CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

New and faster technology, redefined values, and shifting customer demands are changing the way businesses operate in the 21st century. The success of any organization depends to a large extent upon the capability, competence, efficiency, and level of development of human resources, which, being the active agents, accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, and build social, economic and political organizations. No organization can think of viability and effectiveness without the efficient utilization of human resources. Therefore, human resource is the most important resource and is considered the backbone of every organization. Though factors such as exploration of natural resources, availability of physical and financial resources, and international aid contribute to the economic development of a country, none of these factors is more significant than committed manpower. In fact, it may be said that all the development comes from the human mind.1

There are vast differences in development between countries which seem to have almost equal resources. As such, the countries are endowed with the same level of natural resources, technology, international aid, and

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so on. Their productivity and development mostly depend upon the availability, efficiency and committed human resources. However, globalization makes human resource management of the organizations more challenging and it raises a number of new issues like cross-cultural training, compensation, benefits, etc.

Today, organizations operate in an environment characterized by technological changes, which in turn, have an effect on employment opportunities, skill requirement, management policies, strategies and style, expectations and aspirations of employees as well as the physical working conditions. In the industrial world, the thrust is now given to “quality” in order to foster a quality culture. Quality assumes a goal or an objective or even a priority. Quality work cannot be achieved easily. Besides, people's issues move to the foreground and technical issues take a supporting role. Effective utilization of human resources requires better quality of work life by providing adequate financial compensation, good working conditions, suitable opportunities for growth and development, workers’ participation in management and by ensuring social justice in the organization.

1.2. Concept of Quality of Work Life

Since time immemorial, there has been a focus on the quality of work life in India. This is due to the fact that the entire Indian philosophy has

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developed itself on the basis of improving the quality of life of employees due to the stress even in the scriptures, sacred books and the epics, to the need and maintenance of quality in every one's life. Karma-Yoga is prescribed as a way of life. Karma refers to work and Karma Yoga deals with meaning of work, its implications, and the way in which it should be done. Applied in a narrow sense, it can describe requisites of the highest quality in work.

Quality of work life is a generic phrase that covers a person’s feelings about every dimension of work, including economic rewards and benefits, security, working conditions, organizational and inter-personal relationships and intrinsic meaning in a person’s life. Different expressions have been used to denote quality of work life in different countries. To quote a few, for example, in French speaking nations, the most common expression is 'improvement in working conditions'. In the former socialist economies 'workers’ participation' is the term that is widely accepted. In Scandinavia, the concept of quality of work life centers on 'work environment' and 'democratization of work place'. The English concept of 'quality of work life' is understood commonly in all industrialized countries, even if it is sometimes bare.

Quality of work life is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution, and they should be treated with dignity and respect. The elements that are relevant to an individual’s quality of work life include the task, physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job. People conceive of quality of work life as a set of methods, such as autonomous work groups, job enrichment and high involvement aimed at boosting the satisfaction and productivity of workers. It requires employee commitment to the organization and an environment in which this commitment can flourish. Therefore, quality of work life is a comprehensive construct that includes an individual’s job related well-being and the extent to which work experiences are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other negative personal consequences.

work life means the sum total of values, material and non-material, attained by a worker through his life as a wage or salary earner.\textsuperscript{10}

Sirgy, et al. define quality of work life as employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace.\textsuperscript{11} The quality of work life is conceptually similar to well-being of employees but differs from job satisfaction which solely represents the workplace domain.\textsuperscript{12} Quality of work life is not a unitary concept, but has been seen as incorporating a hierarchy of perspectives that not only include work-based factors, but also factors that broadly reflect life satisfaction and general feelings of well-being.\textsuperscript{13} Quality of work life can be described as the nature of work, the physical conditions, the psychological stress one experiences from the work and from other components at the work place, and the group morale where he performs.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Lawler, E. E (2005). “Strategies for Improving the Quality of Work Life”, \textit{American Psychologist}, Vol.37, pp.486-493.
\end{itemize}
The quality of work life is the working conditions’ response to needs and desires of an individual.\textsuperscript{15} Cummings and Worley mention that quality of work life has two meanings.\textsuperscript{16} Firstly, it means a good feeling towards work and good mental health experienced from work in terms of incentives, safe working conditions, and growth. Secondly, it means the ways that organizations use to assure the quality of work such as creating the meaning and importance of work responsibility by applying efficient teamwork and management and labour relation systems. For promoting the quality of work life, various management strategies such as new designs, quality control circle, and participative management are to be initiated.\textsuperscript{17}

