



Quality of Work Life – A Case Study on Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, Srikakulam

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Abstract: Quality of Work life improvements are defined as any 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 state holders in the organization, management, unions and employees learn how to work together better to determine for themselves what actions, changes and improvements are desirable and workable in order to achieve the win and simultaneous goals of an improved quality of life at work for all members of the organization and greater effectiveness for both the company and the unions..

Introduction

Quality of Work Life (QWL) has become one of the important issues in manufacturing enterprises. In term of working conditions, export-oriented enterprises are supposed to maintain their international standards. However, working conditions are changing by the force of technological advancement. In addition, it has been observed that technology has also changed the work culture in manufacturing enterprises.

Quality of work life is a concept of behavioral scientist, and the term was first introduced by Davis in 1972 (Mother, 1989; Han and Einstein, 1990). According Robins (1990) QWL is “a process by which an organization responds to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work”. The key elements of QWL in the literature include job security, job satisfaction, better reward system, employee benefits, employee involvement and organization performance (Haploid, 1991; Scobey, 1975). For

the purpose of this study, QWL is defined as the favorable condition and environment of employees benefit, employees’ welfare and management attitudes towards operational workers as well as employees in general

QWL and organizational factors:

QWL practice involves acquiring, training, developing, motivating and appraising for the best performance of the employees as per organizational objectives. Indeed, core elements of QWL are of working conditions, employee job satisfaction, employees’ behavioral aspects, and employees’ financial and non-financial benefits, growth and development, and supervision .Job satisfaction can be understood by explaining people want to come to work. Locke defined job satisfaction as “a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. Though various researchers identified it in different ways and conclude that it’s a combination of physiological, psychological and environmental circumstances, the result of this combination is a person’s job

satisfaction. Job satisfaction has significant affect on organizational performance in terms of wages,

Need for the Study

In pre-industrial society work was performed in the same community setting where people lived. You knew the person who made your shoes, your clothes, your milk & cheese, and your furniture. You socialized with these same people, as well as helped them when in need. The twin forces of the reduction in agricultural work and the rise of mechanical work meant more people becoming wage earners who were working for others (Brisker, 1996). In 1860, half the working population was self-employed; by 1900 two-thirds were wage earners. Work became governed by the clock, by uniform standards, and by supervisors. "Reason demanded that workers subordinate their own experience of natural rhythms to the logic of efficiency" (Brisker, 1996, p. 100).

The industrial era separated work from the community and created the organization, the bureaucracy to house, organize, and control work. There was little or no contact between the organization where employees worked and the community where they lived. Work was no longer an integral part of community life; it was detached, separated, contained within specific buildings and times. One hypothesis is that motivation only became an issue because meaning disappeared when the work became separated from the rest of life and community (Severs, 1984). "As a consequence motivation theories have become surrogates for the search for meaning" (Severs, 1984, p.3). Wall Street further separated the owners from the employees. Employees received pay for the work they performed and owner/investors received dividends based on the

profits of the company. And there was little to no contact between owner/investors and employees.

The Evolution of the Work-life Movement:

The person who may have been the first humanist of the industrial revolution was actually considered anti-humanist by most accounts. Frederick Taylor was most well known for his time and motion studies, which has been considered de-humanizing because it gave management strict control over worker performance. Peter Ducker asserted, "Taylor, among all his contemporaries, truly deserved the title humanist" The group dynamics movement, and t-group/laboratory training in particular, was the first movement to focus on the human in groups and later in organizations. The National Training Laboratories, and its counterpart in the UK, Tailstock, worked for the recognition of individual and group behavior as the critical component of an effective work group and productive organization (French and Bell, 1999). Boon and Tryst from Tailstock had regular contact with Liker, Argyrols and others in the states, and the journal Human Relations was a joint publication of Tailstock and MIT. This movement later transformed into the organization development concept, which has always had the individual at the heart of their value system.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational culture of organizations that are considered to be employee-friendly workplaces. The research question was; in what ways do work-life programs and policies relate to an organization's culture? Sub-questions were; how do organizations actually achieve being considered a best place to work for? What programs, policies and practices promote a humane workplace? In the US, work-life policies and programs have become

synonymous with humane, employee-friendly organizations. Fortune Magazine's 100 Best Places to Work For, and numerous other sponsored lists of "best places for . . ." are oftentimes the first resource consulted by job seekers. Organizations' public relations and recruitment materials proudly proclaim inclusion on one or more of the lists. But there has been little research on the relationship between the programs they sponsor.

