



AN ANALYSIS OF LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN LEATHER GOODS MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VELLORE DISTRICT

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Abstract

Every activities involved in an organization, have an influence towards the environment. The internal environment and the external environment influence organization climate factors. The Organizational climate refers the inner properties of Organization. There are also some internal and external factors which influences the determination of character of the organization. Labour welfare measures and QLW plays an important role among the deciding the behaviour or workers and therefore the performance of the organization. Organizational climate is outlined as shared perceptions or prevailing structure norms for conducting work place activities (reichers & amp, Schneider, 1990). The success or failure of an organization was determined by this Labour welfare measures. The study was administrated with seven dimensions like work environment, welfare measures, team work, management effectiveness, commitment, competency, rewards, and recognition. The study exhibits the prevailing Labour welfare measures and QWL in the organization, which also suggests the ways for further development.

Keywords: organizational climate, structure norms, seven dimensions, welfare measures

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Introduction

Industrial organization to a large extend depends on an entrepreneurial behaviour which calls for a high degree of achievement and motivation to engender corporate excellence. Corporations need to shift from physical technology to information technology, from capital centered economy to human centered economy, from material growth to sustainable development, from hierarchical pattern to decentralized organization and from conflict to cooperative working relationship. Peter Drucker has rightly observed that to make the organization excellent we need to change the organization from flow of things to 'ranks', and 'powers' have to be replaced by mutual

understanding and responsibility.

The leather goods manufacturing industry as a whole consists of mills, power looms, handlooms, hosiery and khadi may be the largest employer next to agriculture. In the entire leather goods manufacturing industry, handlooms are the most Labour Intensive and providing the largest employment, most of that is self-employment that could be around 15 million. Power looms employ six to seven million people and the Khadi sector about one and a half million. The textile industry is a vital source of revenue to the central and state exchequer and its total contribution in the shape of taxes and levies works out to Rs.400/- crores per annum. It yields a taxable income of



Rs.125crores excluding yarn duties payable by the decentralized and mill sectors.

The Indian leather goods manufacturing industry is the second largest in the world--second only to China. Indian textiles also account for 38 percent of the country's total exports. It occupies the third rank as an exporter of cotton textiles, next only to Japan and Hong Kong. Because of the importance of cotton in the economy, particularly in the export sector, it is not surprising that cotton is called as the "White Gold". The leather goods manufacturing industry is also a "Wage Leader" among comparable organised industries in India. The leather goods exports from India will double from the current levels within a year of the Multi Fibre Agreement coming to an end on December 31, 2004. "At present leather goods exports from India stand at Rs 550 billion and by 2006 it will double to Rs 1100 billion."

Work life

Increase in productivity depends upon effective utilization of human resources. Human beings are resourceful entities. They are multi-faceted. Their maximum utilization leads to attainment of organizational goals. The organisations with perfection in human resource management are leading and growing. Now it is realized by all the efficient management of Human Resources as the key to success and growth.

Work life and its quality have assumed significant importance in recent years all over the world. The management of business and industrial organizations are paying greater attention to the working life and its quality and trying to improve as much as they can. In India much labour legislation have been enacted to protect job security, safety of life and health, that enable them to progress and increase productivity and restoration of industrial peace. Quality of Work Life has been defined as "the

workplace strategies, operations and environment that promote and maintain employee satisfaction with an aim to improving working conditions for employees and organizational effectiveness for employers.

Literature Review

The Quality of Working Life (QWL) is an attempt to improve the relationship between work and human needs. The present study attempts to make an identification of factors perceived to be important in a quality working life experience. Elizur (1990) pointed out that earlier QWL was seen in terms of availability of jobs, training and mobility, and job security and earnings. Then, QWL was perceived to include working conditions, equitable compensation and job opportunities while more recently, QWL was viewed as involving autonomy, accomplishment, challenge, personal responsibility, chances to make decisions and develop interests and abilities.

