2.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher has made an attempt in this chapter to study the conceptual framework of Quality of Work Life (QWL). This chapter consists of the introduction, the quality of work life concept, determinants of quality of work life, QWL in advanced countries, and the impact of QWL and summary. This chapter has been written with the help of secondary data collected from technical books and previous studies.

2.2 CONCEPT OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

"Quality of work life is a relatively new concept in the field of organizational behaviour. It has recently emerged as important area of concern. Quality of work life is a generic phrase that covers a person’s feeling about every dimension of work including economic rewards and benefits, security, safe and healthy working conditions, organizational and interpersonal relationships and their intrinsic meaning in a person’s life. More specifically it is a process by which an organization attempts to unlock the creative potential of its people by involving them in decisions affecting their work lives.

“Quality of Work Life” is a broad concept. It refers to the degree to which work provides an opportunity for an individual to satisfy a wide variety of personal needs – to survive with some security, to interact with others, to have a sense of personal usefulness, to be recognized for achievement, and to have an opportunity to improve one’s skills and knowledge.

QWL indicates the relationship between a worker and his environment, adding the human dimension to the technical and economic dimensions within which work is
normally viewed and designed. This perspective is needed to understand how the world of work can be adaptively evolved in order to cope with the uncertainty, complexity and turbulence of the environment in which it is placed. This development is likely to be the overriding concern of the next few decades and the quality of work life is the key to its successful achievement.

R.E.Walton\(^1\) (1973) offers the following conceptual categories or criteria for quality work. (i) Adequacy in compensation: This concept entails sufficient income to maintain a socially acceptable standard of living, and often includes compensation for skills possessed whether or not they are used. (ii) Safe and healthy working conditions. This category includes reasonable hours in a standardized work week beyond which overtime premiums are paid, and physical working conditions that minimize risk of illness and injury. (iii) Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, included in this category is autonomy, multiple skills requirement, and feedback on results of one’s own action as a basis of self-regulation, whole tasks rather than fragmented ones, planning as well as implementation activities. (iv) Opportunity for continued growth and security.

This concept encompasses work assignments and educational pursuits which expand one’s capabilities, the prospect of using newly acquired knowledge and skills in work assignments, advancement opportunities, and employment or income security associated with one’s work. (v) Social integration in the work organization. Components are free from prejudice; there is egalitarianism, mobility, interpersonal openness, supportive face-to-face work groups and a sense of community in the organization that
extends beyond these primary groups. (vi) Constitutionalism in the work organization: Included is privacy concerning nonworking matters, free speech without fear of reprisal, equity, and due process. (vii) Work and total life space. This category includes a balanced role of work – work schedules, career demands, and travel requirements that do not take up leisure and family time on a regular basis, and advancement opportunities that do not require frequent geographical moves, (viii) Social relevance of work life. This concept includes social responsibility of the organization in marketing techniques, waste disposal, employment practices and the like.

2.3 DEFINITION OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

The American Society of Training and Development established a task force on the QWL way back in 1979. This task force defined QWL as “a process of work organisations which enables its members at all levels to actively participate in shaping the organization environment, methods and outcomes. This value based process is aimed towards meeting the twin goals of enhancing effectiveness of organization and improving quality of life at work for employees”.  

Cohen and Rosenthal define QWL as an “internally designed effort to bring about increased labour management cooperation to jointly solve the problem of improving organizational performance and employee satisfaction”.  

Nadler and Lawler provide concise definitions of QWL as “a way of thinking about people as well as organization. Its distinctive elements are: (i) a concern about the
impact of work on people as well as organisational effectiveness and (ii) the idea of participation in organizational problem solving and decision making”.  

Beinum defines QWL based on a general approach and an organisational approach. The general approach includes all those factors affecting the physical, social, economic, psychological, and cultural well being of workers, while the organizational approach refers to the design and operations of organization in accordance with the value of democratic society”.

According to Luthans, “the overriding purpose of QWL is to change the climate at work so that the human – technical – organizational interface leads to a better quality of work life”.  

Sangeetha Jain viewed QWL as consisting of a “whole parcel of terms and notions all of which really belong under the quality of working life umbrella. They include industrial effectiveness, human resource development, organizational effectiveness, work restructure, job enrichment, socio – technical system, working humanization, group – work concepts, labour management, co-operation, working together, workers involvement, workers participation and co-operative work structure”.

