Research Paper Commerce

Quality of Work Life

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ABSTRACT

The present era is of knowledge workers. Gone are the days when employee's needs were ignored. With the wave of change that is going on no organization can overlook the quality of work life they offer to employees. QWL is needed in every field be it educational, public sector or private sector corporate. QWL is the extent to which members of an organization are able to satisfy their personal interest while working for the organization. It is about fulfilling the higher-order needs of employees in addition to their basic needs. The purpose of the study is to understand the concept of QWL, list the approaches to improve QWL and to conduct a review of literature in this respect.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION.

With evolution of human resource from being a commodity to strategic partner human resource are not considered as a cost but an asset. Entire expenditure on technological developments, machinery, resources will be a waste if organizations are not able to manage their resources efficiently. The present era is of knowledge workers. These workers have to work overtime. As a result of which much of the time for personal life including recreation is lost. Gone are the days when employee's needs were ignored. With a shift towards knowledge economy employee's needs cannot be ignored.

Moreover globalization, increasing education & demand for skilled workers all has brought a change in the expectations of the human resources and their perception of a good employer. Pay is not the only motivator for them. Employees now evaluate an organization in terms of 'Quality of the Work Life' (QWL) the organization offers.

Work Life is the environment in which employee works and can be defined in terms of various variables including the learning experience & growth opportunities, working conditions, job security, working hours, role clarity, the impact of their activities on the organization, employees participation etc. All these factors now define a 'Good Employer'. Employees while selecting the organization look in for the quality they will experience in their work life. As a result QWL has attracted substantial attention of management and researchers.

QWL is needed in every field be it educational, public sector or private sector corporate. To illustrate the importance of QWL one example that can be considered is Chartered Accountants. Accounting Profession plays a significant role in economic growth and development. Chartered Accountants are a symbol of trust, integrity and independence who manage finance and accounts better than any other professional. But for few years the spirit of this profession is going down. All this is due to absence of qualitative work life in terms of lack of independence, lack of autonomy, recreation, participation, clarity of role, working hours, home life balance. Chartered Accountancy as a profession demands long working hours near the review dates, late night working, continuous working on system, long period outstation allocation. Result is interest lost, no enthusiasm in the field they chose with so much of zeal, delay in completion of audits, increasing absenteeism and employee turnover. This makes it very important for the auditing firms to find out ways to improve the work life experiences of its employees. So this case highlights the relevance of maintaining QWL.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER.

- To understand the concept of QWL.
- To discuss the approaches to ensure QWL.
- To relate QWL with job satisfaction and organization's performance.
- To study the scales for measurement of QWL.
- To conduct a review of literature.

WHAT IS QWL?

QWL is the extent to which members of an organization are able to satisfy their personal interest while working for the organization. Work plays an important role in workers life. It helps in shaping personality, determining performance and so on. While working for organization and to their productivity levels there are few things which employees expect from the organizations. Few among these are:

- Adequate Pay- The employees expect their pay to be according to the efforts they put in.
- Safe Working Condition- The environment they work in should not have any threat to their health. A safe environment should be maintained.
- Career Growth Opportunities- Providing adequate pay, good working condition is necessary but not sufficient. Proper advancement opportunities are to be provided for growth.
- Job Security- Another thing which employees expect from the organization is stability and avoiding layoffs and retrenchments.
- Job Satisfaction- The knowledge workers want that job should satisfy their potentials. So in this respect they desire enrichment and redesigning of jobs.

The American Society of Training and Development defines QWL as:

"QWL is a process of work organizations which enable its members at all levels to actively participate in shaping the organizations environment, methods and outcomes. This value based process is aimed towards meeting the twin goals of enhanced effectiveness of organizations and improved quality of life at work for employees."

QWL is about fulfilling the higher-order needs of employees in addition to their basic needs. The work atmosphere is to be adjusted in such a manner that they treat workers as humans having a personal life.

With passage of time there is a wave of change and every organization has to adapt through this change. This can be done only when they realize the relevance of QWL and take

effective steps to ensure it. If workers are assured of quality they extend their full support which can help in increasing organization's performance.

APPROACHES TO IMPROVE QWL.

In order to improve QWL following approaches can be followed:

- Flextime: Freedom in scheduling the working hours.
- Staggered hours: Different people work at different intervals.
- Compressed work week: Working for fewer days but more hours per day.
- Job Enrichment: In order to satisfy the potentials making the job more challenging and enriching.
- Autonomous Work Teams: Giving freedom for decision making.
- Employees Participation: Participation in the decision making process.
- Suggestion System: One of the ways to ensure employees participation. It can be used as a tool to motivate employees.

QWL, JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATION'S PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY.

As stated above that in the era of knowledge workers organizations cannot ignore the QWL they offer to employees. Higher the QWL would mean a better work environment, a proper pay, surety for career growth, challenging job. All this will lead to a proper use of employee's skill and talent. Employees will be in a position to balance out their work life with their personal life. This will definitely impact the level of satisfaction they experience.

Moreover a satisfied employee will put in all his efforts to perform his task to this best. This will ensure organization's success. There will be an increase in employees productivity and hence organization's performance.

