

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE USING SOFT APPROACH FOR HARD RESULTS

*** Dr. V M Chavan**

**** Mr. S C Patil**

ABSTRACT

Though job creation is a very important issue in our country, the issue of improving Quality of Work Life, for those already employed, is equally important. Social concern for job creation is an important objective both for an enterprise and an individual. It can be fulfilled by improving one's own situation by creating happiness at work. Increasing dissatisfaction among workers against jobs that are tedious, monotonous, and with apparent lack of responsibility are the evident strains of fast changing technology on individuals and society, and a realization that providing of people's control over jobs is a part of social responsibility that has important linkage with improving Quality of Work Life in India.

The liberalization of the economy, however, has brought this neglected sector into sharper focus. Smaller organizations are now increasingly recognized as being the cutting edge of development, and also owing to the changing perspective, development is expected to be realized through people's participation. This growing interest in new forms of work organisation has been accompanied by an explosion of the area of "Quality of work life" which is the focal theme of the present work.

Key Words: Quality of Work Life, Small Scale Industry, Productivity, Improve Performance, Reduce costs, and Enhance Profitability.

INTRODUCTION

Human behaviour is the concern of everyone. Parents are unhappy about the behaviour of their children, teachers complain about the lack of interest among students and the employers experience bitter behaviour about the lack of commitment from their employees. When highly paid employees of an organisation go on strike or indulge in some other form of protest, the typical reaction of the management is that of shock and dismay. The assumption here is that when an employee is well paid for his time and labour, he is supposed to be motivated to carry out the responsibilities entrusted on him, and he should be happy with his job.

It seems that all of a sudden the traditional methods of motivation of human beings, even within established institutions, have become ineffective. Technological advancement can be taken as a key factor in this struggle. Although advanced technology centres around higher productivity, it still has negative impact on the workplace environment. Workers see their jobs disappearing or becoming dehumanised. Societal support must go hand in hand with technical innovations. The new forms of work organisation, therefore, must represent an optimum balance between the technical demands of the job and social needs of the people performing the job.

* Director Bharati Vidyapeeth's, Institute of Management, Kolhapur. Email : dr_v_m_chavan@yahoo.co.in

** Asst. Professor, K L E Society's, I M S R, Vidyanagar, Hubli, Karnataka. Email : patilsc2809@gmail.com

This growing interest in new forms of work organisation has been accompanied by an explosion of the area of "Quality of work life" which shall be the focal theme of the present work with the following

objective.

1. To study the impact of Quality of work life on various departments (Dispatching, Production, Sales and Marketing, Administration, Stores, Painting, and Security).
2. To study the impact of Quality of Work Life across the different levels of employment (Eg: Executive, Supervisor, Skilled Workers, Semi-skilled Workers, and Un- skilled Workers).
3. To suggest suitable policy decision, for building effective Quality of Work Life in small-scale industries.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The Study was confined to Karnataka Conveyors & Systems Pvt. Ltd, one of the leading small scale industries in Hubli City. The industry was considered for the reasons, where minimum of above 20 and less the 100 workers presently working continuously throughout the year, the unit was making profits since last five years, and agreement to go for a change if found deficiencies. For the present study the Quality of Work Life term is restricted to industrial organisation. A higher score on 'Quality of Work Life' scale indicates "better Quality of Work Life". The "working life concept" consists of many factors, each of which plays its role in evaluating working life. For the present investigation, eight major conceptual areas of 'Quality of Work Life' had adapted from Walton's work (1974). The eight factors in reference to present investigation are Adequate Income and Fair Compensation, Safe and Healthy Working Conditions, Opportunity to Develop Human Capacity, Opportunity for Continued Growth and Security, Social Integration in Work Organisation, Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation, Work and Total Life Space and Social Relevance of Working Life had be focused in the study.

Taking the same contention into consideration, a case study method is used to collect diagnostic data for Quality of Work Life measure. It was desirable to collect the information from the majority of the employees form the organisation. For collecting the responses on 'Quality of Work Life' measures, respondents were contacted individually to help them to understand the items of measures as sample population includes white and blue-collar workers and some of whom had language difficulty. The responses were obtained for the measure from five levels, (Executive, supervisor, skilled worker, semi-skilled worker and un-skilled worker) across seven departments.

