

# A Study of Quality of Work Life of the Employees Working in Telecom Sector

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** The author aims to study the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of employees working in some of the major telecom companies in India. QWL is not only a concept that can be used to understand the level of motivation of an employee but it can also be used to happily engage & retain them. The paper attempts to compare and understand the level of QWL in each company and relationship between the various factors affecting it.

**Methods** – Initially a qualitative study was done based on the reports and articles available in the public domain on the various telecom companies in order to get a first hand information on the various measure already taken by them to improve the QWL. An extensive review of literature was carried on for developing a theoretical base and with the help of a questionnaire and appropriate statistical tools the QWL was studied in major telecom companies both public and private.

**Findings-** This paper evaluates the impact of Quality of Work Life and the various means by which the employer tries to improve the QWL for its employees.

**Implications-** Improving the Quality of Work Life can lead to better job satisfaction, increases organization effectiveness and individual productivity. It can be used as a tool in creating an amicable climate within the organization where people are self driven for work rather than driven by a process.

**Originality** – The paper is a part of ongoing research in the field of QWL of employee working in telecom sector at a stage when the sector is going through so many changes. The paper tends to explore the level up to which the telecom companies are interested in improving the QWL of its employees.

**Key Words** - Quality of Work Life, HRD Climate, Job Satisfaction & Telecom Company.

### Introduction:

As said by the famous English naturalist Charles Darwin that “it is not the strongest of the species that survives nor the most intelligent that survives, it is the one most adaptable to change. Adaptability is a relative term which depends both upon the conditions and on the individual willingness to embrace it. An individual only changes himself when he is convinced that the change he is going through today is going to help him not only survives but thrive in the future. Today in this globalised economy in order to grow one has to make changes as the environment that is prevalent in a particular country is based on the norms and belief of the locals and the prevalent social belief. However the changes made are not always one sided now a day’s organization are also mending there ways in order to be seen a better place to work. All these efforts by the organization are aimed towards improving the organization effectiveness which in a way will improve its profitability.

The only way an organization is going to improve its effectiveness is when the individuals associated with it are going to perform more than what is expected from them. It is a well established fact that nothing motivates individual than monetary gains but time and again it has been proved that the other supporting factors like organizational climate, emotional support, flexible work arrangement, rewards & benefits had greater impact on individual than anything else.

The above relationship is best defined by the concept of Quality of Work life first propounded by Davis & Chern in 1972 at a conference held Arden House, Columbia University, New York. Organizations are working hard to find new ways of satisfying their customers ever changing needs as a result there is an increasing pressure on the employees to not only give their 100 % but also to come up with fresh ideas and methods by which the organizations bottom line can be improved. Long working hours, goal oriented task and work pressure are common in any present day organization given the time and importance that an employee gives to his work it is imperative that he should be happy and enjoy what he is doing. Since a frustrated, depressed and an exasperated employee is not going to bring anything positive to the work environment. Quality of Work Life therefore includes the sum of accountable and non-accountable values that an individual received from his employer throughout the tenure of his work in exchange of the efforts that has been put by him in order to achieve organizational objective. Thus Quality of Work life can be defined as the extent to which the employees of an organization can satisfy their important personal needs through the experiences that they have received in the organization (J. Richard & J.Loy). However the concept of QWL is not something that has come to the fore overnight. It has strong linkages with the Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Need theory of Motivation propounded in the year.....According to which an individual strives hard to satisfy the different kinds of needs divided into the lower and higher level need which includes physiological, social, love & belongingness, esteem and self actualization .All these needs in a way are associated with improving the quality of life of an individual and since he spends more than half time of his day on the place of work these factors are going to influence his quality of work life.

