Research Paper

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Quality of work life (QWL) – an inevitable issue to focus on for business survival

Commerce

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ABSTRACT

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is becoming an increasingly popular concept in recent times. It basically talks about the methods in which an organization can ensure the holistic well-being of an employee instead of just focusing on work-related aspects. Quality of work life is specifically related to the level of happiness a person derives for his career. Employees with a high quality of work life generally make enough to live comfortably, find their work to be interesting or engaging and achieve a level of personal satisfaction or fulfillment from the jobs that they do. In other words, employees who are generally happy with their work are said to have a high quality of work life, and those who are unhappy by their work are said to have a low quality of work life.

In today's scenario, high QWL is essential for organizations to continue to attract and retain employees. QWL offers a value frame and the social technology of organizational change leading to task effectiveness of micro entities through utilization and unfolding of human potential. Various valuable dimensions of Quality of Work Life like recent strategies, benefits to employees, as well as company by taking practices of QWL in Google Company discussed in the paper.

Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) concern with scientific Recruitment & Selection, Development, Motivation and Maintenances of human resources in the organization. It also provides human resource with the best working conditions. HRM is totally concentrated on the "people" of the organization. It is "people oriented" process. HRM focuses on managing people at work.

Today business organizations are developing very rapidly because of LPG (Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization).Particularly after globalization; business organizations are facing high competition and demands due to economic, political, social and technological changes. The uncertainty in business environment and increase of competition has made business organizations to go for different & unique ways of managing business; like QWL (Quality of Work Life), JIT (Just In Time), TQM (Total Quality Management), Team work.

Quality of work life (QWL) is seen as an alternative or another option to manage people or control them in a better way. The QWL approach takes human resource as a 'valuable asset' of the organization rather than as 'costs'. QWL helps in motivates employees by satisfying not only their economic needs but also their social & psychological needs. Now a day's workforce is realizing the importance of relationships, family & is trying to keep a balance between professional and personal lives. Successful organizations support and provide facilities to their human resource to help them to balance the scales.

Concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Quality of Work Life concept is now a day'sgetting more popularity. It basically deals with methods in which company can ensure the holistic well-being of an employee instead of just concentrating on work-related aspects.

Quality of work life is generally connected to the level of happiness a person gets for his or her career. Every individual has different needs when they plan their careers; the quality level of their work life is decided by whether those needs are being met or not. Some people might be satisfied with a simple minimum wage job as long as it helps to pay their bills, others would find such a job highly unsatisfactory. Thus, concept for having a high "quality of work life" differs from individual to individual. In short, employees who are generally secure happiness from their work are said to have a high quality of work life, and those who secure unhappiness or unfulfilled needs of careers by their work are said to have a low quality of work life.

Origin of Quality of Work Life

Quality of Work Life (QWL) activity achieved attention between 1969 and 1974, when a number of researchers, trade union leaders and government took interest in how to improve the quality of an employee through on-the-job experiences.

The concept of "Quality of Work Life" has been published in research journals and news in USA in 1970. Louis Davis had introduced the word "Quality of work Life" In Toronto the first International QWL conference was held in 1972 and also the international council for quality of work life was established in the same year. In the mid-1990s till today it suffer from challenges of economize and corporate restructuring, QWL is re-emerging where employees are searching out more meaning in job and occupational desires in today's slow economic growth and reduced opportunities for advancement, so, there are rising concerns for QWL and for career and personal life planning. In India, QWL offers a value frame and the social technology of organizational change leading to task effectiveness of micro entities through utilization and unfolding of human potential.

Definitions:-

QWL can be defining as "The quality of relationship between employees and the total working environment."

It is related with the favorability or unfavourability with a work environment for employees.

J. Richard and J. Loy define QWL as "the degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personnel needs through their experience in the organization."

Q.W.L = The sum total of physical (working conditions), psychological and economic factors which affect the job.

The factors that influence and decide the Quality of work life are:

Attitude: - Attitude of employees play major role in deciding the level of QWL in any organization. Employees energy level, readiness to learn new things, inter-personal relationship, openness, team-spirit etc. depends on what level of attitude person carry in organization.

Environment: -Environment is nothing but surrounding under which employees work which varies according to job of employees. Sometimes high level of patience, tactfulness, empathy and compassion and control over emotions require.

Opportunities: - Some jobs offer opportunities for learning, research, self-development, exploration, celebrity-status and lots and lots of fame. Others jobs are monotonous, repetitive, dull, boring. Type of job opportunities offer in every job will decide the high level or low level of QWL. Job opportunity offers positive opportunity of development leads to high QWL and Vice versa.

Stress Level: - Stress level not always direct proportional to the compensation. There are various types of Stress like mental stress physical stress and psychological or emotional stress. A(MD) Managing Director of a company will have mental stress, a laborer will have physical stress, Mental stress and Emotional stress cause more damage than physical stress. It depends on the organization what level of stress is there in job, environment that affects QWL.