Statistical Tools Used

(i) Micro-level Analysis

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on all factors of Quality of Work Life and total Quality of Work Life for all five levels of Dispatching, Sales and Marketing, Production, Administration, Store, Security , and Painting departments

(ii) Macro-level Analysis

Mean and Standard Deviation across on all factors of QWL and total QWL for all five levels (combined departments) of the organizations.

Development of the Scale

The preliminary schedule of the scale consisted of 128 statements (standard books and relevant literature were consulted) with 80 items as 'true' keyed and the remaining 48 items were false keyed. Statements of the questionnaire are generally direct to keep, ambiguity at lower levels avoiding paradoxical meaning. After a careful screening only 52 items in which 35 items are true keyed and 17 items are false keyed were retained and rest were dropped.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Factor 1: Adequate Income and Fair Compensation

1. Executive group of sales and marketing, and administration departments, and supervisors of administration has obtained highest scores for the factor Adequate Income and Fair Compensation.
 - a. This indicates that at a higher level of hierarchy the personnel are more comfortable with the economic factor of working life than the workers level.
 - b. The reason being competent executive and supervisors are not easily replaceable and to train them at those levels is fairly expensive.
2. Skilled workers of dispatching department had obtained the lowest score for factor Adequate Income and Fair Compensation.
 - a. The reason being, semi-skilled and un-skilled class of workers, supply is always pretty much higher than demand. This factor itself indicates that they cannot bargain, hence, get relatively low salary in the organisation. They were not found to be satisfied with their salary, as it becomes difficult for them to lead their social life in a decent and respectable manner.

Table 1.1 Mean Scores of all levels across the department for Total of QWL

Department	Levels									
	Executive		Supervisors		Skilled Workers		Semi-Skilled Workers		Un-Skilled Workers	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Dispatching			38.3 N=1	6.05	36.5 N=1	5.06	41.5 N=2	4.53	39.3 N=4	3.84
Production	43.9 N=1	4.75	45.7 N=2	3.33	46.7 N=3	2.91	44.8 N=8	4.11	44.0 N=2	4.00
Sales & Marketing	41.0 N=1	2.45	44.7 N=2	3.29						
Administration	50.3 N=1	1.33	49.6 N=1	1.58	45.6 N=2	3.98				
Stores					38.1 N=1	2.16	42.5 N=1	3.77		
Painting					40.8 N=3	1.51			36.9 N=5	4.21
Security							35.8 N=1	4.10	37.5 N=1	10.21

Factor 2: Safe and Healthy Working Conditions

1. Results showed that un-skilled workers of painting department and skilled workers of dispatching department were found particularly low perception on the factor Safe and Healthy Working Conditions.
 - a. Dispatching men very provided little and cramped space for performing their duty. It affected their alertness, the space was not only inadequate but also hardly fit for comfortable and normal movement.
 - b. As the present study was involved with small-scale units they don't have equipments to load on to trucks (material handling equipments) the un-skilled workers had all the risk to load the components on to the trucks, plenty of times they had the risk of injury while loading.
2. Regarding Painters, management never thought of providing them any working space in the industry. They go with the slogan-"work where you find place." It has been observed that they were working in the passage disturbed by people of the industries who often pass through that route.
 - a. They have to face people's remarks at their painting, at times most discouraging.
3. Thus, we may conclude that improper working conditions and lack of adequate financial compensation may have jointly contributed to their scoring low on this factor in comparison to their other colleagues.

Factor 3: Opportunity to Develop Human Capacity

1. Supervisors of administration department, sales and marketing department and executive of administration department had obtained high scores on the factor Opportunity to Develop Human Capacity.
 - a. This high score was due to the fact that they were provided with better facilities for training, not only in their jobs, but even in the implementation of the latest ideas.
 - b. They were well-informed with the latest technology and advancement in the area of management. Secondly, they had freedom to express their new ideas, had autonomy to get the work done from their subordinates and thus, they might have felt a sense of pride in their jobs.
2. While un-skilled workers of painting department and un-skilled workers of security department obtained low scores on the factor Opportunity to Develop Human Capacity.
 - a. The reason being workers of security department felt that their job as a guard was limited to a certain work content. No new ideas suggested by them could be implemented, no scope for further learning in their department was there. They did not get opportunities to develop their skills. Their work has been routinised, repetitive, monotonous, the kind of activity having little scope of skill utilization, which created a sense of frustration, causing lack of interest in their work.
 - b. Despite the minor differences in the nature of duties, the whole security department was found to be having an unhealthy attitude regarding this factor.
 - c. While discussing painters, un-skilled workers, had the lowest score on this factor, because they were given simple piece of work (viz., painting of only small components or some minor work of cleaning or polishing) repeatedly, which, did not involve any kind of discretion, decision-making.