#### **Rationale for Choosing Telecom Sector:**

In recent times, Indian telecom sector has emerged as one of the fastest growing telecom markets in the world, particularly by the unparalleled growth in mobile telephony it is now the second largest telecom market globally. The total mobile services market revenue in India is \$29.8 billion in 2014 and is expected to touch \$37 billion by 2017, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.2. With over 951.84 million telephone subscribers as on 31 August, as per data available from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), India has the second highest number of phone users in the world after China. The continuous growth of the industry has attracted many major global manufacturers of telecom equipment to make investments in Indian market, paving the way for extensive provision of modern communication services in rural areas and also act as a strong predicator of boosting government revenues.

The Telecom sector is attracting the best of industry talent at both technical and non technical level. Indian Telecoms are doing every bit to improve the quality of life of its employees keeping in view that it will attract the best talent available in the market but retain them as well. The last decade has been very exciting for this sector, there was an exponential growth in the number of subscriber and on other the average revenue per user (ARPU) has also gone up. The result was that only those companies who had deep pockets in order to invest in infrastructure required handling this growing traffic were able to survive.

The year 2017 has seen great consolidation in this sector from 9 to 10 big players promoted by big corporations the likes of Tata Teleservices Ltd promoted by the TATA Group, both Reliance Jio and Reliance Communication promoted by Reliance Industries Ltd and Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) respectively, Idea promoted by Aditya Birla Group, Vodafone India Ltd a subsidiary of Vodafone Group Plc Telenor promoted by Maxis Communication and the likes of Aircel has gone either for merger or forced buyout. The public sector is also bleeding with slash in internet and call rates the ARPU has gone for a toss. The only way out of this whirlwind is to increase the customer base and in a way try to improve upon the revenue. But the side effect of this is that the preset environment of uncertainty and ambiguity has taken a toll on the life of an average employee working at the entry or mid management level in these companies.

### **Review of Literature:**

Quality of Work Life is a concept which has gained huge popularity in HR circle during the last few years, however the concept is a half century old. Studies on QWL have been going on in almost all the sectors, many scientist has come up with new angles which defines the QWL and the factors effecting it. In this section we will do a review of all those previously held studies and see whether something substantial can be drawn which can assist us in our present study. The broad terms associate with QWL usually are working hours, compensation, work environment, motivation & satisfaction however in the past (Lawler 1982) propounded that the role of QWL should be to improve employee productivity and his well being. Based on the review of literature the following factors where quite prominently seen effecting the QWL

**Respect at Work Place:** One of the most important factors that effects the QWL of an individual. The constitution of our country gives equality to all its citizen and do not differentiate them on the basis of any religion, caste, class or creed. It's the basic right of all citizens to be treated with respect.

**Opportunity to use & develop Human Skills:** In today's scenario no employer can guarantee job security but it can only provide skills to its employee which keep them relevant to the job market (Moses, 1999) every organization must give opportunity to its employee to use & develop these skills. It can be done by providing him training from time to time as per his requirement. Also by providing conducive environment wherein he can develop his skills and giving him opportunities to test these skills. There are various studies to prove that there is a relationship between the quality of working task, degree of involvement, career opportunities, job security and their impact on quality of work life (Gallie 2003)

**Safe & Healthy working condition:** Protection of employee against any kind of physical harm at the workplace is the utmost responsibility of his employer. An employer should do everything in order to make the employee feel safe at his work place. From providing them with safety gears and equipment to training them so that they do not harm themselves at the place of work are some of the measures which an employer takes to protect the interest of its employee. Facilities like clean drinking water, clean and odourless urinals, air curtain at the entrance proper air conditioning and ventilation, plantation & greenery are few of the measures which can promote a healthy working environment and thereby improves the QWL.

**Employee Welfare Facility:** Every employer provides certain type of facilities to its employees that are above the compensation or direct reward for the job done. Facilities like life insurance for the employee, health insurance for the family members, canteen & mess facility, housing facility, easy loans and many others are example of employee welfare facility which helps in improving the QWL.

