



## Quality of Work Life in Coal Mining Employees: A Study With Special Reference to the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL)

**Ch.Narayana Rao**

M.Com. Lecturer in Commerce & Research Scholar, Acharya Nagarjuna University, KVR College, Nandigama - 521 185 Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, India

**Prof. V. Narasimha Rao**

M.Com., MBA, Ph.D. Director: P.G. Department of Business Administration, Akkineni Nageswara Rao College, Guduwada – 521 301. Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, India

### ABSTRACT

*Coal mining is one of the most arduous and hazardous operations as miners are not only exposed to dangers from mining hazards like explosions, inundations, roof falls, noxious gases etc. but also prone to various diseases. The day to day working environment is far from congenial. Below ground, the miner is exposed to perpetual darkness, forced ventilation, water logging, humidity and extreme temperatures. Even above ground, working conditions and other civic amenities are not up to the required level. On the positive side, mining companies provide all the required facilities as per the Mines Act, 1952 besides making good payments in the form of wages, salaries and other benefits. However, these benefits can not equate the relentless efforts of employees who work under odd conditions. In view of this, an attempt is made in this article to understand the quality of work life of employees in SCCL.*

**KEYWORDS :** Quality of work life, Employee grievance, Working conditions, Occupational stress

### I. Introduction:

The term "quality of work life" means different things to different people. For example, to a worker on an assembly line, it may just mean a fair day's pay, safe working conditions and a supervisor who treats him with respect and dignity. To a young new entrant, it may mean opportunities for advancement, creative tasks and a successful career. Quality of work life may be described as a concern about the impact of work on people and organizational effectiveness and the idea of participation in organizational problem solving and decision making. The American Centre for Quality of Work Life, define it as activity which takes place at every level of an organization, which seeks greater organizational effectiveness through the enhancement of human dignity and growth, a process through which the stakeholders in the organization such as management, unions and employees learn how to work together and 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 work life at work for all members of the organization and greater effectiveness for the company. The key elements of the definition are highlighted as being i) promote human dignity and growth, ii) work together collaboratively iii) participatively determine work changes, and iv) assure compatibility of people and organizational goals.

Quality of work life (QWL) aims at integrating the socio-psychological needs of people in the organization, the unique requirements of a particular technology, the structure and processes of the organization, and the existing socio-cultural milieu. It is thus, concerned with the overall climate of the work.

The basic purpose of improving QWL is to change the climate at work so that human-technological-organizational interface leads to a better quality. According to Walton, there are eight broad conditions of employment that constitute desirable quality of work life. The conditions of employment or criteria are adequate and fair compensation; safe and healthy working conditions; jobs aimed at developing and using employee's skills and abilities; opportunity to develop human capacities; social integration in the work place; constitutionalism; opportunity for career growth and social relevance of work.

Klatt, Murdick and Schuster suggested eleven major issues of quality of work life. They are pay, stability of employment; occupational stress; organizational health programs; alternative work schedules; participative management; recognition; congenial worker-supervisor relations; grievance procedure; adequacy of resources; seniority

and merit in promotions. It is worth noting that often the conditions that contribute to motivation (equitable salaries, financial incentives, effective employee selection etc.) will also contribute to the "quality of work life". Some of these activities like job enrichment might contribute indirectly to the quality of work life by tapping worker's "higher-order needs", and motivating them.

### II. The present study:

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) is the second largest public sector coal mining company in India after Coal India Limited (CIL). The company's contribution to the growth and development of the nation is undisputable since the survival of power sector and many other companies directly depend upon coal. At this juncture, the untiring efforts of employees cannot be ignored since they discharge their duties under adverse conditions due to the nature of work. This is because, coal mining is one of the most arduous and hazardous operations as miners are not only exposed to dangers from mining hazards like explosions, inundations, roof falls, noxious gases etc. but also prone to various diseases like pneumoconiosis, mining nystagmus, dermatitis, hook worms and the like. The day to day working environment is far from congenial. Below ground, the miner is exposed to perpetual darkness, forced ventilation, water logging, humidity and extreme temperatures. Even above ground, working conditions and other civic amenities are not up to the required level. All the same, accidents leave a trail of misery on dependent families, and sap the morale of co-workers who all work and live together. On the positive side, the company provides all the required facilities as per the Mines Act, 1952 besides making good payments in the form of wages, salaries and other benefits. However, these benefits can not equate the relentless efforts of employees who work under artificial conditions. In view of this, an attempt is made in this article to examine the quality of work life of employees in SCCL.

### III. Hypotheses:

- Organizations which ensure good quality of work life can make the employees satisfied with their jobs thereby the production and productivity of the organization will be increased.
- There is no significant difference in the opinions of executives and non-executives about their quality of work life in SCCL.

### IV. Objectives:

- To assess the opinions of employees about their quality of work life in SCCL in terms of factors like job security, pay, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunities for

- growth etc.
- To find out how far the quality of work life programs undertaken by the company helped in enhancing the performance of the company.
- To make suitable recommendations to the management after identifying the lacuna in the existing quality of work life programs.