- d. Such conditions may have created a feeling of alienation and as such failed to facilitate self-improvement in their job, resulting in low-level perception of this factor as far as its contribution to Quality of Work Life is concerned.

Factor 4: Opportunity for continued Growth and Security

1. From the results obtained it may be observed here that the executives, supervisors and skilled workers of all departments had obtained high score on the factor Opportunity for Continued Growth and Security, except the dispatching supervisors.
2. At the same time, in the production department, all the five levels were found to be better on the factor Opportunity for Continued Growth and Security.
 - a. The reason for such findings might be that the skilled workers and supervisors occupy strategic positions in an organisation. They are in continuous contact with workers as well as managers. The management looks upon them as up-coming leaders who would meet their needs in future, and workers perceive them as a liaison between employees and the management.
 - b. Skilled workers and supervisors had undergone several training programmes on leadership styles, communication, human relation approach which might have increased the stability, flexibility and capacity for growth in the organisation, and they experienced enhanced on sense of achievement and knowledge.
 - c. Similarly, the executives are also close to the management and the management obliges them by providing executive development training and also gives an opportunity to implement their new ideas by placing them in appropriate departments.
3. While this factor was not very much up to the mark for dispatching supervisors, it might be attributed to the fact that this particular sample did not get any opportunities to grow and develop as other supervisors were getting, which may be due to the routinized nature of their duties.
4. In the case of production department, there was better chance for career opportunities in production section, compared to other departments of the industry. The function of the production department is to handle and maintain the plant and machines for which specialized and technical skilled manpower is required. Therefore, career development opportunities become brighter. The chances for promotion and vertical movement are also more in this department.
5. The workers of the painting and security department had again obtained low scores on the factor Opportunity for continued Growth and Security.
 - a. Training facilities for advancement in career for continued growth were not available to the workers class. Moreover, the security of job plays the most important role in human needs, as the workers classes are easily replaceable. Therefore, workers had always feared of losing their job on pretext of one or the other mistake. This fear arrests their growth and advancement in their career.

Table 1.2 Mean and SD scores on QWL for all levels of the organisation

Factors	Executive N=3		Supervisors N=6		Skilled Workers N=10		Semi-Skilled Workers N=12		Un-Skilled Workers N=12	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
X1	3.91	0.38	3.84	0.47	3.63	0.40	3.52	0.55	3.62	0.50
X2	5.00	0.63	4.87	1.23	4.72	0.30	4.04	1.32	4.24	0.60
X3	9.66	1.85	9.74	0.92	9.07	0.90	8.39	1.60	7.18	0.82
X4	4.96	0.90	4.31	0.79	4.42	0.69	4.48	1.05	4.17	1.02
X5	10.43	1.64	10.72	2.80	10.32	0.90	10.48	1.65	10.53	1.00
X6	2.77	0.45	2.80	0.66	2.81	0.50	2.62	0.41	2.75	0.35
X7	3.39	0.75	3.46	0.64	3.39	0.60	3.36	0.55	3.55	0.98
X8	5.23	0.32	5.00	1.10	4.98	0.66	4.35	1.23	4.08	0.90
Total QWL	45.35		44.71		43.34		41.24		40.12	

Factor 5: Social Integration in Work Organisation

1. The results denote that the executives and supervisors of the administration department had obtained the highest on the factor Social Integration in Work Organisation.
 - a. In the administration department, individual relations were satisfactory for employees of all levels. They seemed to have a sense of being part of one community. They seemed to work as a team and valued friendship among their colleagues very high, and co-operated with one another and thereby encouraged reciprocal help.
2. The skilled workers of the dispatching department, executives of sales and marketing department, and the un-skilled workers of security department obtained low scores on the factor Social Integration in Work Organisation.
 - a. They had a sense of being one community, to work as a team and valued friendship among their colleagues, co-operated with one another, and thereby encouraged reciprocal help. This was lacking among the skilled workers of dispatching, sales and marketing department executives, and un-skilled workers of security department. They felt that senior members of the staff did not pay attention to the grievances of their junior staff and that their suggestions were not given due consideration in resolving working problems.
3. The sense of being one community in work organisation that extends beyond face to face work group has an important place in the perception of Quality of Work Life. A supervisor is one who is responsible for getting a job done, which task is more difficult than doing it himself. The most essential skill requirement for him is leadership, and to set up a situation in which subordinates obtain need satisfaction through their jobs. Supervisor's humanitarian approach develops an interpersonal relationship to such a great extent that it will enable him to keep the workers in his fold and get the maximum work done with least difficulty.