To sum up, quality of work life is viewed as a wide-ranging concept, which includes adequate and fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions and social integration in the work organization that enable an individual to develop and use all his or her capacities. Most of the definitions aim at achieving effective work environment that meets the organizational and personal needs and values that promote health, well being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non-work life.


1.3. Importance of Quality of Work Life

As more companies have started realizing that a happy employee is a productive employee, they have started looking for ways to improve the work environment. Many have implemented various work-life programs to help employees, including alternate work arrangements, onsite childcare, exercise facilities, relaxed dress codes, and more. The quality of work life movement aims at integrating the socio-psychological needs of employees, the structure and process of the organization and the existing socio-cultural milieu. It creates a culture of work commitment in organizations and society at large so as to ensure higher productivity and greater job satisfaction. The quality of work life has an important bearing on the total quality of the people.\(^{18}\) It leads to a better quality of life of the people and vice versa. Thus, it has been considered a means and at the same times an end in itself. It is an end because the quality of life can be achieved only through the quality of work life. It means the experience gained through work life that helps workers to acquire excellence, high amount of civic competence and better skills which are necessary for the development of manpower.

The benefits of quality of work life have direct effects on increasing job satisfaction, creating feelings of belonging, and reducing rates of change.

The quality of work life affects the organization in three ways: Firstly, it increases organizational productivity; secondly, it increases work spirit, encouragement and motivation of workers, and lastly, it helps to improve the potential of workers. Quality of work life programmes are desirable for human needs because they act as a motivating factor for better working, comprehend conditions at employment, include work environment and social integration and seek to employ the higher skills of work and provide an environment that encourages to improve their skills. If quality of life at work could be improved, it would benefit and reward not only the individual employee, but also the company, its customers and society as a whole.

1.4. Evolution of Quality of Work Life

The concern for quality of work life was first noticed in the early 1970s. It was seen as the latest revolution that was taking place in the relationship between men and work. Two drastic changes in this relationship have been noticed in the past. The first one resulted from the use of machine power and the second one resulted from the explosion of information technology. The third revolution is now taking place in

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humanization of work.\textsuperscript{21} The genesis of concern for quality of work life could be found in the humanistic tradition within the social sciences that try to highlight the employees’ need for meaningful and satisfying work and for participation in decisions that influence their work environment. With the beginning of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, an industrial worker had to adapt himself to machines that have become increasingly independent of both human energy and human ingenuity for his operation. Technology having not yet reached a high degree of refinement, the worker still serves as complement to the machine. The machine imposed on him has disturbed his rhythm and increasingly reduced the number and importance of decisions he has to make. The constraint the industrial worker has to endure is a totally different from those of agricultural workers to whom technology is complement.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the role of the workers continued to evolve. This evolution was heading towards the strict assimilation of the workers into the very operations of a machine. Although Taylor had furnished the impetus, there were a number of individuals who have been bringing the movement to its maturity along with a number of dimensions. Taylor’s contemporaries played relatively a minor, though important role in bringing the movement towards its maturity by stating the dimensions of

maximum specialization and repetition; minimum worker responsibility, authority and decision making power; minimum requirement for training and development so that workers can be moved from one job to another with minimum disruption in productive process; and administrative directions and creative contributions restricted to managers and supervisory agents. The work of Taylor and Fayol has, of course, undeniable economic advantages; however, the economic advantages have been considerably offset by increasing human problems, including boredom, under-utilization of intellectual skills, alienation, absenteeism and turn-over.

