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SIGNIFICANCE OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE – A STUDY

K. KAVITHA

M.Com, PGD MISCA, B.Ed., UGCNET, APSET

Head Department of Commerce

TSWRAFPDCW, Bhongir, Telangana, India

Introduction

Quality of work life can be defined as the environment at the work place provided to the people on the job. QWL programs is the best dimension in which employers has the responsibility to provide congenial environment i.e excellent working conditions where people can perform excellent work also their health as well as economic growth of the organization is also met. The quality of personal life is always reflected in professional life and vice versa. Now a day to retain the employees in the organization providing healthy QWL is the key factor. In earlier times QWL means only job enrichment. In addition to improving the work system, QWL programs usually emphasize on development of employee skills, the reduction of occupational stress and the development of more co-operative labor-management relations. Dissatisfaction with working life affects the workers some time or another, regardless of position or status. The frustration, boredom and anger common to employees can be costly to both individuals and organisations. Managers seek to reduce job dissatisfaction at all organizational levels, including their own. This is a complex problem, however, because it is difficult to isolate and identify the attributes which affect the quality of working life. Profitability of a company is linked to satisfaction of its work force. A company that does not measure and improve employee satisfaction may face increasing turnover, declining productivity and limited ability to attract and retain qualified replacements. Employee satisfaction and quality of work life directly affect company's ability to serve its customers. Efforts towards QWL measurement help in efficient and effective allocation of resources to enhance productivity and stability of the workforce.

The components of Quality of Work Life may vary from organization to organization, individual to individual but some of the basic components are

- ✓ Free communications – open communication in the organization with the co-workers is the vital factor that ensures good quality of work life. It leads to more of informal communication between co-workers and subordinates during the rest hours of the organization.
- ✓ Reward system – reward is related to monetary or non monetary rewards eg- incentives, movie tickets, family health insurance, sponsoring the education of children etc.any kind of reward given to the employee promotes good quality of work life.
- ✓ Employee job security - job security is the one vital element to get maximum productivity from the employee, the employee should feel secured regarding the job.
- ✓ Career growth – the organization should provide career growth to the employee i.e promotion, authority with responsibility ,hike in the salary to retain the talented employee.
- ✓ Workers participation in decision making of the organization – employees should be encouraged to take participate actively in the decision making body of the organization so that should feel that we are also of some value to the employers. They will be more loyal, committed towards the organization.
- ✓ Opportunities- organizations should provide some basic opportunities to their employees eg. Research, training sessions based on increase of skills and knowledge. These kinds of organizations are required than the vice versa.
- ✓ Stress level – stress level should not be in proportion to the work life. Higher the stress level poor is the quality of work life, lower is the stress level higher is the quality of work life.

Evolution of Quality of Work Life

The Quality of Work Life refers to all the *organizational* inputs that aim at the employees' satisfaction and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Walton R.E. (1973) attributed the evolution of Quality of Work Life to various phases in history. Legislation enacted in early 20th century to protect employees from risks inherent in job and to eliminate hazardous working conditions, followed by the unionization movement in the 1930s and 1940s were the initial steps. Emphasis was on 'job security, due process at the work place and economic gains for the worker'. The 1950s and the 1960s saw the development of different theories by psychologists proposing a positive relationship between morale and productivity, and the possibility that improved human relations that would lead to enhancement of productivity. Attempts at reforms to acquire equal employment opportunity and job enrichment schemes also were introduced. During 1970's, the

idea of QWL was evolved, according to Walton, as a broader concept than the earlier developments, and something that includes the values, human needs and aspirations. An international conference was held at Arden House, New York in 1972. It dealt in detail with the practice and theory of democratization of work place. In this conference the term “Quality of Working Life’ was introduced, and the International Council for Quality of Working Life (ICQWL) was formed to facilitate research on and action for Quality of Working Life. During 1972 to 1980 the concern for QWL gained momentum, and assumed the proportion of a movement. Some of the members of ICQWL wanted to hold another International Conference, during the 1980s. In Canada, QWL researches were gaining attention; and a weekend meeting was organized in Toronto in 1980 to discuss ICQWL’s proposal. The first open International Conference was organized in Toronto in August 1981 on Quality of Work Life. A large number of managers, union representatives and academicians, attended the conference. Jenkins (1981) observed that the Toronto conference demonstrated that the Quality of Working Life is becoming an important issue of the ongoing organizational reality to enhance the Quality of Work Life of employees.

In recent years there has been increasing concern for QWL due to the following factors:

- Increase in education level and consequently job aspirations of employees;
- Association of workers;
- Significance of human resource management;
- Widespread industrial unrest;
- Growing of knowledge in human behavior, etc.

Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To study importance of quality of work life
- ✓ To study the impact of quality of work life on the organisation

Review of Literature

- Nadler, D. A. and Lawler, E.E. (1983) defined QWL as an individual’s perception of and attitudes towards, his or her work and the total working environment. In simple words, QWL can be defined as an individual’s evaluative reactions to satisfaction with his/her work and the total working environment.
- Beukema, L. Groningen *et al.* (1987) expressed that QWL is defined as the degree to which employees are able to shape their jobs actively, in accordance with their options, interests and

needs. It is the degree of power an organization gives to its employees to design their work.

