

The Relation between Sound Industrial Relations and Quality of Work Life: a study with reference to India

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Abstract

Quality of work-life or QWL can be defined as the total quality of an employee's work-life at an organization. When the quality of work-life is stable, productivity is bound to increase. So does the level of employee retention.

The objective of this study is to establish the fact that in an atmosphere of sound Industrial Relations Workers may find improvement in quality of work life. I.e. For quality improvement of quality of work life, good and sound industrial Relations is the sine qua-non.

Keywords: Quality of work life, Job satisfaction, Organization Productivity, Career, Organization culture.

1. Introduction

According to Campbell (1981), the satisfaction people experience in the domains - self, standard of living, family life, marriage, friends and work which result to have the greatest influence in accounting for the level of satisfaction people feel with their lives in general. Goodale, Hall, Burke and Joyner (1975) conducted interviews in which they asked the public how they would define the word "quality of life". The most common mentioned components defining quality of life were psychological well-being, the work environment, realizing or working towards one's aim in life and the social environment provided by the people at work place. It is safe to conclude that the work environment is not only one of the most important domains in people's lives, but also contains many of the components of quality of life. Therefore, this area plays an important part in the individual's general quality of life and sense of well-being. Various segments of our lives are tied to the actions of organizations. Indeed, most of the adults organize their lives around work. Most individuals spend a good deal of their hours in work place or job activities; it prescribes how their days are spent and places certain restrictions on them; it determines their living standards and affects their friendship and relationship patterns. Work goes beyond just influencing behaviour, however. It plays an important role in the adult's sense of self. Work can represent a number of stressors, but it can also provide satisfaction. Successfully managing or lacking the ability and resources to manage work stressors

affects the self-regard and impacts on health. When meeting a person, one of the first questions that come to mind is —What do you do for a living?¶ To a large extent, people define themselves and others in terms of their work (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Thus quality of work life in organisations is a major element of quality of life in general (Lawler, Nadler & Cammann, 1980). An individual's work experience can have positive effects or negative effects on other round of his or her life. The more direct relevance of work to the total life space is perhaps best expressed by Walton (1975) by the concept of balance. A balanced approach to work should incorporate work schedules, career demands and travel requirements which do not infringe on leisure and family time on a regular basis. Even advancement in the work place should not require repeated geographical moves. The common nature of work and family-life balance is debatable as far as cause-and-effect or symptoms are concerned. Sometimes, the hiring organization imposes demands that seriously affect the employee's ability to perform other life roles, such as with personal life (spouse or parent). In other cases, however, work demands are used as an excuse to escape the responsibilities and anxieties of family roles (Walton, 1975). It is, therefore, not always certain which is a cause and which is a sign.

Theoretical Perspectives:

Quality of work-life or QWL can be defined as the total quality of an employee's work-life at an organization. When the quality of work-life is stable, productivity is bound to increase. So does the level of employee retention.

The term first came to limelight in 1970 in research journals and press in USA only. Organizations, in the past, stressed more attention on advancement of Technology for higher productivity suppressing the needs and mental condition of its employees. Those it was felt that societal support should go hand in hand with technical innovations. Quality of work life denotes all the organizational inputs which aim at the employee's satisfaction and increasing organizational effectiveness. It also refers to favorableness or unforourableness of the job environment for people.

Till-now, no generally acceptable definition of the term has been established. Quality of work life means different things to different people.

Literature Review:

QWL has steadily growing importance over a period in which the industrialized nations have increasingly come to question about role and status of human beings in the modern technological environment. In recent year's concern with the nature of work, its impact upon people, and their attitudes towards it, has sharpened. (Newton, Leckie, & Pettman, 1979). The psychological wellbeing of office workers depends on the physical office environment. Worker assessments of the physical environment are distinct from their assessments of general working conditions, such as work load, decision making latitude and relationships with other people at work. There are many organizational factors like job insecurity, shift work, long work hours, role conflict, physical hazard exposures, interpersonal conflicts with co-workers or supervisors etc. contributing to increased stress levels. These stressors are related to depression, anxiety, general mental distress symptoms, heart disease, ulcer and chronic pain (Sabadra, 2009). In addition to this other adverse environmental conditions, especially

poor air quality, noise, ergonomic conditions, and lack of privacy, may affect worker satisfaction and mental health. It supports to the position that, the stress people experience at work may be due to a combination of factors, including the physical conditions under which they labour (Klitzman & Stellman, 1989) The combination of a fluctuating work environment with competing job and family commitments has negatively affect employees in the form of lowered morale and motivation, reduced productivity, and increased burnout and turnover. Moreover the inability of employee to balance the equally challenging demands of their work and personal life has contributed to the escalating stress and conflict of today's workforce (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Thus signifying that employees' QWL experiences are limited not only to them but is a matter of concern for the employers as well the only thing that will maintain today's source of competitive advantage is high quality personnel instead of merely capital, technology or long-lived products Caudron (1994). In fact, employees are the soft assets and are the hidden value of a company (Abdeen, 2002). Based upon an understanding of employees' various needs and their QWL experiences, management can identify the strategic gap (if any) in the organization and can take further necessary actions to improve the QWL of employees. This may be helpful for an organization to be successful and to achieve organizational objectives since employees' QWL experiences are directly related with a variety of desirable organizational outcomes, such as reduced rate of absenteeism, turnover, tardiness frequency and health care utilization (thus, reduced health care costs), and increased job performance (Warr 2005, Wright and Bonett 2007, Wright and Croppanzano 2004).

Muftah (2011) mentioned that QWL (QWL) was one of the key areas of human resource management that is attracting attention and research focus. It was a philosophy that considers people as the most important recourses in the organization and views them as an "asset" to the organization rather than as "costs". Hence, if organizations are concerned about developing their human resources and gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace, it seems necessary that they attend to one of their most precious assets, namely, their human resources by employing highquality working-life experiences in consonance their various needs eliciting favourable job-related responses in return (Chandranshu Sinha, 2012). Ahmad (2013) stated that the core pillar of QWL was to create a work environment that employee can work cooperatively with each other in order to achieve to organization objectives. K. M. Nalwade and S. R. Nikam observed QWL in academic institutions in their paper Quality of Work Life in Academic: A Review of Literature that QWL is fundamental as it is significant not only to determine employee satisfaction but also promote organization health. The teacher's quality of work life could forecast with the principal's leadership behavior. Attempt has also been made to find out determinant of QWL which signifies present job, working conditions and work culture are highly influencing QWL. Three dimensions of personality extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are positively correlated with QWL. Narehan Hassan et al. (2014) found that quality of work life (QWL) programs influence quality of life (QOL) of employees in organization. The most influence factor on quality of life (QWL) were work environment followed by job facets. Others were emotional wellbeing, personal development, social inclusion and interpersonal relations. In Indian scenario despite of legal provisions made by acts like those of the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 which promulgates equal payment for equal work, regardless of gender and prohibits gender discrimination in hiring practices etc. women always carry more responsibilities at home than men and also struggling

to achieve Work-Life Balance (WLB). (Jyoti J. Nigade and Sarang S. Bhola, 2014)

Criteria of QWL:

Rechard E. Walton explains QWL in terms of Eight broad conditions of employment that is required for quality of work life. These are –

- i. Adequate and Fair – compensation.
- ii. Safe and Healthy working conditions.
- iii. Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capabilities.
- iv. Future opportunity for. Contrived growth and security.
- v. Social integration in Work-Environment.
- vi. Constitutionalism or “the rule of Law” in the work organization.
- vii. Work and the total life-space.
- viii. The social relevance of work life.

It is crystal clear that all the Eight conditions above are the ingredients of good industrial relations system. So theoretically item be safely concluded that for improvement of quality of work life a good industrial relations system should exist.

