SMALL CAN BE MADE BEAUTIFUL ADOPTING QUALITY OF WORK LIFE CONCEPT A CASE OF FINE BLANKING PVT LTD

Dr. V M Chavan*
S C Patil**

Abstract: *When highly compensated employees of an organisation go on a 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 paid well for his time and labour, he is supposed to be motivated to carry out the responsibilities entrusted on him, and he should be contented with his job. It appears, that, all of a sudden the traditional methods of motivating employees, 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 work-place environment. Workers see their jobs disappearing or becoming dehumanised. Societal support must go hand in hand with technical innovations. The new forms of work organi¬sation, therefore, must represent an optimum balance between the technical demands of the job and social needs of the people performing the job. To bring about a balance between these demands, it is essential to understand the concept of quality of work life. Hence the central theme of this paper is "Quality of work life".*

Key Words :
Quality of work life, HR strategy , technical demands, social needs.

The central theme of the paper is "Quality of work life".

INTRODUCTION

Job creation is an important issue in our country; no less important is the issue of improving Quality of Work Life. Social concern for job creation is an important objective both, for an enterprise and an individual. It can be fulfilled through 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.

Smaller organizations are now increasingly recognized as being the cutting edge of development, and also owing to the changing perspective. Development of these organizations is expected to be realized through people's participation. Since it is essential to bring about a balance between the technical demands of the job and social needs of the people performing the job it is important to understand the concept of quality of work life. Hence the central theme of the paper is "Quality of work life".

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

(1) To study the impact of Quality of work life on various departments (Dispatching, Production, Sales and Marketing. Administration, Stores, Painting, and Security department).

(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 decisions for building effective Quality of Work Life in small-scale industries.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The Study was confined to Fine Blanking Pvt. Ltd, one of the leading small-scale industries in Hubli City. The industry was considered for the

*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

following reasons:

- The minimum number of employees were above 20 and less than 100 workers presently working continuously throughout the year
- The unit has been making profits for the last five years, and was in agreement to go for a change if found deficient.

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". For the present investigation, eight major conceptual areas of 'Quality of Work Life' have been adapted from Walton's work (1974).

Taking the same contention into consideration, a case study method is used to collect diagnostic data for Quality of Work Life measure. For collecting the responses, respondents were contacted individually so that they could understand the items of measures. The sample population includes white and blue-collar workers; among them a few also had language difficulty. The responses were obtained for the measure from five levels viz, Executive, supervisor, skilled worker, semi-skilled worker and un-skilled worker, across seven departments.

ABOUT THE STUDY SAMPLE

Fine Blanking was started in the year 1989 by a technocrat to serve the growing Automobile industry requirements. The organization has 55 employees'; the details of the employees are given in table 1.2. The firm had a turnover of 78 million Indian rupees for the year ended 2008-2009. The industry manufactures cold forging up to 25 mm sheets.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The mean and standard deviation was calculated; the mean and standard deviation on each factor and five levels is shown in table 1.1. The cases have been tested on 't' test to find the significance of the cases; the significance of difference among Levels within Department for Factors of QWL was seen on 27 cases out of which 11 cases were significant at 0.01 level and 2 cases were significant at 0.05 level. The Significance of Difference between Department for Factors of QWL and Total QWL was seen in 44 cases out of which 29 cases were significant at 0.01 level and 4 cases were significant at 0.05 level.

Factor 1: Adequate Income and Fair Compensation

Executives and supervisors of administration had obtained highest scores for the factor **Adequate Income and Fair Compensation**. The reason is competent executives and supervisors are not easily replaceable and to train them at those levels is fairly expensive.

Un-skilled and Semi-skilled workers had obtained the lowest score for Factor 1. The reason being, in the case semi-skilled and un-skilled class of workers, supply is always much higher than demand. This factor itself indicates that they cannot bargain, and therefore get relatively low salary in the organisation.

Factor 2: Safe and Healthy Working Conditions

Dispatching men were provided little and cramped space for performing their duty. It affected their alertness; the

Eight major conceptual areas of 'Quality of Work Life' have been adapted from Walton's work (1974).

space was not only inadequate but also hardly fit for comfortable and normal movement. As the present study was involved with small-scale units, they do not have equipment to load on to trucks (material handling equipments). The un-skilled workers faced severe risks in loading the components on to the trucks; injury while loading has become common.

Regarding painters, the 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 often disturbed by other employees who used that route regularly.

They also had to face discouraging comments from others many a times. Thus, we may conclude that improper working conditions and lack of adequate financial compensation may have jointly contributed to their scoring low on the factor **Safe and Healthy Working Conditions** in comparison to their other colleagues.

The responses for each factor was obtained from five different levels of hierarchy.

Factor 3: Opportunity to Develop Human Capacity

Supervisors of administration department, sales and marketing department and executives of administration department had obtained high scores on the factor **Opportunity to Develop Human Capacity** because they were provided with better facilities for training, not only in their jobs, but even in the implementation of the latest ideas. They were well-informed about 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.