**Job Security:** Every employee wants a level of certainty in his job, any job which gives reach divided in terms of monetary gains but is low in stability is not going to improve the QWL of the employee. If the employee is

always under pressure to prove is worth or outperform his colleagues or his previous performance will never be able enjoy his work.

**Occupational Stress:** Every profession has a level of stress associated with it ,an army man fighting for his country will be under a different kind of stress then a bank cashier .Both needs to be alert while working but the cost they have to pay for a small mistake is one losing his life and other to paying money from his own pocket. One cannot deny the fact that there is stress in almost all the professions in the world the level and intensity can vary from profession to profession. It's the responsibility of the organization to use measures to reduce this stress and help his employees to handle it not only to make him more productive and efficient but also to improve his QWL.

**Reward & Recognition Program:** Nothings motivate an individual then acknowledging his contribution to the organization. The Reward & Recognition Programs are designed in organization to provide this motivation in a systematic manner, so that the individual works constantly towards achieving his and organizational goals. The R&R program is now an integral part of HR department in an organization but for a dynamic environment an organization should not wait for a formal way of recognizing an employee a dynamic R&R system will always help in improving the QWL of an employee.

**Adequate & Fair Compensation:** Money cannot buy everything but it can buy most of the things. Every employee work to get paid for, whatever the perks associated with a particular type of organization the most important of them all is the compensation. It is the responsibility of an organization to pay adequate & fair compensation to its employee. There are different methods of calculating it but most organization strives to give something extra to its employees that are over and above of what is being paid in the market for doing the same type of job. It is the biggest influence on QWL.

**Physical Environment:** The physical environment has a huge impact on individual performance and his ability to think and act rationally under stress. The Hawthorne Studies conducted by Elton Mayo somewhere in the 1930s where an indicator of how light intensity can effect individual job performance (Jeffrey Muldoon, 2017). Ergonomics a study developed in the initial phases for the manufacturing and military personnel is now used widely in public domain. Ergonomics specialist use their knowledge of office furniture and equipment design to protect worker from long term muscular damage due to sitting in bad body posture in ineptly designed office furniture's ,which affect their job performance, increases stress, decrease job satisfaction and thereby influencing their overall QWL (Cooper and Dewe 2004 p. 95)

**Flexible Work Arrangement:** With the improvement in modes and methods of communication it is no longer necessary for an individual to be present at the place of work in order to get it done. Flexible Time or Tele commuting are approaches to work which has gained a lot of popularity in the last decade, especially in sectors like IT and ITeS and areas related to creativity & designing with gradually gaining importance in other sectors like Telecom, Banking and FMCG etc . Not only flexi work & tele commuting saves time for the individual to utilise his scarce resource on improving the quality of work rather than merely travelling, it gives him enough quality time which he can be spend with his friends & family.

**Fringe Benefits:** There are certain benefits which are not direct or mandatory on the part of the employer but if an organization provides these facilities to its employees it can help in motivating the individual than anything else. Benefits like paid pregnancy leave both for the male & female employees, crèche facility, education assistance like loans at lower interest rate for the children of the employee and relocation assistance

both related to logistic and boarding as well as helping the employee getting settled in the new location can help in improving the overall QWL.

**Friendly & Supportive co workers:** An employee spends on an average 8-10 hrs working in an organization for at least 5 days a week. If we calculate this for the entire year it's roughly around 60 % of his qualitative time is spend in company of his superiors, colleagues & subordinates. Having a healthy & supportive relationship with your co worker is imperative to improve the overall QWL of an individual. An organization should promote and facilitate this by ways of flexible HR policies and other platforms which improves the camaraderie between its employees.

**Supportive seniors:** People leave managers, not organization .People are attached to people not organization. These are some of the sayings which are very common in the corridors of high corporate. The very first interaction an employee have with the management of his organization is through his boss or superiors

**Social Relevance of Work:** An employee working in an organization is associated with a particular kind of profession and is playing some role in the society say for example an army men protecting his country against the enemy, a doctor working hard to save the life of his patient, a civil engineer helping in making dams and bridges for the betterment of society and a fire fighter saving life of a common man have a lot more social relevance of work compare to a C-Suite Executive of a MNC. The above profession are high on boosting the self esteem and are therefore improves the QWL of an individual compared to any other job in the society.