Objectives of Quality of Work Life:

- To increase in individual productivity, accountability and commitment.
- For better teamwork and communication.
- For improving the morale of employees.
- To reduce organizational stress.
- To improve relationships both on and off the job.
- To improve the safety working conditions.
- To provide adequate Human Resource Development Programs.
- To improve employee satisfaction.
- To strengthen workplace learning.
- To better manage on-going change and transition.

Importance of Quality of Work Life:

Improved Quality of Work Life was not considered as important factor in India until recently as there were important impending factors like resource deficiency, environmental threats and some services of financial problems. Quality of Work Life program has become important in work place for the following reasons:

1. Increase demands at work
2. Loss of long term employee guarantees
3. The need for enhanced work place skills
4. Greater competition for talent
5. Increased women in work force Good quality of Work Life leads to an atmosphere of good impersonal relations and highly motivated employees who strive for their development.

Though monetary benefits still occupy the first place in the cost of elements like physical working conditions, job restructuring and job re-designing, career development, promotional opportunities etc. are gaining importance rapidly. As such, workers expect the management to improve all these facilities which thereby improve Quality of Work life. If provided with good Quality of Work Life, employees concentrate more on both individual as well as group development which in turn leads to overall development. According to Walton (1975) proposed eight conceptual categories. They are as follows: o Adequate and fair compensation o Safe and healthy working conditions o Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities o Opportunity for continued growth and security o Social integration in the work organization o Constitutionalization in the work organization o Work and the total life span o The social relevance of work life Successful organization is turning through the introduction of Quality of Work Life strategy to the people who work in them to maintain competitive advantage. The benefits to both management and workers include: 1. Improved organization performance through the development of people. 2. Increased co-operation and team work within and across all the levels of the organization including movement towards management or trade union partnership. 3. Increased environment in doing a good job. 4. Improved quality performance. 5. Increased commitment to the values and goals of the organization. 6. The anchoring of the development of a quality organization

ANALYSIS OF DATA THROUGH STATICIAL TECHNIQUES:

Now let us consider the following figures of a small at an Engineering Industry of West Bengal:

Educational standard of Employees	Employees view of How far it is justified to prevail to sound Industrial relations		Total
	Justified	unjustified	
Highly literate	50	12	62
Literate	9	21	30
Total	59	33	92

From the above figure of the Engineering Industry it can be concluded that Most of the Highly literate Employees are of the view that - Prevailing sound Industrial Relations system is necessary for improvement of quality of work life. Where as Most of the literate Employees are of the view that it is not justified to prevail a good industrial relations system for improvement of quality of work life. Now let us form the following

Table :

Educational standard	View of Employees		Total
	Justified	Unjustified	
Highly literate	50 (40)	12 (22)	62
Literate	9 (19)	21 (11)	30
Total	59	33	92

Now let us determine the expected frequencies which are calculated as follows :

A) $59 \times \frac{62}{92} = (40)$

B) $33 \times \frac{62}{92} = (22)$

C) $59 \times \frac{30}{92} = (19)$

D) $33 \times \frac{30}{92} = (11)$

This are written in brackets

Null-Hypothesis:

We start from Null-Hypothesis that prevailing good industrial relations system is not justified for improvement of quality of work life.

Alternative Hypothesis:

Prevailing a good industrial relations system is justified for improvement of quality of work life.

Here degree of freedom

$$= (2 - 1) \times (2 - 1) = \text{i.e. } 1$$

We consider the case at 5% level of significance.

Now the chi-square Distribute value of $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$

Calculation Table:

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
50	40	10	100	2.500
12	22	-10	100	4.545
9	19	-10	100	5.263
21	11	10	100	9.091

$$\sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} = 21.399$$

Thus the calculated value (21.399) is more than. The critical value of χ^2 for 1 degree of freedom at 5% level of significance i.e. (3.84).

Conclusion of analysis:

So the null hypothesis is rejected and statistically it is proved that prevailing a good industrial relations system is justified for improvement of quality of work life. So it can be safely concluded that there exists a close relation between sound industrial relations and quality of work life. (QWL)

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