job and work organizations. It is the quality of the content of relationship between employees and their total working

environment, with human dimension. In the organization, management, unions and employees learn how to work together better. Employees should be treated in a fair and supportive manner, to open up communication channel at all levels, to offer employees opportunities to participate in decisions affecting them, and to empower them to carry through assignments. Moreover, quality of work life through employee involvement consists of a variety of systematic methods that enable employees to participate in the decisions that affect them and their relationship with the organization. The paper suggests that strengthening the employees are provided opportunities for their advancement and growth and to develop their personality, they will feel highly motivate.

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