- Havlovic, S.J. Scobel, D.N *et al.* (1991) expressed that the QWL include job security, better reward systems, higher pay, opportunity for growth, and participative groups among others.
- Knox, S. and J.A Irving (1997) stated that the QWL practices and policies of the QWL determine the organization environment, and organization development and interventions operationalise the constructs. Individual employee's perceptions concerning strengths and weaknesses in the total work environment and what is or is not desirable in the workplace are other foci for research.
- Gilgeous, (1998) says that the Quality of life could be defined as an individual's satisfaction with his or her life dimensions comparing with his or her ideal life. Evaluation of the quality of life depends on individual's value system and on the cultural environment where he lives.
- Hagerty, M. R., *et al.* (2001) state that the QWL implies the quality of a person's whole life, not just a separate component. Hanna Sutela (2006) opines that the Quality of work life is evaluation about four categories, namely, physical work environment, psychic and social factors in the work environment, health and stress symptoms, labour market position, and family background variables.

Importance of Quality of Work Life:

Many companies find that paying attention to the needs of employees can benefit the company in terms of productivity, employee loyalty and company reputation.

- ✓ Enhance stakeholder relations and credibility:
- ✓ Increase productivity
- ✓ Attraction and retention
- ✓ Reduces absenteeism
- ✓ Improve the quality of working lives
- ✓ Matches people who would not otherwise work with jobs:
- ✓ Benefiting families and communities:
- ✓ Job involvement
- ✓ Job satisfaction
- ✓ Company reputation

Advantages of Good Work-life Quality:

- Decrease absenteeism and increase turnover,
- Less number of accidents,
- Improved labour relations,
- Employee personification,
- Positive employee attitudes toward their work and the company,
- Increased productivity and intrinsic motivation,
- Enhanced organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage, and
- Employees gain a high sense of control over their work.

Problems in Improving the QWL:

Though every organisation attempts to improve the employer-employee relations and through it, the quality of work life of employees, problems may occur in effective implementation of QWL programmes. These problems may occur because of:

- Poor reward and recognition:
- Dead-end jobs:
- Managing by intimidation:
- Negative working environment:
- No job security:
- Negative attitude:

Organizational Commitment

- an identification with the goals and values of the organization;
- a desire to belong to the organization; and
- a willingness to display effort on behalf of the organization.

Employee compensation

Employee compensation systems are most frequently considered as one of the key factors influencing employee satisfaction. Prior researches have shown that employee compensation has a positive influence on employee job satisfaction.

Salary, Wages and Conditions of Service

To use salaries as a motivator effectively, personnel managers must consider four major components of a salary structures. These are the job rate, which relates to the importance the organization attaches to each job; payment, which encourages workers or groups by rewarding them according to their performance; personal or special allowances, associated with factors such as scarcity of particular skills or certain categories of information professionals or librarians, or with long service; and fringe benefits such as holidays with pay, pensions, and so on. It is also important to ensure that the prevailing pay in other library or information establishments is taken into consideration in determining the pay structure of their organization.

Reward System

Reward is something that an organization gives to the employee in response to their contribution or performance so that the employees become motivated for future positive behavior. The term 'reward' is something which is desired by the employees, it can be cash reward like bonus or recognition such as naming a Best Employee of the Month or Best Performer of the Month and free trips. It is very important that the rewards have a lasting impression on the employee and it will continue to substantiate the employee's perception that they are valued. An organization's reward system can affect the performance of the employees and their desire to remain employed in the same organization. Rewards are very important for job satisfaction because it fulfills the basic needs as well as it helps to attain the higher level of goals. Earnings is the way by which worker get to know that how much they are gaining by dedicating their time, effort and skills in a job. Today a major concern in business is flexibility at work. The one thing becomes very clear that money is not ultimate. Employees are willing to trade a certain amount of money for reduced work hours in their schedules. It is argued by the researchers that reduced work hour options should have the potential of win-win situation for both individuals and organizations. Distress and fatigue from excessive time on job can lead to decline in performances of the employee and also it affects the safety level. A large amount of time at work is not a good predictor of productivity and it is observed that periods of time away from work can be extremely beneficial to the quality of person's work. It is more cost-effective and productive for management to design the work arrangements to fit the human than to force the human to fit into the system. Thus practices like learning organization, Career planning & Development, Work Environment, Reward system, Team Spirit, Quality of Work Life etc. will improve retention.

Measures to Improve the Quality of Work Life are:

- Flexibility on job – flexibility on job means flexible working hours, no fixed working hours, different time intervals etc. By this flexibility in the job can be introduced.
- Job enrichment – job enrichment focuses on designing the job in such a way that becomes more interesting and challenging so that it satisfies the higher level needs.
- Secured job –security of job should be provided to the employee to make him feel committed and loyal to the organization
- Grievance handling - the disciplinary procedure, grievance procedures, promotions, and transfer matters should be handled with of justice, fair and equity
- Participative Management - Employees should be allowed to participate in management participative schemes which may be of several types. The most sophisticated among them is quality circle.

CONCLUSION

Quality of Working Life is not a concept, that deals with one area but it has been observed as incorporating a hierarchy of concepts that not only include work-based factors such as job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and relationships with work colleagues, but also factors that broadly focuses on life satisfaction and general feelings of well-being. To retain a good talent in the organization it is important for the organization that he should have low stress level and high quality of work life.

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