QWL refers to a work situation which emphasizes on relationship, sensitivity and concern for others. Robbin used two terms in connection with QWL namely, “Quality of Life” means “Assertiveness, Acquisition of Money and Material things: on the other hand quality of life refers to a favourable working environment, which encourages
participation, better communication, amity, fairness and job satisfaction. This is precisely the meaning of QWL which will promote industrial relations and productivity.\(^8\)

Having gone through the above definitions of QWL, now QWL in long and short’ can easily be defined as “an approach concerned with the overall climate of work and the impact that the work has on people as well as on organization effectiveness. Direct participation of employees in problem solving and decision making in areas related to their work helps upgrade the quality of life at – work”.

2.4 DETERMINANTS OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

Various criteria’s are evolved in past two decades to measure quality work life. Various researchers who carried on studies in this area came up with various criterias which are not entirely different from each other. Walton’ eight factors are considered as most comprehensive criteria for measurement of QWL.

The eight – point criteria of Walton to measure quality of work life include:

1. Adequate and fair compensation
2. Safe, healthful working conditions
3. Opportunity to develop human capacities
4. Opportunity for career growth
5. Social integration in the work force
6. Constitutionalism
7. Work and quality of life
8. Social relevance
2.4.1 Adequate and Fair Compensation

Compensation plays a greater role in employee’s satisfaction. Especially in a country like India, where the employee welfare programmes take back its seat, compensation is the main source of satisfaction for the employee. Compensation package includes all other fringe benefits and social welfare programmes. Fringe benefits give employee a feeling of gaining something extra. Recently, the concepts fringe benefits and social security measures are gaining importance in Indian industrial scenario. Free transportation or transportation at minimum cost, hospital facility, group insurance programmes, retirement benefits are some important welfare programmes. Organization at rural, semi-urban can satisfy their employees with comparatively lower levels of compensation than their urban based counterparts. The urban based organizations usually compensate the extra cost of living, through higher dearness allowances, keeping basic the same. Organisations fix pay ranges through different methods. They may fix wages comparing with other organization. They may fix taking cost of living into account. They may also fix pay levels based upon their capacity to pay and so on.

2.4.2 Safe, Healthy Working Conditions

Physical working conditions is the second most important aspect in measuring QWL as Walton rightly categorized, employees who spend a lot of time at their workplace consider the physical working conditions an important factor. Proper seating arrangements, water facility, fresh air and good sanitary conditions are important to the employees who engage themselves in desk work. Absence of such good conditions may result in ailments like back pain and romantic pains which in turn frustrates the
employees who may develop stress. A physical condition at work places which is second home for employees is thus an important factor in measuring QWL.

2.4.3 Opportunity to Develop Human Capacities

According to Maslow, people want to satisfy their higher order needs once they satisfy their basic needs like fair pay and good physical condition. These higher order of needs include recognition and social status. More regulations and control mechanism by the management may dissatisfy the employee. This was the very reason why Taylor criticized. An employee, provided optimum degree of freedom in work can improve himself on the job which the employees, calling for his suggestions, and framing work groups like quality circles help employee in improving his capabilities on job. Proper training through various methods not only at the beginning but from time to time also helps a employee to improve his capabilities which in turn satisfy him.

2.4.4 Opportunity for Career Growth

The employees seek career growth more and more recently. Job security ceased to satisfy employees. Employee tends to drift from a job which does not promise career growth. Many numbers of organizations are helping employees in this direction by helping them draw their career paths. Organisational chart is so prepared to accommodate employees in next higher position. Care is to be taken to chart proper career charts for employees at some level, so as a balance of human resource in the organization is maintained.
2.4.5 Social Integration in the Workforce

According to Walton, a satisfying identity and self-esteem are influenced by five characteristics of the workplace: freedom from prejudice, egalitarianism, upward mobility, supportive workgroups and community of feelings, and interpersonal openness.