A number of researchers and theorists have been interested in the meaning of the QWL concept and have tried to identify the kinds of factors that determine such an experience at work.

However, Richard Walton, Gray and Starke proposed eight conceptual factors relating to the quality of working life. They are:

- Adequate and fair compensation. That is to ensure that compensation is not only equitable, but is above some minimum maintenance level;
- Healthy and Safe working conditions. This minimizes both physical and mental fatigue and pertains to hazards, noise pollution and visual annoyance.
- Development and growth of human capacities - that is to focus upon job design and effective utilization of skills and abilities in the job, with emphasis on mental and physical aspects of the



job;

- Growth and security. This expands upon the above to ensure that growth in the job skills ensures opportunity for job security;
- Social integration of people - taking into account egalitarian and interpersonal aspects of relationships within the work groups;
- Constitutionalism -this ensures that individual rights are protected and that there is a clear and fair grievance procedure;
- Protection of total life space. This relates to the changes in the job which might have adverse effects on family life;
- Social relevance of work. This broadens the concept of satisfaction from just the job itself to the accomplishment of the organization's social objectives.

Problem Identification

While employers in the area are earning large profits with the export of yarn, the industry is characterized by the use of forced overtime, child labor, and the denial of fundamental union rights, poor working conditions in textile industry in Coimbatore District. The experienced workers are forced to resign and have no option other than getting jobs at other leather goods mills at beginner's wages.

Textile Workers in Coimbatore are regularly denied their right to free Association. Of the 167 cotton mills in Vellore only 56 mills allow trade unions. Workers report that employers will dismiss them if they try to start trade unions or join any existing trade unions, and that they will be placed on a blacklist and so they are unable to obtain work in the region.

Throughout the sector there are violations of workers' rights, including low wages and long working hours, intimidation and

unjust dismissals, and the use of child labor. According to the reports from the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) Task Force- Tamil Nadu, working conditions are unsafe, with old machinery in use; fingers are often cut and sometimes amputated. Conditions are also unhealthy due to poor air quality; the fine cotton dust in the air has negative effects on the respiratory system of the workers.

leather goods manufacturing workers are regularly denied benefits they are legally entitled to like ESI, Provident fund, paid maternity leave, and other benefits. Workers who have worked for as long as three years are still categorized as temporary workers. Workers are paid below the legal minimum wage. Workers generally live in 300 square foot tiled houses, without toilet facilities, and are unable to maintain a nutritious diet on the wages they earn.

Objectives of the Study

In this study the following objectives are framed;

1. To find out the adequate and fair wages level of the workers
2. To analyze the existing working condition prevailed and welfare measures in the working places.
3. To study the level of insecurity of the job and job discrimination among the workers to elicit the social integration among the employees and industrial relation with management

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the monetary benefits, working condition and welfare measure being adopted in the leather goods manufacturing industry for the development of workforce working in the leather goods manufacturing industry in Vellore district. Based on such evaluation through proper collection of data from the selected respondents, a model would be



suggested for the betterment of quality of work life and efficiency in the productivity.

Methodology

This study is limited to the leather goods manufacturing industry in Vellore District only. Vellore district is one of the major leather goods manufacturing industry areas in Tamil Nadu and the sample size is spread over the different rural parts of the district. The Vellore district was selected for the purpose of collection of primary data. Data were collected by means of structured questionnaires from 150 employees in Vellore district from their workplace and those who volunteered to participate answered the questions on their own time in their regional language.

Analysis

Item wise questionnaire was developed and used to measure Quality of Work Life factors. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they perceived the importance of each QWL item in their work situation. The scale employed was a 5-point Likert format ranging from 'Very often' to 'Not at all', 'Strongly Agree', to 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Very important' to 'Not at all'.

The sample is predominant by male respondents (79%) and comprised 21percent of female respondents. About half of the employees (52%) worked in spinning section and one quarter of respondents worked in the textiles section. Sixty-five percent of the respondents have less than Elementary school level education and 24% of them are Diploma and ITI holders. The majority of respondents are in worker categories (82%). The average wage levels of workers category are between Rs2000 to 3000.