Factor 6: Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation

1. The results showed that the executives, and supervisors of administration department, had the highest scores on the factor Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation.
 - a. The higher levels had perceived the organisational climate as being democratic. They were close to the management. The management valued and gave credit to their opinions and suggestions put forth by them.
2. While the semi-skilled workers of the security department and the executives of the sales and marketing department had the lowest score on the factor Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation.
 - a. When this is the case of executives of sales and administration the story of the workers level is different. They believe that organisational climate is autocratic in nature. In general, members of any Indian administration department feel themselves as a superior class as compared to other departments, since the nature of their job allows them to boss over others and utilize their power (authority) over decision-making.
3. Security workers obtained the lowest score among others on the factor Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation. They had to face autocratic rule, and sometimes inhuman behaviour, of the executive class while performing their duties, and at times, they were treated more or less like pieces of furniture rather than human beings.

Factor 7: Work and Total Life Space

1. The executives and supervisors of the administration department and the supervisors of the store department scored higher on the factor work and total life space.
 - a. As stated, earlier the higher levels of administration and stores departments are a 'special class' due to the nature of their jobs, and feel comfortable with their working life. Therefore, the quality of their life is bound to be more enriched as far as this factor is concerned.
2. But the semi-skilled workers of security department have obtained low scores on the factor work and total life space.
 - a. The executives and supervisors of sales and marketing department obtained low scores compared to other levels and department, the reasons being that they were owned by these administrative department people many times. It is evident that the sales and marketing-men have to work against the nature, that is, while all people stay at their homes at night, these people have to travel and stay away from their homes as a part of their duty. It not only affects their health, but also disturbs their family life.
 - b. The case of the semi-skilled workers of security department, they have rather a negative attitude towards their life. These people in general are lacking in Quality of Work Life. The cumulative effect of lengthy hours and uncertainty in their working conditions may have resulted in this pattern of scoring. It is evident that the security-men have to work against the odds of nature that is, while all people enjoy soiled sleep at night; they have to remain not only awake but also vigilant and alert as a part of their duty. It not only affects their health, but also disturbs their family life. All these factors determine their perception regarding their life. A single word of encouragement from the management will go a long way to give them happy look despite their monotonous lives.

Factor 8: The Social Relevance of Working Life

- 1 It was observed that the executives, supervisors and skilled workers of administration department had obtained the highest score on the factor the social relevance of working life while security department semi-skilled workers had obtained the lowest on the factor.
- 2 The society in India, especially, the family is dominated by bureaucratic thinking. The executives may have got over this type of compulsion, but the less educated workers may still be groping in the dark to find out the real meaning of social relevance. Thus, the low Scores of the workers may lie not in the merit of this factor but in the ambiguity surrounding the meaning and the importance of the term.

- a. Further higher ranks were having positive attitude for this factor. May be because these were privileged persons for training and development, and their performance was evaluated systematically.
- b. Wage and salary administration were adequate to keep them satisfied. While for the workers, the selection procedure itself was not that reliable right in the beginning, and they were not provided with proper opportunities for suitable training and development. They got only some consolidated pay, etc. (data obtained from the organisational information was provided by the administrative managers and other records). Therefore, they did not possess positive attitude for this factor.

CONCLUSION

The employee is a high leverage variable in Industry. Only by helping the employees achieve a constructive balance between work and personal life can businesses compete successfully. Only by achieving a constructive balance can the society provide a strong foundation for future business growth and achievement, a foundation that sustains effective parenting, education, and workforce development. A comprehensive Quality of Work Life process strengthens business, families and society.

**Businesses that adopt Quality of Work Life strategies
Improve their chances for success.**

**Quality of Work Life strategies improve performance,
Reduce costs, and enhance profitability.**

More and more companies, especially those that analyze and those whose track performance; have found that Quality of Work Life strategies can pay off in multiple ways for the business.