Another step in this direction could be setting up of Joint Management Councils. These were first set up by Industrial Disputes Act 1847, in 1958. Join management councils were meant to (a) improve working conditions, productivity and communication (b) assist in administration of law and collective agreements (c) encourage suggestions from workers and (d) create a sense of participation

2.4.6 Constitutionalism

Bias on part of management, lack of privacy, improper process of discipline and so on, tamper the constitutionalism of an organization. The constitutionalism can be considered as hygiene factor i.e., thought it may not satisfy or motivate the employees considerably. The absence of it is definitely, felt by the employees and may have adverse effects.

2.4.7 Work and Quality of Life

A challenging work which utilizes the capabilities of employees plays important role in QWL. Right person for right job is the motto gaining importance.

Emery and Thorsurd (1969) identified six psychological requirements of working people.
a. The need for variety in the content of a job

b. The need for belong to learn on the job and go on learning

c. The need for some minimal area of decision making that the individual can call his own

d. The need for some minimal degree of social support and recognition in the work place

e. The need for the individual to be able to relate what he does and what he produces to his social life.

f. The need to feel that the job leads to some sort of desirable future.

2.4.8 Social Relevance of Work

The employees feel a need to relate their work socially. For example, those in service – oriented organization who directly relate their jobs socially and can gain immediate recognition in a group are most satisfied. If his organization is attracted / criticized by the government or public on any aspect, the employee develops stress and gets frustrated. As such social relevance of work of each employee is very important in measuring his quality of work life.

While deliberating on quality of work life, the International Labour Office (ILO) enumerates the following areas as determinant of QWL:

- Hours of work and arrangements of working time
- Work organization and job content
Impact of new technologies on working conditions

Working conditions of women young workers, older workers and other special categories.

Work – related welfare services and facilities

Shop floor participation in the improvement of working conditions.

Added to above constituents Herrick and Maccoby’s identified four basic principles, which result in humanization of work. Brief descriptions of these principles are as follows:

1. **The Principle of Security**

   One of the preconditions of humanization of work is that work should be free from anxiety, fear and the loss of future employment. Such safe and secured working conditions help to foster skills and ideas.

2. **The Principle of Equity**

   This implies fair reward for effort made by the workers. Profit sharing between the owner and workers is one such example of following principle of equity. This results the humanization of work.

3. **The Principle of Individualation**

   Individualation refers to freedom and autonomy to workers so as to encourage them to develop themselves to their utmost competence.
4. The Principle of Democracy

Akin to principle of individualation, the principle of democracy, implies right to personal privacy, freedom of speech, and equitable treatment, ongoing participative management in business organizations, symbolizes the principle of democracy.10

2.5 SPECIFIC ISSUES OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

The American authors Klatt, Mudrick and Schuster are identified 11 specific issues in general. They are

1. Pay and Stability of Employment

Pay without stability of employment cannot satisfy the employee. Though stability of employment is not a serious problem in India, the management should ensure its employees stability to make them part of the organization in its real sense.

2. Occupational Stress

Stress is a condition of strain on one’s emotions, through process and physical condition. Preferring all types of jobs inevitably causes stress, though the intensity may vary from job to job. As such job performance depends upon effective management of stress in addition to other factors which in turn depends upon identification of sources of stress.
3. Organisational Health Programme

The idea behind such health centers is to develop mental health by maintaining good physical health. This can be done through encouraging employees to take up physical exercises, and sports activities.

4. Alternative Work Schedule

Each employee may have his own preferences of working hours. The management can introduce schemes like work at home, flexible working hours, staggered hours, reduced work week and part-time employment.

5. Participative Management and Control of Work

Participative management is life blood to quality of work life which creates a feeling of commitment among the workers, thus improving their QWL.

6. Recognition

Appreciate an employee in public and criticize him in private. Recognition and appreciation is a magic which changes anyone’s attitudes towards anyone. Recognition at an appropriate time can improve personal relations in the organization.

7. Superior – Subordinate Relations

A relation between boss and subordinate is an important aspect in improving total work culture, productivity and QWL of any organization.
8. Grievance Procedure

Grievance procedure is to be handled carefully, because between the two parties, one is bound to dissatisfy. The management using apathy and concern should try to reduce this dissatisfaction as much as possible.

9. Adequacy of Resources

Adequate resources should be ensured to the employees on work. Inadequacy may cause stress to employees who are prepared to work but cannot find resources.