Career Prospects: - Career planning, Career development is an important factor which decides the quality of work life. The work atmosphere should be conducive to achieve organizational goal as well as individual development. In organization which gives importance to employees career prospects have high QWL in organization.

Challenges: -Every job must offer some challenges to make it interesting; Challenge that keeps the innovation and thrill alive in the job. A well-accomplished challenging job yields greater satisfaction than a monetary perk; it boosts the self-confidence also and also develops high level of QWL.

Growth and Development:- Each organization should give proper opportunity for growth & development. If proper opportunities are not given than it is difficult to retain the talented personnel and also attract new talent with experience and skill.

Common strategies should be followed for improving QWL is discussed below:

Health is wealth: Companies should understand that their actual wealth is its employees and giving them a healthy, good work environment should be their primary objective.

Career planning & development opportunities: Any company should develop opportunities for personal/professional development and growth.

Participative management style and recognition: Organizationwhich facilitates employee participation encourages employees /workers to offer innovative ideas to improve job related operations, processes. Recognition can be in the form of rewarding employees for jobs well done awards, appreciation also motivate employees to perform better.

Work life balance: An organization should provide time for relaxation and also provide guidance to employees for keeping balance in their personal and professional lives.

Fair compensation and job security: Compensation should be decided on the basis of the job, responsibilities, skills, talent, performance, achievements. Employees should get enough pay and benefits to reach an acceptable standard of living, and the pay should be similar to others performing same work. Job security that is permanent employment provides security to the employees and improves their QWL.

Fun at workplace: This is a latest approach adopted by today's organizations to make their work place; a fun place to work.

Flexibility in work schedule: Flextime- a system of flexible working hours and compressed work week. Flexible work schedules leads to job motivation and dedication. It also enables the employee to use time more efficiently by organizing activities in a way that suits his or her situation best.

Autonomous work group: Developing anautonomous work group helps in creating positive feelings among employees. Employees may provide freedom to select their own teams, freedom of decision making regarding the choice of methods for work, distribution of tasks among group members and designing of work schedules.

Job Enrichment: Job enrichment act as a motivational tool which attempts to design a job in such a way that it becomes more interesting and challenging so that the job holder makes meaning out of that. The degree of job enrichment determines the degree of QWL.

Communication: To prepare QWL sound, effective two-way communication is necessary. With help of the downward communication, employees would get information about the various aspects of the organization. Through upward communication, employees can share their views, ideas, grievances, opinions for improving the work performance.

Research methodology

Research statement: A case study of Google Company has been taken here.

Objective of the study: To study various activities of Quality of Work Life in the company and its impacton employees and company performance.

Research design: Case study method

Data collection: Secondary data (websites, research papers, journals)

Sector Profile: Information technology (IT)

Information technology (IT), in which hardware & software which are most important aspects of IT industry which are an integral part of newly every major global industry. IT industry specially in the developed world, is an important driver of global economic growth.

The Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) explains "information technology as encompassing all possible aspects of information systems based on computers."

Because of easy and simple accessibility and the wide range of IT products available, the need for it services has increased over the years. The IT industry has emerged as a major global source of both growth and employment.

Information technology (IT)industry in India has played a major role in putting India on the global map. IT industry in India has boost up the Indian economy. The industry has played a significant role in transforming India's image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing world class technology solutions and business services. The industry has helped India transform from a rural and agriculture-based economy to a knowledge based economy.

Globalization had a significant impact in shaping the Indian Information Technology sector. The near future of Indian IT industry sees a significant rise in share of technology spend as more and more service providers both Indian and global target new segments and provide low cost, flexible solutions to customers. By 2015, IT sector is expected to generate revenues of USD 130 billion (NASSCOM) which will create a transformational impact on the overall economy.

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About Google Company
Google was founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin when they were P.hd students at Stanford University. The company was officially started in September, 1998 in one friend's garage. In one of the most anticipated Initial Public Offerings (IPO) Google raised $1.67 billion in August, 2004. Today, Google has over 12,000 employees in offices throughout the world.

Google's mission statement and corporate culture reflect a philosophy that you can "make money without doing evil" and that "work should be challenging and the challenge should be fun". These philosophies dominate life at Google. The official mission statement of the company is to "organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." Google is having a high-energy, fast paced work environment. While the dress code might be "casual" the company attracts and retains some of the brightest minds in the technology industry. There is a work hard, play hard atmosphere.

Google's strategies for QWL
Google's employee gave a statement as followed: "Google is a great company and I am very proud to be a part of it. The perks are extra ordinary and this is the most unique working environment I have ever been in.The products, ideas, creative minds that we have continue to amaze and inspire me."