In reaction to the obvious problems caused by simple repetitive jobs, the "Human Relations School", centered in U.S has attempted to draw upon the knowledge acquired through disciplines of sociology and psychology and apply it to the day-to-day industrial life. Much of their work was directed towards the refinement of scientific management by applying new insights to evolving social industrial system not in the interests of workers, but to optimize its manipulative capacity in the interests of higher productivity and profit. This abuse of behavioural science has separated the human organization of industry from its technological organization and left scientific management virtually intact and brought the school into disrepute. The contributions of Maslow, McGregor, Herzberg and Trist were certainly of critical importance to the development of new concepts and experimental processes that would lower the antagonism of workers towards their work.
Maslow’s concept of "need hierarchy" has been given considerable importance in the world of management. This theory provides significant clues to answer, "Why is well remunerated employee not motivated to carry out his responsibility"? According to him, human needs arrange themselves in prepotency. Once the physiological needs are gratified, the higher order needs emerge and dominate the behaviours.

Building upon the work of Maslow, it became clear to Herzberg, who was greatly interested in the problems of work motivation, that the traditional methods for division of labour used only a small portion of human potential. Since each worker has many more skills to offer than those he is asked to perform, Herzberg wonders to what extent a worker could derive his motivation to work from the task itself. When lower order needs are not satisfied, the worker is likely to feel unhappy, but the satisfaction of these needs does not necessarily make him happy. A worker’s satisfaction can be increased only by motivators that satisfy order. Herzberg has isolated five motivators, namely, the need for achievement, recognition by others, the work itself, responsibility, and the opportunity for advancement. According to Herzberg, work organization should, therefore, seek to introduce these motivators into work situation. This has laid the foundation for well known concepts of job enlargement and job enrichment.
During the same period another group of researchers in Tavistock Institute of London focused on the integration of technical as well as human and social dimensions of industry, called socio-technical system. The concept emphasizes that optimization of the technical production system may be undertaken currently with the optimization of the social system, by means of job constructed to satisfy human needs adequately. The socio-technical approach fostered the idea that there appears to be a possible and desirable alternative to the modes of work organization inherited from scientific management for a given technology. There is not only one but several possible and effective ways of work organization. Some of these offer better socio-technical combinations than others and allow for improvement in the quality of work life without sacrificing any of the organizational effectiveness of the enterprise.

The developments in Europe are best characterized by Thorsurd. The history of quality of work life over the last twenty years is an account of organizational philosophy moving from socio-technical job design to redesign of organizations as learning units and finally to inter-organizational changes, including different spheres of society, particularly, enterprises, schools and public administration. Emery Thorsurd has carried out a study on the effectiveness of worker representative participation on company boards. The first phase of demonstration showed

up problems of diffusion. Subsequent efforts were made to build networks and develop a learning system in organizations. He identifies six psychological requirements of working people, namely, the need for variety in the content of a job, the need for being able to learn on the job and to go on learning, the need for some minimal area of decision-making that the individual can call his own, the need for some minimal degree of social support and recognition in the work place, the need for the individual to be able to relate what he does and what he produces to his social life, and the need to feel that the job leads to some sort of desirable future.

Therefore, from a historical perspective this concern for quality of work life in organizations can be seen as the latest, and, in many ways, the culmination of a string of reform movements that have been attempted during the past several decades, to protect the rights and interest of workers. Therefore, the concept of quality of work life is very close to the concept of human resource development. Improvement in quality of work life is considered necessary not only because it contributes to organizational efficiency and to a fall in negative employee behaviour, but also because justice and fair pay demand it.

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1.5. Statement of the Problem

Globalization of the economies and the consequent compulsion of facing competition both in the domestic and international markets pose a serious challenge to all concerned, viz. employers, employees and the society. Though the positive effect of quality of work life has already been established, all parties of the organization still resist any scheme or procedure to improve quality of work life. The management may feel that the quality of work life at the present level is satisfactory enough and no steps need to be taken to improve it. It leads to poor morale of employees, lack of complete integration between employees and management, demoralization and lack of job security. Employees, on the other hand, resist changes with a preconceived notion that any scheme the management takes up would be to increase production without extra cost. Of course, majority of the public sector undertakings and few private sector organizations have been in the red since 1991 and whenever certain demands arose in the past, the management pleaded its helplessness in meeting such demands because of financial constraint and steadily declining profitability. To attract and retain employees, companies need to be exploiting those points of convergence and continuously work with employees to redesign the work, eliminate job stress, increase job autonomy, provide learning and training opportunities, and to handle such problems, quality of work life of employees is required. For bringing out
quality of work life of employees in magnesite companies, examining the perception of the employees and evolving a suitable parameters to improve their quality of work life has become imperative. In this context, the researcher has made an attempt to study the quality of work life of employees in the select magnesite companies in Salem district.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the perception of the employees towards quality of work life in the select magnesite companies in Salem district. Besides, the study has the following secondary objectives:

1. To study the need and importance of quality of work life of employees in general.

2. To review the quality of work life practices implemented in the select magnesite companies in Salem district

3. To study the satisfaction level of the employees towards prevailing quality of work life in the select magnesite companies in Salem district.

4. To study the perception of the employees towards various quality of work life dimensions in the select magnesite companies in Salem district.
5. To suggest appropriate measures to improve the quality of work life of employees based on the findings of the present study.

1.7. Operational Definitions of Concepts

Employees

Employees are people working in the select magnesite companies on a permanent basis. They include executives, supervisory staff and workmen.

Employees’ Satisfaction

Satisfaction denotes a set of attitudes about a particular thing. Thus, the term “satisfaction” for the purpose of the study connotes the attitude of employees of the select magnesite companies towards the quality of work life.

Attitude

Attitude refers to the feelings, beliefs and opinions of the employees on the quality of work life practices of the select magnesite companies.

Quality of Work Life

The term “quality of work life” refers to values and attitudes contained in the working life of any employee in the select magnesite companies.
**Working Conditions**

It refers to the safe working environment and equipment for health that doesn’t pose any danger for working including appropriate arrangement of the working place, tools and devices, temperature, light and sound.

**Opportunity for Growth and Development**

It refers to an opportunity to improve various skills of the employees in the select magnesite companies. The employees have more chances to use their own working knowledge and skills.

**Social Integration of Work**

Social integration refers to freedom from prejudice based on skills, abilities, and potentials of a person without having discrimination.

**Constitutionalism**

Constitutionalism refers to personal right, freedom to express, right to express one’s opinion about working policies, equality, and respect for being human, equal chances, both in work and private for everyone.

**Work and Total Life Space**

Total life space refers to the relation between the time spent at work and the time spent for personal matters. In other words, it is the balance between life and work of employees.
**Occupational Stress**

Occupational stress is a mental or physical tension or both emerging from occupation and its environment. For the present study, it is defined as a person’s response to some threatening or disturbing stimuli from the occupation.

**Social Relevance**

Social relevance refers to a creative and useful awareness of one’s performance towards society.

**1.8. Testing of Hypotheses**

In order to examine the perception of the employees towards quality of work life in the select magnesite companies, the following null hypotheses have been formulated and tested:

**H$_{01}$**: There is no significant association among the satisfaction levels of the employees belonging to different demographic profiles towards prevailing quality of work life in the select magnesite companies.

**H$_{02}$**: There is no significant relationship among the acceptance levels of the respondents belonging to different demographic profiles towards factors contributing to quality of work life of employees in the select magnesite companies.
1.9. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is examining the quality of work life of employees in the select magnesite companies in Salem district. There are three large scale magnesite companies in operation in Salem district, namely, the Tamil Nadu Magnesite Limited (TANMAG), Dalmia Magnesite Corporation (DMC), and SAIL Refractory Company Limited (SRCL). The employees working in these organizations were only considered as total population. In the present study, the most common 11 variables that influence the quality of work life of employees such as nature of job, compensation, working conditions, opportunity for growth and development, social integration of work, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and total life space, occupational stress, workers’ participation in management, grievance handling, and social relevance of work only were studied.

1.10. Sampling Design

This study is confined to the employees of the above said three magnesite companies. The employees working in these organizations are only considered: they are about 1241 as on 31.12.2010. The employees are categorized into executives, supervisory staff and workmen. By adopting the stratified random sampling, 497 respondents (40% of the population
from each stratum) are selected. The following table shows the sampling distribution of the present study.