Scope of the Study:

1. Analyzing the Organization's Readiness for Change

Before a large change initiative is begun, the climate and environment should be analyzed. This includes looking at the history of past change efforts, then assessing the current environment for opportunities. Lewis (2001) pointed out that organizational change, like accepting family-friendly policies that go against the entrenched social norms of the male model of work, does not take place in a vacuum. When listening to people speak of failed attempts to implement a change, one often hears: "the culture here just does not support that," or "the climate was just not right for it to happen." Organizations' attempts to change culture in general are filled with high expectations. However, when they fail to take root and produce intended results, a continuous cycle of new change and further disappointment can be the experience (Schneider, Brief and Gusto 1996)

2. Shared Vision and Strategy

The creation of the vision is crucial as it can guide the desired change, but only if it reflects the organization's values and philosophy (Jack 1991). Every work-life program, and specifically the work life strategy, is highly dependent upon the company in which it exists. This is why "when you have seen

one work-life program; you have seen one work-life program." The work-life strategy must be in line with the total rewards and overall HR strategy, and the three need to be in line with the company's business plan, strategy and philosophy. Because work-life is downstream in this flow, the strategy must be imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible and communicable.

3. Creating a Sense of Urgency

The importance of establishing a sense of urgency cannot be underemphasized (Katter 1996). The urgency for work-life efforts—often cited by leading organizations—is the need to attract and retain talent. An organization which is precariously closet bankruptcy or is losing its position in the marketplace will adopt a sense of urgency more readily than one which is thriving (Jack 1991). Unfortunately, many organizations are in part particularly resistant to change because of a lack of urgency. The risk is in appearing as "chicken little," so there must be data showing the trends concerning to the decision makers.

4. Involving All Stakeholders

True organizational change needs to involve everyone's from the support people to the president. Ideally, the organization's CEO will champion the work-life efforts, as the CEO has more influence on a change effort than other drivers of change (Stein 1990, Thackeray 1986). If leaders recognize the complementary importance of work-life priorities for business success, they strongly influence integrating this approach in building a supportive work environment..

5. Planning for Evaluation

A most-heard criticism about culture change is that the outcome is often never identified nor based on

measurable results. Objectives such as increased employee loyalty improved morale, decreased absenteeism, improved recruitment or higher rates of retention can be measured. The key is determining what can be measured regularly and whether it will be accepted throughout the organization as realistic and worthwhile. The preparation phase revolves around identifying the problem, what is going to change and how it will be measured.

6. Reinforcing Change

Most change efforts fail due to little follow-up on new training and little focus on the goals and direction of a change (Schneider, Brief and Gusto 1996). Katter (1996) termed this final step as “generating short-term wins” which needs to focus on visible improvements, but also on those that made the change happen. The end result is to create a culture recognizing and thriving on the continuing necessity of change (Jack 1991).

7. Work-Life Stages of Change

Although each lever is useful, its effectiveness is increased if used at the appropriate time. Using Prochaska's Tran theoretical Stages of Change model as a base can determine the decision maker's openness to information and willingness to consider supporting a work-life initiative (See Figure 1). Using workplace flexibility (flex-time, telework, part-time work) as an example, this paper discusses the model.

8. Precontemplation

In the precontemplation stage, the decision maker is unaware of problems, and not thinking about making any change. Bringing a proposal, or even data supporting a proposal, is ineffectual as the decision maker is not open to listening. Although

one may attribute a significant amount of turnover to workplace flexibility issues, the decision maker sees the cause as something completely different and will label the flexibility initiative as a “personal issue,” something that the business would never address.