V. Methodology:

The prime objective of the study is to understand the quality of work life of employees in a coal mining company. In SCCL, a total of manpower of 64,600 are employed in eleven mining areas such as Yellandu, Kothagudem, Manuguru, Ramagundam-I, Ramagundam-II, Ramagundam-III, Ramagundam-IV, Mandamarri, Bellampalli, Srirampur and Bhoopalapalli. In Kothagudem mines, a total of 6,232 people are employed out of which executives account for 929 and non-executives account for 5,303. From these executives and non-executives, a sample of 10 percent is taken. As such executives constitute 93 and non-executives account for 530 taking the total sample size to 623. In other words, stratified random sampling method was utilized in the selection of sample respondents. Further, questionnaire method of data collection was considered to be appropriate for the study since the participants are all educated to respond to the questions on their own. Hence, a questionnaire was designed and developed and then administered to all the 623 sample respondents. The responses of the sample respondents were taken on five-point scale, (Likert's scale) on all the 31 factors that influence quality of work life. Then these responses have been processed and then analyzed with the help of statistical tools.

VI. Statistical analysis:

In this study, Chi-square test has been conducted and accordingly both calculated value and table value for each of the 31 items has been found out at a significance level of 5 percent. It is to be noted that if the calculated value is less than table value, the hypothesis is accepted and vice versa. In other words, if there is congruence in the opinions of executives and non-executives, the hypothesis is accepted and vice versa.

VII. Results and discussion:

The results of Chi-square test on all the 31 factors related to quality of work life are furnished in table-1. The formulated hypotheses are tested at 5% level of significance. The results as evident from table-1 show that except on seven parameters like working conditions, autonomy, participative decision making and occupational stress, in all the remaining 24 parameters the quality of work life of employees is good. Hence, it can be safely concluded that employees in SCCL enjoy good quality of work life barring few exceptions. Further, the performance of the company is quite impressive since its coal production increased from 308.11 lakh tonnes in 2001-02 to 531.90 lakh tonnes in 2012-13 while its productivity (output per man shift) rose from 1.34 tonnes to 3.94 tonnes during the same period. In short, the hypothesis has been proved.

Table-1  
Quality of Work Life (Chi square test)

| Sl. No. | Factors in quality of work life                        | Calculated Chi square value | Table value | Hypothesis at 5% level of significance (Accepted / Rejected) |
|---------|--|-----------------------------|-------------|--|
| 1       | SCCL provides Job Security                             | 0.693                       | 3.841       | Accepted   |
| 2       | SCCL provides Good Working Conditions                  | 351.975                     | 9.488       | Rejected   |
| 3       | SCCL provides flexible working system to its employees | 10.081                      | 3.481       | Rejected   |
| 4       | The work is interesting in SCCL                        | 48.725                      | 7.815       | Rejected   |
| 5       | SCCL undertakes job enrichment measures                | 136.156                     | 9.488       | Rejected   |
| 6       | The work is social relevant in SCCL                    | 4.224                       | 5.991       | Accepted   |
| 7       | SCCL pays good wages and salaries                      | 5.821                       | 5.991       | Accepted   |

|    |  |         |       |           |
|----|--|---------|-------|-----------|
| 8  | SCCL is employee development oriented  | 0.551   | 3.841 | Accepted  |
| 9  | SCCL provides a number of health facilities to its employees   | 5.683   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 10 | SCCL is employee safety oriented   | 5.643   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 11 | SCCL pays adequate compensation to its employees who meet with accidents   | 5.333   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 12 | Promotional policies are transparent and fair in SCCL  | 2.717   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 13 | SCCL provides timely promotions to its employees   | 299.054 | 9.448 | Rejected  |
| 14 | Good interpersonal relations exist in SCCL   | 5.638   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 15 | In SCCL, employees work with operation and coordination  | 5.676   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 16 | Superiors follow the principle of equity   | 3.973   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 17 | Superiors treat subordinates with respect and dignity  | 5.883   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 18 | Superiors are considerate and helpful  | 5.452   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 19 | Newly Recruited Employees easily adjust themselves in SCCL   | 4.702   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 20 | Employees enjoy autonomy in SCCL   | 191.655 | 9.488 | Rejected  |
| 21 | Employees are allowed to participate in decision making  | 229.464 | 9.488 | Rejected  |
| 22 | Employees have a sense of competence in SCCL   | 4.90    | 7.815 | Accepted  |
| 23 | Employees skills and abilities are fully utilized in SCCL  | 5.92    | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 24 | SCCL rewards the talented and hardworking  | 5.064   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 25 | Stress level is high in SCCL   | 4.824   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 26 | Grievance redressal procedure is transparent and fair in SCCL  | 1.863   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 27 | SCCL is employee welfare oriented  | 0.194   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 28 | Overall satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the quality of work life programs undertaken by the company                                | 0.369   | 5.991 | Satisfied |
| 29 | Whether the quality of work life programs undertaken by the company help in improving the productive performance of the company or not | 2.821   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 30 | Whether quality of work life programs undertaken by the company helps in improving industrial peace                                    | 0.082   | 5.991 | Accepted  |
| 31 | Whether quality of work life programs undertaken by the company helps in controlling absenteeism or not                                | 4.655   | 5.991 | Accepted  |

Source: compiled from primary data

### VIII. Findings:

The following findings have been drawn after analyzing each of the thirty one factors that influence the quality of work life of employees and the same is presented hereunder.