There exist a positive relation between QWL, Job Satisfaction, Organization's Performance and Productivity. So it is in best interest for the organization to main the quality of the life in the organization which they offer to employees.

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.

MEASUREMENT OF QWL.

There are few recognized measures of quality of working life and jobs:

Work-Related Quality of Life scale (WRQoL): It uses six core factors to explain most of the variation in an individual quality of working life: Job and Career Satisfaction; Working Conditions; General Well-Being; Home-Work Interface; Stress at Work and Control at Work.

Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction (BIAFJS).

Job & Career Satisfaction (JCS) scale of the Work-Related Quality of Life scale (WRQoL): It reflects an employee's feelings about their satisfaction with their job and career. It is about how satisfied people feel about their work. It is influenced by clarity of goals and role ambiguity, appraisal, recognition and reward, personal development career benefits and enhancement and training needs.

General well-being (GWB) scale of the Work-Related Quality of Life scale (WRQoL): It is suggested that general well-being both influences, and is influenced by work. Mental health problems, predominantly depression and anxiety disorders, are common, and may have a major impact on the general well-being of the population.

WRQoL Stress at Work sub-scale (SAW): The extent to which an individual feels stress at work.

Control at Work (CAW) subscale of the WRQoL scale: It is extent to which employees have freedom at work.

WRQoL Home-Work Interface scale (HWI): The extent to which employers support family life of employees.

Working Conditions scale of the WRQoL: The extent to which the employee is satisfied with the fundamental resources, working conditions and security necessary to do their job effectively.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

Small Scale Industries are very essential for the economy. The reason why small scale industries may not be able to perform well are lack of finance, technology etc. But one of the reasons which are not visible to all is QWL. **Sharma and Verma (2013)** attempt to identify the existence of QWL in small scale industries with regard to employees and to find important QWL factors. They try to find out the requirements of employees. Communication level, career development and growth, flexible work arrangement, family responsive culture and industrial climate are the few factors which affect QWL. A survey is conducted to assess the quality of work life in small scale industries of Indore. The researchers infer that employees are dissatisfied with working environment, promotional opportunities. Only 24% of employees surveyed are satisfied with the salary. It is very important to ensure QWL for employees to get quality output from them. So this study suggests introduction of flexi time, job enrichment, and management by objective, job rotation to improve QWL.

Sadri and Goveas (2013) state safe and healthy working conditions, adequate and fair compensation, opportunities to utilize individual skills and talent, career and growth opportunities as factors essential for QWL. They conduct a study with reference to employees in freight forwarding and clearing house business in Mumbai. Using Chi square value the results of the study is that there is no significant difference between employee's satisfaction and work life balance. The employer's in this industry should take measures to improve QWL of employees. Such measures will benefit employers in retaining their employees. HR professionals in order to get benefits for organization should focus essentially on working conditions. Compensation and Job Security are instrumental factors which cannot be ignored.

Srivastava and Kanpur (2014) state that in modern era stress management is a major challenge. Working efficiency decreases if a person is not able to manage his personal and work life. The study concludes that high degree if QWL leads to job satisfaction which leads to effective and efficient performance. The identification of specific measures of QWL is a difficult task. This study focuses on key elements of QWL like job security, job performance, and employee satisfaction.

Singh and Srivastav (2012) state that success of an organization depends on its work culture, method used and the level of employee satisfaction. This level of employee satisfaction depends on job security, rewards, job satisfaction. All this can be used to measure QWL. QWL in turn affects organization efficiency. SERVQUAL model has been opted for measurement of QWL. They tend to examine the gap between employees and employers perception. A high level of QWL in an organization suggests that gap between employee and employer's perception on various factors of QWL is negligible. The researchers conclude by agreeing on the positive impact of QWL on organization efficiency.

Gupta (2014) attempts to study the relationship between QWL and organization commitment. For data analysis Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation is used. The primary focus

here is on the manufacturing sector. The results of the study highlight a positive relation between QWL and organizational commitment. QWL helps in retaining employees and help them towards career development. If employees are assured that organization offers them good QWL then there will be an increase in commitment from their side towards the organization.

In Bangladesh QWL is a new concept which is still in its emerging stage. Only few efforts are taken with respect to it. **Tabasco, Rahman et al. (2012)** study QWL in Bangladesh with focus on faculty members in private universities. Correlation analysis is conducted which reveals a significant relationship between QWL and its dimension. There are significant differences in perception of QWL in terms of gender. They find social relevance of work life, adequate and Fir compensation and constitutionalism as the three dimension of QWL for faculty members.

Baitul Islam (2012) conducted a study to find out factors that have an impact on QWL of employees in private companies of Bangladesh. They find work load, family life, compensation, transportation, work environment and career growth to have a significant impact on QWL. Colleagues have no significant impact. Moreover companies are required to manage the personal life of employees for its long term benefits.

CONCLUSION.

Ensuring QWL has become a key issue now. Human resources are considered as an asset. They have to be given a work life which satisfies their quality needs. Job rotation, enrichment, flexitime are among few approaches to improve QWL. The review of literature highlights that QWL has an impact on job satisfaction and thus the organization productivity and performance. __

In this era of knowledge workers no organization can ignore the work life quality they provide to employees. Moreover companies are required to manage the personal life of employees for its long term benefits.

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