Table 1: Attitude towards working conditions

S. No.	Factors	Mean score		
		Male	Female	Average
1.	Heat	2.20	2.35	2.24
2.	Dust	3.52	3.12	3.41
3.	Noise	2.95	2.70	2.88
4.	Inadequate ventilation	3.80	3.62	3.75
5.	Hazard of infectious diseases	2.71	3.17	2.83
6.	Poor or glaring lighting	3.00	3.22	3.05
7.	Difficult or uncomfortable working positions	2.33	2.17	2.42
8.	Heavy lifting	2.10	1.70	1.99
Average mean score				2.82

Source: Primary data



Table - 1 shows the result to attitudes of the workers towards working conditions. The respondents feel that there are high levels of dust, inadequate ventilation and poor lighting facilities prevailed in the work place. They also feel that they are struggled by uncomfortable working position in the work place. In total the workers are not satisfied with safety and working conditions in the work place irrespective the gender since the overall average mean score is 2.82 only.

Table 2: Insecurity factors in the work place

S. No.	Insecurity Factor	Yes			No		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Transfer to other duties	92	23	115	18	17	35
2	Threat of dismissal	76	18	94	34	22	56
3	Threat of unemployment	68	16	84	42	24	66
4	Unexpected changes in the work	72	31	103	38	9	47
5	Intolerable increase of workload	61	33	94	49	7	46

Source: Primary data

Table – 2 shows the result of insecurity factors faced by the workers. Out of 150 responds 76.6 percent of them faced insecurity in the form of transfer to other duty and 68.6 percent of them faced unexpected changes in the work. In the meantime 62.6 percent of them faced both threat to dismissal and intolerable increase of work load. The threat of unemployment is the lowest insecurity among the other insecurity factors.

Table 3: Discrimination that occurs in the workplace

S. No.	Discrimination	Yes		No	Total
		Nativity	Community		
1	At the time of appointment	32	74	44	150
2	In monetary benefits	20	52	78	150
3	In gaining appreciation	46	65	39	150
4	In distribution of work or shifts	76	62	12	150
5	In gaining employment fringe benefits	20	12	118	150

Source: Primary data

From the table-3, we can infer that about 49.3 percent of the responds are discriminated based on the community at the time of appointment, 43.3 percent of them in gaining appreciation and 34.66 percent in getting monetary benefits. But the nativity of the workers discriminates the workers more on work shift (50.6%) than community. This study shows that the discrimination in getting monetary benefits among the respondents is very low irrespective of community and nativity they are belonging to.

The underlying dimensions of the quality of work life constructed was examined using principal components of factor derived and labeled as monetary rewards work environment, and social integration among the workers and with management.



Table 4: Factors Determining the Quality of Work Life

S. No.	Factors	Mean score		
		Male	Female	Average
1.	Workers treated with dignity and Respect	2.16	1.82	2.06
2.	Fair and tolerable work loads	3.42	3.15	3.34
3.	Comfortable working conditions	2.11	2.52	2.32
4.	Reasonable working hours	2.34	2.17	2.21
5.	Assured job	1.82	1.45	1.72
6.	Good relationship with supervisor	2.80	3.20	2.90
7.	Good relationship with coworkers	3.20	3.10	3.17
8.	Fair and equitable salary	2.12	2.42	2.20
9.	Statutory bonus disbursed	2.37	2.10	2.29
10.	Reasonable retirement benefits	1.86	1.64	1.75
11.	Employees provident scheme is implemented	1.00	1.23	1.11
12.	ESI Scheme is implemented	1.85	1.65	1.79
13.	Over time wages is being paid	2.67	1.10	2.25
14.	Enough time to get my job done	3.20	3.45	3.26
15.	Safety and health conditions in work place	2.62	2.85	2.65
16.	Lot of conflicts between me and my superior	2.90	3.00	2.92
17.	My superior treats aged employees equitably	3.35	3.10	3.39
18.	My main satisfaction in life comes from my work	1.83	2.67	2.05
19.	I am proud to be working for my employer	1.71	1.67	1.69
20.	Medical and welfare Measure	1.40	1.25	1.36
Average Mean Score		--	--	2.32

Source: Primary data

The factor1 includes the variables like wages, bonus, retirement benefit, overtime wages, EPF and ESI scheme. According to the overall mean score (1.89) of the variables it is inferred that the adequate levels of wages and other benefits provided to the workers are fair.