**TABLE 1.1**

**Sampling Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Companies</th>
<th>Executives</th>
<th>Supervisory Staff</th>
<th>Workmen</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRCL</td>
<td>15 (37)</td>
<td>11 (27)</td>
<td>119 (298)</td>
<td>145 (362)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalmia</td>
<td>11 (27)</td>
<td>20 (49)</td>
<td>147 (368)</td>
<td>178 (444)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANMAG</td>
<td>9 (22)</td>
<td>27 (67)</td>
<td>138 (346)</td>
<td>174 (435)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>35 (86)</td>
<td>58 (143)</td>
<td>404 (1012)</td>
<td>497 (1241)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parenthesis refer to population

**1.11. Tools for Data Collection**

This study is empirical in nature based on survey method. The first-hand information for this study was collected from the human resource departments of the select magnesite companies in Salem district. The study is mainly based on primary data. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 497 employees with the help of questionnaire. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was prepared after a perusal of available literature. The questionnaire was constructed based on Likert scaling technique. Pre-testing of questionnaire was done during January 2011, involving
25 respondents to know the relevance of the questions. In the light of pre-
testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the questions and their
sequences. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals,
magazines, government reports, books and unpublished dissertations. The
more relevant secondary sources of information were collected from the
Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; School of Economics, Delhi
University, New Delhi; and Karnataka University, Dharwad. The data so
collected were entered into a master table and tabulated to arrive at useful
conclusions.

1.12. Period of Study

As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected for
a period of 6 months from March 2011 to August 2011.

1.13. Framework of Analysis

The ultimate object of the study is to examine the quality of work life
of employees in the select magnesite companies in Salem district. In order
to study the attitude of employees, chi square test, analysis of variance,
student t test, co-efficient of variation, multiple regression analysis, multiple
discriminant function analysis, and percentage analysis were employed. The
chi square test was employed to measure the association between the
satisfaction levels of the respondents belonging to different demographic
variables and the prevailing quality of work life of employees in the select
magnesite companies in Salem district. Analysis of variance and student t test which are used to find out the relationship among the acceptance level of the respondents belonging to different demographic background towards factors contributing to quality of work life of employees in the select magnesite companies in Salem district. The co-efficient of variation was employed to find out the consistency in the acceptance level of the respondents towards factors contributing to quality of work life. Multiple regression analysis was used to measure the effect of the personal variables towards the impact of quality of work life in the select magnesite companies. Multiple discriminant function analysis was used to study how the different variables contributing to QWL discriminate among the employees of three companies namely SRCL, Dalmia and TANMAG. Multiple discriminant function analysis was also used to study how the different variables contributing to quality of work life of employees discriminate among the three types of employees namely workmen, supervisors and executives. To arrive at possible solutions, comprehensive, descriptive and percentage analyses were also employed in this study.

1.14. Limitations of the Study

The present study is concerned with employees’ perception towards quality of work life, rather than how it is reported by the top management of
the select magnesite companies in Salem district. Besides, the study has the following limitations:

1. In any study having a bearing on attitude, incomplete and non-responses to some questions could not be avoided. However, considerable care was exercised in making the study as objective and systematic as possible.

2. The study has the limitation of time and resources, usually faced by the researchers. Only 497 employees from 3 magnesite companies have been selected and studied. Hence, the conclusion drawn is specific and cannot be generalized.

1.15. Scheme of the Report

The thesis is presented in five chapters.

The first chapter, “Introduction and Design of the Study,” presents the introduction, concept of quality of work life, importance of quality of work life, evolution of quality of work life, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, operational definitions of concepts, testing of hypotheses, scope of the study, sampling design, tools for data collection, period of study, framework of analysis, limitations of the study, and scheme of the report.

The second chapter, “Review of Literature” deals with the previous studies related to the objectives of the present study.
The third chapter, “Quality of Work Life Practices of the Magnesite Companies” focuses on the quality of work life practices that are implemented in the select magnesite companies in Salem district.

The fourth chapter “Perception of the Employees towards Quality of Work Life” furnishes the profile of the sample employees and highlights their perception towards quality of work life in the select magnesite companies in Salem district.

The final chapter “Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion” presents the summary of the findings of the present study and offers various suggestions for improving the quality of work life of employees in the select magnesite companies.