9. Contemplation

As the name implies “contemplation” is just that, thinking about it. Although decision makers may view workplace flexibility as more than a “personal issue,” they still may marginalize it by labeling it a “woman's issue” or a “generational issue.” Nevertheless, this crucial stage is difficult to get to, and it is where the research, ideas and options can be brought to light with the decision maker.

10. Preparation

The decision maker has compelling information and some sense of urgency to act on the workplace flexibility initiative. The decision maker is starting to invest some credibility in this initiative and will now see this as a “task-force issue.” The lever of “involving all stakeholders” is now most effective. These stakeholders need to be treated as decision makers as well, so the previous levers of “shared vision and strategy” and “creating a sense of urgency” are used in a similar fashion.

11. Action

The pilot has been successful and now the decision maker sees workplace flexibility as a business issue. To roll out the flexible work arrangements will require the lever of “total systems change.” Much or most of what will be required will have come from all the previous stages and levers, with a heavy reliance on the stakeholders.

12. Maintenance

It will be tempting to claim that the successful pilot and companywide rollout of flexible work arrangements changed the organizational culture. Rather, understanding that some of the climate has been changed, in the way of practices and policies, is more realistic. Now is the time to use the “reinforce change” lever. It will be almost impossible to over communicate what flexible work arrangements are, how managers decide on who gets them and how managers evaluate employees in them.

Objectives of Study

- To study the Quality of work life (QWL) of the employees in Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Srikakulam
- To find out how Quality of work life leads to high satisfaction
- To know the existing working conditions sectoral health and safety helps to improve the Quality of work life
- To study the workers participation in Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Srikakulam
- To examine Training and Development programme helps to improve the Quality of work life
- To know how the various welfare activities and other benefits helps to bring a better Quality of work life

Past research on QWL: The evolution of QWL began in late 1960s emphasizing the human dimensions of work by focusing on the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment. QWL as a discipline began

in the U.S. in September 1972 when the phrase was coined at a “democratization of work” conference held at Columbia University’s Arden House to discuss two movements.

Career and QWL: A career is the evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time. Career arises from the interaction of individuals with organizations and society. Career is not a primarily a theoretical construct but is used in meaningful ways, given meaning and it creates meaning and also experience. More specifically, career is referred to as a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence.

Propositions: With justification from the literature, it is reasonable to suggest that aspects of career development with reference to career satisfaction and career achievement are factors likely to have impact on QWL. Likewise, career balance with the rising indication of conflict between work and family life is also proposed as another factor determining QWL. The key elements in QWL include decision participation, restructuring the nature of the work, enhancing the work environment and defining the reward structure.

Findings

- From the survey results it is evident that both the quality Of work life and workers expectation from quality of work life system are the same.
- Hence a single quality of work life system can satisfy needs of both the company and workers.
- Therefore the quality of work life program would be designed in such a way that the workers would be able to analyze the

contribution of the employee to the organization periodically.

- Through this the worker can also motivate the employees who felt that they had no growth in the organization and serves the purpose of employee development. Thus quality of work life can be used as a significant tool for career growth.
- Another point worth's noting is that though existing system is satisfactory, it was found that change is to be done in method of appraising the employee and training programs are to be conducted to improve the performance of employees.
- The findings suggest that for success of quality of work life the credibility of appraiser is of almost importance.
- As per the Appraiser, their goals are not fully attained by the present quality of work life process
- In BSNL the quality of work life process done once in a year.
- The quality of work life done by immediate superior.

Conclusion

With rewards being directly linked to achievement of objectives, goal setting and quality of work life assumes utmost importance. The quality of work life System has been professionally designed and it is monitored by HRD. The implementation is the responsibility of each and every employee along with their supervisor. There should be adequate training to the evaluator that will go a long way in answering the quality of

Performance Appraisal. In conclusion, a quality of work life is a very important tool used to influence employees. From the analysis and interpretation, it is concluded that most of the employees are satisfied with the present quality of work life system and only few employees are not satisfied with the system, which are negligible in number. From the analysis it is clear that, quality of work life is being used as motivating tool for the employees in BSNL .According to analysis and interpretation, BSNL helps in making the dreams of the customers come true.

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