Factor 2 includes variables like work load, working condition, working hours, assured job, welfare measure and work safety measures. The result of the factor analysis reveals that the work environment perceived by the respondents is also to be fair since the average means score is 2.26.

Factor 3 includes variables like relationship among the workers and with supervisor, due respect to aged employee, family life satisfaction, proud of working, and workers dignity and respect. The result of the factor analysis shows that the relationship among the workers and between the supervisor and workers seems to be high regarding dignity and respect extended by the management on male workers, but the female workers are not satisfied. The overall result of this factor analysis of Social integration shows that the social interaction and industrial relations prevail in the organization seemed to be fair since the average mean score is 2.36 only.

According to the overall average mean score of the factor analysis, the determinant of the quality of work life in textile industry is not up to the satisfactory levels of the workers.



Table 5: Expectation of the Workers to Improve QWL

S. No.	Factor	Mean score		
		Male	Female	Average
1	More flexible working hours	3.71	3.17	3.57
2	Improvement of working environment	3.12	3.35	3.18
3	Increase in pay	3.67	3.80	3.70
4	Reasonable workload	3.51	3.12	3.40
5	Leave with wages	3.10	3.35	3.16
6	The job security to be ensured	3.60	3.77	3.64
7	Workers need strong trade unions to protect their interests	3.90	3.72	3.85

Source: Primary data

Table – 5 reveals the expectation of the workers from the management. The strong trade union to protect their interest and increase in pay are predominating other variables. According to the mean score, the assured job security and improvement in the working environment are the next expectation of the workers. Other expectations are flexible working hours, reasonable work load, leave with wages and other facilities expected by the workers in the organization. Individual level and organizational level. A management practice that manifests concern about employee’s job security, conducive working conditions, fair and equitable wages and participation of the workers representatives from the formal workers association in decision making process will lead a harmonious industrial relation in the working place. The development programme on quality of work life of the employee will lead to better work environment and productivity of the organization. Many large companies in India have tested and are still experimenting with the ways to improve the quality of work life and productivity.

Findings and Suggestions

The safety and physical working conditions in the working place are perceived as the most important factor. Even the friendly atmosphere through co-operation among the workers and supervisors is considered to be secondary. So the management may improve the safety and physical working condition through implementing safe and comfortable work environment in the working place.

It is clear from this study that the workers seek a relatively high level of job security reasonable and comparable wage and other benefits like EPF, ESI scheme prevailed in other industries which are carrying out similar nature of the work. This study reveals that there are some discriminations among the workers based on the nativity and community on recruitment, wage benefits etc. It is the responsibility of the management to curtail the factors which are having negative impact in the work life by proper study. The government authority concerned may be taken initiative steps by forming a team comprising of members from labour department ESI Corporation, EPF commission, local administration and representative from mill association and workers trade union to ensure job security and reasonable wages and other benefits to



the workers working in the leather goods manufacturing industries.

Conclusion

Quality of work life refers to relationships between a worker and his work environment. The quality of work life is the degree of excellence brought about work and working condition which contributes to the overall satisfaction at the individual level and organizational level. A management practice that manifests concern about employee's job security, conducive working conditions, fair and equitable wages and participation of the workers representatives from the formal workers association in decision making process will lead a harmonious industrial relation in the working place. The development programme on quality of work life of the employee will lead to better work environment and productivity of the organization. Many large companies in India have tested and are still experimenting with the ways to improve the quality of work life and productivity.

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