While un-skilled workers of painting department and un-skilled workers of security department obtained low scores on factor 3, the reason being workers of security department felt that their job as guards 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 repetitive and monotonous. As their activities had little scope for skill utilization, it created a sense of frustration, causing lack of interest in their work. Similarly, the un-skilled workers of the painting department too obtained lowest score on this factor. Their work involved painting of only small components besides cleaning or polishing demanding neither discretion nor decision-making.

Factor 4: Opportunity for continued Growth and Security

The results showed 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.

At the same time, in the production department, all the five levels were found to be better on this factor. 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. Skilled workers and supervisors had undergone several training pro¬grammes on leadership styles, communication, human relations approach which might have increased the stability, flexibility and capacity for growth in the organisation. They experienced a sense of achievement and fulfillment. 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.

In the case of dispatching supervisors, it was found that they were lagging behind because limited opportunities to grow and develop caused by the nature of their duties.

The workers of the painting and security department had again obtained low scores on the factor 4. Training facilities for advancement in career for continued growth were not available to this class of workers. Moreover, the security of job plays an important role in human needs, as they are easily replaceable. Therefore, workers had always feared of losing their jobs under one pretext or the other. This fear arrests their growth and advancement in their career.

Factor 5: Social Integration in Work Organisation

The results denote that the executives and supervisors of the administration department had obtained the highest on the factor of **Social Integration in Work Organisation** due to satisfactory relationship between the individuals and the administration department. They appear to belong to one community. There was team spirit and co-operation. 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 their problems. Hence, they scored low on this factor.

Factor 6: Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation

The results showed that the executives, and supervisors of administration department had the highest scores on the factor **Constitutionalism in the Work Organisation.** This was because 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 gave suggestions.

The semi-skilled workers of the security department and the executives of the sales and marketing department had the lowest score on this factor. They believe that organisational climate is autocratic in nature. In general, members of any Indian administration department consider themselves to be superior compared to other departments, since the nature of their job allows them to boss over others and utilize their power (authority) over decision-making.

Security workers obtained the lowest score among others on this factor. They had to face autocratic rule, and sometimes inhuman behaviour from the executive class.

Skilled workers and supervisors had undergone several training programmes on leadership styles, communication, human relations approach which might have increased the stability, flexibility and capacity for growth in the organisation.

Only by helping the employees to achieve a constructive balance between work and personal life, can businesses compete successfully.

Factor 7: Work and Total Life Space

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.** As stated in the earlier factor, the higher levels of administration and stores department employees appear to belong to 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.

But the semi-skilled workers of security department have obtained low scores on this factor. The executives and supervisors of sales and marketing department have also obtained low scores compared to other levels and department. It is evident that they are called upon to work against several odds, be it traveling or working for long hours. It not only affects their health, but also disturbs their family life.

Factor 8: The Social Relevance of Working Life

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 this factor.

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.

Executive class had a positive attitude towards this factor, probably because they were privileged persons for training and development, and their performance was evaluated systematically. Compensation was 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 received some consolidated pay. (This data was obtained from the administrative managers and other records). Therefore, they did not possess positive attitude towards this factor.

CONCLUSION

The employee is a high leverage variable in Industry. Only by helping the employees to achieve a constructive balance between work and personal life, can businesses compete successfully. Only by achieving a constructive stability, 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. Qualities of work life strategies improve performance, reduce costs and enhance profitability.

More and more companies 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:**

   Companies 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 QWL strategies help companies become "the employer-of-choice" for talented workers, which provides a competitive advantage for businesses in such sectors which are facing a shortage of skilled workers and managers. They can reduce turnover and the high cost of replacing former workers.

3. **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 QWL increases the employee loyalty and commitment to the organization, which is also known as "passionate commitment". It spells success for the organization. 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 QWL 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 QWL strategies can augment diversity efforts to open the workplace door to people who otherwise might 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:**

   QWL contributes to a better-educated workforce, and diminishes societal problems. For example, strong parent involvement in the education of children is known to improve a child's educational achievement. Business can facilitate that involvement by providing leave, and paid or unpaid time-off to participate in school activities and parent-teacher meetings.

The QWL increases the employee loyalty and commitment to the organization, which is also known as "passionate commitment".

Table 1.1 Mean and SD scores on QWL for all levels of the organization

Factors	Executive N=3		Supervisors N=5		Skilled Workers N=9		Semi-Skilled Workers N=13		Un-Skilled Workers N=6	
	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	

Table 1.2: Details of employees at Fine Blanking Pvt. Ltd

	Executives	Supervisors	Skilled Workers	Semi-Skilled Workers	Un-Skilled Workers	Total
Dispatching		1	3	4		**8**
Production	1	2	10	6	6	**25**
Sales & Marketing	1	2	2			**5**
Administration	1	2	2		2	**7**
Stores		1		2		**3**
Painting			1	3		**4**
Security			1	2		**3**
Total	**3**	**8**	**19**	**17**	**8**	**55**

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 Daivs, 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 Sciencs, 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.