- SCCL provides job security to all its employees
- The working conditions are poor in the company.
- The company does not provide flexible working system to its employees.
- The company does not undertake job enrichment measures
- The work is socially relevant
- The company pays good wages and salaries to its employees
- The company is highly employee development oriented
- The company provides almost all the health facilities to its employees
- SCCL is highly employee safety oriented.
- The company pays adequate compensation to its employees who meet with accidents
- Promotional policies are transparent and fair but timely promotions are absent
- Good interpersonal relations exist in the company
- Employees in SCCL work with cooperation and coordination
- Superiors follow the principle of equity
- Superiors treat their subordinates with respect and dignity
- Superiors are considerate and helpful towards subordinates
- Newly recruited employees easily adjust themselves in the company
- Autonomy is absent in the company
- Participative decision making is absent in the company
- Employees are competent in SCCL and the company utilizes their skills effectively and efficiently.
- The company rewards the talented and hardworking employees
- Occupational stress exists in the company
- Grievance procedure is transparent and fair in the company
- The company is employee welfare oriented
- The overall quality of work life is good in SCCL.

### IX. Suggestions:

Since the working conditions are poor, the company has to implement all the provisions of Mines Act to ensure good working conditions. It should also educate the employees about the various measures taken to improve the working conditions. In this regard, the company may arrange 'Display Boards' wherever necessary about the working conditions which are required to be provided and working conditions actually provided. This measure creates a positive attitude among employees that they are cared for.

The company made it a policy to promote its executives for every five years and non-executives for every seven years. But the promotions are not timely as employees have to wait until vacancies arise in higher positions. Since promotions satisfy the higher order needs of employees, the company should create additional vacancies so as to satisfy the higher order needs of employees.

In SCCL, autonomy is absent due to which employees cannot act independently. However, executives enjoy autonomy to some extent but not to the required extent. Therefore, the company has to give more autonomy to its employees.

The management of SCCL shares information with employees. But it does not allow them to participate in decision making. During wage agreements only, employees are invited for participative decision making. Hence, management of SCCL should practice participative decision making on all important policy decisions.

Occupational stress exists in the company since miners have to work 200 meters below the surface. To overcome the high stress levels of employees the company has to conduct yoga and meditation classes at regular intervals. It should also educate employees about the advantages of quitting bad habits such as smoking, alcoholism, gambling, gutka chewing etc.

### X. Conclusions:

To sum up, the quality of work life of employees is poor in areas like working conditions, flexible working system, nature of work, job enrichment, timely promotions, autonomy, participative decision making and stress. But the quality of work life of employees is quite good in various areas like job security, social relevance of work, wages and salaries, training and development, safety, reward mechanisms welfare etc. In short, the areas where the quality of work life is poor is offset by the provision of various employee oriented programs undertaken by the company.

## REFERENCES

1. Annual reports of SCCL | 2. Ashraf Ali and Prabhu, R. "Quality of Work Life", Organizational Management, October - December, 2003, Vol. XIX, No. 3, pp. 21-22. | 3. David A. Nadler and Edward E. Lawler, "Quality of Work Life: Perspectives and Directions", Organizational Dynamics, Winter 1983, p.26. | 4. Joshi, J. Rama, "Quality of Work Life of Women Workers: Role of Trade Unions". The Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, January 2007, Vol.42, No.3, pp.355-356 | 5. Lee M. Ozley and Judith S. Ball, "Quality of Work Life: Initiating Successful Efforts in Labor Management Organization", The Personnel Administrator, Vol. 27, No: 5, May 1982, p.27. | 6. Nirmala Kaushik and Manju Singh Tonk "Personality and Quality of Work Life" The Journal of Organizational Behavior, July 2010, Vol. VIII, No. 3, pp. 34-35. | 7. Richard E Walton, "Quality of Working Life: What is it?" Sloan Management Review, Fall, 1973. | 8. Sangeeta Jain, "Quality of Work Life of Indian Industrial Workers", Arya and Tandon. B.B, Human Resource Development, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 420-422. | 9. Seshu, C.B.S.R, "Quality of Work Life as HR Strategy-An Analysis", HRM Review, February, 2004, pp.26-28. | 10. Shashi K. Gupta and Rosy Joshi, "The Concept of Quality of Working Life", Human Resource Management, Kalyani Publishers, Hyderabad 2005, pp.38.11 to 38.14. | 11. Sinha, J.B.P. "The Quality of Work Life in Indian Setting", Journal of Social and Economic Studies, 1976, pp. 235-248. | 12. Subba Rao, P. "Quality of Work Life", Essentials of Human Resource Management and Industrial relations, Himalaya publishing House, Mumbai, 2008 pp 95-96 | 13. Walton, R.E., "Improving the Quality of Work Life", Harvard Business Review, May-June 1974, p.12. | 14. www.scclmines.com