Google had done so many things that one takes pride when one works at Google's company. Google's company is mainly concern with managing all its employees.

Firstly the managing process starts with a principle of respecting any diversity. Diversity of its workforces can be seen through the number of communities formed by Google employees, such as: Black Googlers Network (BGN), woman@Google, VetNet: Google's Veterans Network, Gayglers: Google's LGBT Network, The Capability Council, Hispanic Googler Network (HGN) (Google.com 2013).

The second step is that Google company acts as a service provider for the employees, provide treatment to employees as its customer – treat the employees the same way you would like them to treat their customer. (The 2013 IBEA, International Conference on Business, Economics, and Accounting 20 – 23 March 2013, Bangkok - Thailand)

Third step is **Google provide its employees varieties of benefits, facilities to make sure that employees are satisfied & became loyal to the company**. These benefits include:

Food Facilities:-
Google offer free food facility to every employees of the company at various locations like Mountain View, New York Campus, Satellite offices. Google believe that no employees must be away from food than 100 feet from source of food. Variety of food items and drinks are stone's throw away from employees place.

Childcare center:-
Google company offers onsite child care centre in its Mountain View Campus which is just five minutes from headquarter. As well as it also offer back up child care facilities to its employees so they can easily concentrate on their work.

Healthcare Benefit:-
Company provides full (100%) health care coverage to all its employees as well as their family members. A part from this physician and dentists are available on site for free check up. This will generate sense of loyalty among customers.

Internet Services:-
Google provide free Wi-Fi enabled shutter services to several San Francisco, East Bay. And South Bay locations which ultimately motivate the employees to work better.

Acceptance of Pets in office:-
Google allowed employees' pet on site so that employees get relaxation from stress as an when they want. But that permission is granted on one condition that pets are reasonably well behaved and properly trained and with a single complain one have to take pets to home.

Laundry & Dry cleaning facility:-
Employees can do laundry and dry cleaning free in company's washers and dryers.

Sports Advantage:-
Company in its Mountain View campus provide swimming pool, running trails, beach volleyball court, gym, subsidized exercise classes, professional massage which indirect help to retain the employees and work with more energy.

20% creative time programe:-
Google inspire all its employees mostly engineers to spend20% of their time during job on projects or assignments in which they are interested. This programe not only keep employees enthusiastic but also provide them challenging task to perform and open the doors of new opportunity for the company. Gmail, Orkut, Google News were started as individual projects.

(The 2013 IBEA, International Conference on Business, Economics, and Accounting 20 – 23 March 2013, Bangkok - Thailand)

Fuel Efficiency Vehicle Incentive Programe:-
Google gave subsidy to its employees who buy hybrid or electronic cars or vehicles and who also have solar penal at their homes as google is giving importance to protect environment and put efforts to be an energy efficient as possible.

Facility of leave and holiday:-
Google employees receive 25 leave days +12 holidays a year. A part from this new mother receives 18 weeks maternity leave and new dads get 7 weeks of paternity leave. New moms and dads are able to expense up to $500 on baby meals during first four weeks.

Other Services:-
Google offer car wash, oil change, foreign language classes, in its Mountain View headquarter there is a college campus like environment-atmosphere is relaxed. Neither dress code nor formal meetings.in such type of environment virtue of creativity gets growth.

Conclusion:-
Google has done so many things to facilitate all its employees and that has made **Google voted as the number one Best Company to Work for in 2007, 2008, 2011, and 2012 based on Fortune's Magazines (Google.com 2013).** The Google's success has given rise to unique and new ways in the organizational culture and values. If as a company you provide your employees their freedom and comfort; which will result into on the other hand, employees have enabled Google to gross $209,624 in profit per employee in 2008. This number beat all other large tech companies in the sector, including big hitters like Microsoft, Apple, Intel and IBM, and competitor Yahoo! (at $31K per employee) (Kuntzhe and Matulich, 2009). (The 2013 IBEA, International Conference on Business, Economics, and Accounting 20 – 23 March 2013, Bangkok – Thailand)

What Google had done for its employeeswhich lead to Google the number one company in the Fortune's list of "100 best companies to work for". The Google employees feel proud in saying

tat they work in the best company in the world; they say proudly that they are working"to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful" (Murari, 2008). By changing the formal working environment into a place like a collegecampus anddeveloping a very comfortable work place-Google has managed to utilize all its employees at fullest. Google has also designed unique changes in working environment thathas enhanced the quality of life of its employees.

Google employees have high job satisfaction; this can be from low turnover ratio (4, 3%), knowledge retention, and low absenteeism (Google HR Policies 2013).A happy and healthy employee will give better turnover, make good decisions and positively contribute to the organizational goal. An assured good quality of work life will not only attract young and new talent but also retain the existing experienced talent.What strategies Google had adopted may be simple, but it have a great impact when it comes to the talk of the company among aspiring employees.

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