10. Seniority and Merit in Promotion and Employment

Either seniority or merits are usually considered for promotions and employment. Management has to consider either one depending upon the attitudes of employees. Sometimes they can also consider both.

11. Employment on Permanent Basis

Stable employment is something which gives confidence to the employee which is prime factor for good employment. With given job security, the employee strive for the organization.

2.6 BARRIERS TO QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

Though the positive effect of QWL is already established, all parties of the organization still resist to any schemes or procedure to improve QWL. The management may feel that the QWL at present level is satisfactory enough and no steps need be taken.
to improve it. They fail to measure the impact of improved QWL on the psyche of the employee, though all employees basically aspire for satisfaction of employees.

Employees on the other hand resist to changes as discussed earlier, with a pre-conceived notion that any scheme, the management takes up would be to increase production without extra cost.

Another barrier to the improvement of QWL is lack of financial resources. The employer with his limited financial resources think before providing better working conditions, offering better wages and implementing other programmes of QWL.

However, the situation is slowly changing towards good. All parties of organization, that is, employer, employees and unions are realizing the importance of QWL. Employees also are taking up awareness programmes to educate employees in this regard and then implement QWL improvement programmes.

Strategies for improving QWL, according to Subba Rao, are self-managed work teams, job redesign and enrichment, effective leadership and supervisory behaviour, career development alternative work schedules, job security.

All the above steps depict the importance of management’s efforts in this regard. By implementing such changes the management can create sense of involvement, commitment, and togetherness among the employees which paves way for better quality of work life.
2.7 QUALITY OF WORK LIFE – INDIA – ABROAD

Experiments are being conducted in industrially advanced countries to find out cause of general frustration among employees and resulting misunderstandings between management and employees and the ultimate industrial sickness and unrest.

The famous Tavistock studies from which socio-technical system emerged provided answers to most of these questions. In brief, this system advocated industrial democracy, participative management, minimum involvement of management in the tasks of employees and improved interpersonal relations to overcome the labour problems. Managements, especially in industrially developed countries were quick to react to these suggestions. As such they had taken up research and experimental studies in their organizations. With good results showing up in no time, these organizations started practicing the same.

The employees also, being more educated and more informed through unions. Grew more logical and demanded for increased involvement in the management. Now, both management and workers are realizing the importance of QWL.

2.7.1 Quality of Work Life – United States of America

QWL is sometimes referred to as humanising the working life and emphasizing the human factor. USA can be said as pioneer in developing thoughts, ideas and identifying various dimensions of QWL. Richard E. Walton, an American professor played a major role in developing the concept of Quality of Work Life. In fact, the eight
factors that he proposed to measure QWL made the task easy worldwide. Still these factors are mostly used in measuring QWL.

2.7.2 Quality of Work Life – United Kingdom

Changing economic environment due to the impact of world war and changing technology, changing political environment due to increased Government intervention brought in changes in industrial scene of the country, which initiated improved co-operation and trust between management and workers, which paved way for practices quality of work life.

2.7.3.1 Quality of Work Life – Sweden

The decision–making power in Sweden mostly lays with management as they have a right to ‘hire and fire’ and ‘to distribute and manage jobs’. But with the increase in manpower problem, the managements are taking steps recently towards as a participative management. According to Agevold, an academician, efforts were made in redesigning work and making workers participation effective.

2.7.3.2 Quality of Work Life – Italy

Italy is a scene of high attention paid towards QWL in early 1970s, then decline in attention during later years of 1970s, as they perceived QWL as a ‘peripheral problem’. And in recent years, the Government of Italy is again taking all steps to increase QWL consciousness among organizations with setting up of organizations like ‘Kstitue de studi Lavora’ and ‘Istituto Ricerca Intervento SviSistemi Orgniativi’.

### 2.7.3.3 Quality of Work Life – West Germany

West Germany like many other countries had become concerned about working conditions and other labour problems due to decreased productivity and industrial unrest.

As a measure towards improving QWL, that Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs introduced a research programme on humanisation of work in 1974. The concentration was on problems of industrial workers, particularly those from basic and mental processing industries. After 1976 the attention was on future orientation of the programmes and the priority was in the contents of such programmes.