Because the Quality of Work Life benefits the bottom line, employers can:

1. **Reduce the Cost Of Doing Business:** The Quality of Work Life programmes can reduce the net costs related to hiring, training and development, legal services, and health insurance premiums (by reducing the stress related to medical and mental health care usage).
2. **Attract And Hold Talent:** The Quality of Work Life strategies help companies become "the employer-of-choice" for talented workers, which provides a competitive advantage for businesses in such sectors as are facing a shortage of skilled workers and managers. They can reduce turnover and the high cost of replacing lost workers.
3. **Increase Productivity:** The Quality of Work Life strategies increase productivity. They reduce absenteeism, stress, and distractions that impair productivity. Giving people flexibility, choices, and an opportunity to balance the competing demands enables them to be more productive.
4. **Strengthen Employee Commitment:** The Quality of Work Life increases the employee loyalty and commitment to the organization, what some have called "passionate commitment" to helping the organization succeed. Flexibility and choices give workers a greater control over their lives, and they respond with a sense of greater personal ownership in their work.
5. **Build a Positive Image in the Marketplace:** The Quality of Work Life efforts enhance a company's reputation and image in the market with its customers, suppliers and investors.
6. **Improve Access to a Broader Resource Pool:** The Quality of Work Life strategies can augment diversity efforts to open the workplace door to people who might otherwise not be able to work. Flexible scheduling might be extremely important to a single parent or facilitate opportunities for employment and promotion for people with disabilities.
7. **Strengthen Families, Society And Education:** The Quality of Work Life efforts build stronger families and a healthier society. They contribute to a better educated workforce, and diminish societal problems. For example, strong parent involvement in the education of children is known to improve a child's future educational achievement. Business can facilitate that involvement by providing release time, leave, and paid or unpaid time-off to participate in school activities and teacher meetings.

REFERENCE

- Bhardwaj, S B.L., Quality of Work Life, Perspectives, Dreams and Realities, Paper Presented at National Symposium on QWL, Hyderabad, 1983.
- Lawler, E.E., Strategies for improving the Quality of Work Life, *Journal of applied Social Psychology*, May 1982, Vol. 37(5), pp. 486
- Levine, M.F., Defining Quality of Working Life, *Organisational Dynamics*, January 1984, Vol. 37(1), pp. 81-104.
- Mehta, P., Rising Aspirations, Quality of Life and Work Organisation, Paper Presented at National Seminar on Improving QWL at NPC, Delhi, 1982.
- Nadler, D. A. and Lawler, E.E., Quality of Work Life: Perspective and Direction, *Organisational Dynamics*, Win. 1983, Vol. 11(3), pp. 20-30.
- Nilakant, V. and R. Tandon, An Alternative Approach for Improving QWL in India, Occasional Paper No. 1, PECCE, Delhi, 1982.
- Rao, V R. Quality of Life in an Industrial Township: An Initial Survey, *National Labour Institute Bulletin*, 1, 10 October.
- Rice, R. W., Organisational Work and the Overall Quality of Life, *Applied Social Psychology Annual*, 1984, Vol. 5, 155, pp. 1-78.
- Rice R. W. et. al, Organisational Work and the Perceived Quality of Life Toward a Conceptual Model: *Academy of Management Review*. April 1985. Vol. 10(2), pp. 296-310.
- Seashore, S. E., Defining and Measuring the QWL in Davis, L. E. and Chern, A. E., QWL, New York, 1975.
- Seashore, S. E., Indicators of Environment Quality and Quality of Life, *UNESCO Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences*, No. 38, 1978.
- Singh J. P., QWL Experiments in India: Trials and Triumphs, *Abhigyan*, (Fall), 1983.
- Sinha J.B.P., Organisation Climate and Problems of Management in India, *International Review of Applied Psychology*, U.K. 22 (1973a), pp. 55-64.
- Sinha J.B.P., The QWL in India's Setting, *Journal of Social and Economic Studies*, 5(2) (1976), pp. 235-48.
- Sinha, J.B.P., Power Motive and Democratization of Work Place, *Integrated Management*, 12(2) (1977a), pp. 5-8.
- Thrist, E. L., The Evolution of Socio – Technical Systems, *Issues of Quality of Working Life*, Occasional Papers No. 2, June 1981.
- Walton, R. E., QWL Indicators: Prospects and Problems, *Studies in Personnel Psychology*, 1974, Spr., Vol. 6(1), pp. 7-18.
- Walton, R. E., Improving the Quality of Work Life, *Harvard Business Review*, May– June 1974, pp. 12-19.
- Walton, R. E., Quality of Work Life Activities: A Research Agenda, *Professional Psychology*, June 1980, Vol. 11(30), pp. 484-94.