### 2.7.3.4 Quality of Work Life – Japan

Japan has always been first in introducing labour welfare programmes, maintaining sound labour management relations and practicing any new concept which ensure good industrial atmosphere. In case of QWL, Japan can be said as torch – bearer in introducing QWL – improvement programmes.

Their success in implementing QWL – improvement programmes can be mostly attributed to the positive attitudes of both management and employees and also extensive support from Government in all possible ways.

The Japanese have a two – way approach towards QWL – improvement programmes that is, flexible employment of work force and employees general
acceptance to technological changes. Many other western and some of the Asian countries are also contributing towards QWL – improvement programmes.

2.8 QUALITY OF WORK LIFE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

India is a country with various cultures, value systems and varied interests. As such it is difficult to assess the impact of a particular concept in the country as a whole. QWL improvement was not considered as important factor in India until recently. Because there were more impending factors like resource deficiency, environmental threats, serious financial problems and lack of consciousness among employees in this regard can also be considered as one of the reasons for delayed improvement of QWL. Though trade unions were playing an important role, their part is more of a destructive one. Their negative attitude towards management did not in any way help the improvement of QWL. In fact, workers selected for bipartite committees for decision-making are viewed by the unions as their rivals.

The worker is not just like other factors of production such as, machinery, land capital but a human being with feelings and emotions, and the organizations have to behave with workers accordingly. The establishment of a separate ministry of Human Resources Development by the Government of India is a testimony to such a realization. Indian worker’s has yet to be duly recognized and rewarded accordingly.

In India, around 10 per cent of workers in organised sector are unionized. The past records relating to labour unions land enough evidence that the unionized work force has been much vocal for demands of one and or other. These usually relate to their better working conditions.
The human behaviour is highly unpredictable and complex underline the need for the study of organizational behaviour. QWL is one of the newer concepts experimenting how to make effective utilization of human resources. There are also differences among the views of managements regarding QWL. Some have come to a stage, where they see human resource as a critical one in the developmental process and thus striving to take all steps to improve it, whereas the other organizations still did not realize the importance of Human Resources. Even if they realize, the improvement strategies confine themselves. They ignore the other aspect that is, the higher order needs of the employees. This is so, especially in case of small and medium scale industries and multi-nationals are fast realizing the need for improvement of QWL.

QWL in India seems in practice in a variety of operational systems like workers participative job enrichment, quality circles and the like. The Government’s intervention in this regard is minimum. The inclusion of the concept workers participation in management did not in any way influence the improvement of QWL. The Ministry of Human Resource Development is taking active steps to implement some of the Human Resource Development programmes to which QWL correlates.

What is important in India at this stage is developing consciousness among all sections of industry that is workers, unions and management. Once these parties view QWL with a positive approach, the improvement programme can be effectively planned and implemented. Because a positive relationship between improved QWL and increase in worker’s satisfaction is almost already established.\textsuperscript{12}
2.9 IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

Improvement in QWL is a source of numerous gains. It might lead to more positive feeling towards one’s self (greater self esteem), towards one’s job (improved job satisfaction and involvement and towards the organization stronger commitment to the organization goals). Increased QWL might also be result in building up of physically and psychologically healthy, productive, adaptable and motivated employees. The society as a whole might gain from quality of work life. Enhancement in quality of work life might help government combat, certain social problems such as unrest in society, mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse and inequitable distribution of national income.

The changing economic scenario has necessitated the significance of improving performance of work organizations, in globalization of the economy and the resultant competitive environment demands, new work culture, high levels of commitment to job and organizational goals among the employees. This cannot be attained unless adequate measures to be taken to improve quality of work life in organization in India.

2.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher has studied the conceptual framework of quality of work life. This study showed the concept of QWL, Definition of QWL, Determinants of QWL, such as Adequate and Fair Compensation, Safe, Healthy Working Conditions, Opportunity to Develop Human Capacities, Opportunity for Career Growth, Social Integration in the Workforce, Constitutionalism, Work and Quality of Life, and Social Relevance of Work, Specific issues of QWL, Barriers to QWL, QWL – India – Abroad, QWL in the Indian context and Importance of QWL.
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CHAPTER II

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Concept of Quality of Work Life
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