**Interesting & Challenging Work Assignment:** Nothing motivates an individual to work in an organization and do his job properly then the assurance that at the end of the month his account will be credited with the salary. But as employee progress in their career and grow merely a competitive and assured compensation do not motivates him. Interesting & challenging work assignments brings the much needed excitement at work place and motivates him to go to his organization and do his job. Every organization wants to break the monotony at workplace to keep its employee engaged and motivated thereby lowering the attrition rate, reduce instances unplanned leaves and improving overall QWL of the employee.

### **Objectives:**

- To identify factors influencing Quality of Work Life in Telecom Industry in India and understand the relative importance of each factor

### **Research Methodology:**

A thorough literature review was conducted on the topic before selecting the major factors that impacts the QWL of an employee. Based on these reviews, articles in reputed magazines and newspapers and discussion with the employees of telecom sector at length on various factors a set of 15 measures were carefully selected for the study. These measures intend to validate the concern of telecom employee's w.r.t QWL.

A structured questionnaire was prepared using these measures namely Respect at Work Place, Opportunity to use & develop Human Skills, Safe & Healthy Working condition ,Employee Welfare Facility, Job Security, Occupational Stress, Reward & Recognition Program ,Adequate & Fair Compensation ,Physical Environment ,Flexible Work Arrangement ,Fringe Benefits, Friendly & Supportive co workers, Supportive Seniors ,Social Relevance of Work ,Interesting & Challenging Work Assignment

The questionnaire was first pilot tested on 30 employee of telecom sector, appropriate statistical tools like Cronbach Alpha is use to test the reliability of questionnaire with  $r=0.962$  indicating a high reliability. A total

of 24 items representing these 15 measures were scored on a five point Likert scale ranging from 5 “I strongly agree” to 1 “I strongly disagree”.

The questionnaire was send to around 140 employees working in different telecom companies both public and private out of which around 120 employee responded positively indicating around 85% response rate that makes the study rigorous. The obtained data was analyses through SPSS 17.0 version

**Reliability Statistics**

**Table 1:Cronbach Alpha**

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</b>	<b>N of items</b>
.961	.962	24

**Data Analysis & Findings:**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to determine the sufficiency of the sample size, and Bartlet test of sphericity was applied to calculate the meaningfulness of the correlation matrix. As per the rule of thumb KMO values between 0.8 and 1 indicate the sampling is adequate for undergoing factor analysis. In our case the value was KMO = 0.898 which is good enough to go for exploratory factor analysis with maximum probability approach to identify the rate of loading of variables recognized in the component, and direct oblimix approach was used to interpret the variable.

**Table 2: KMO & Bartlett's Test Result**

<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</b>	<b>.898</b>
<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	<b>Approx, Chi-Square</b>
	<b>1856.946</b>
	<b>Df</b>
	<b>276</b>
	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>.000</b>

Factor Analysis: Factor Analysis was conducted on the 25 statements in order to reduce the dimension and to see the impact of underlying factors which explain most of the statements .It was found that of the 25 statements that where use to understand the factors that influence the quality of work life of employee working in telecom sector, only four factors can explain about 76 % of variability. The factors have correlation of .5 or less where deleted bases on the assumption that they have not strong correlation in a way that they can explain a factor. The factors so extracted where clubbed together in a way that they all are trying to explain a similar kind of underlying factor

The factors are as follows

**Factor-1**

**Table : 3 Factor Analysis Interpretation - Monetary Gains & Appreciation**

Q No	Measurable values	Weights	Variance	Identified Factor
FB5	Bonuses	0.920	<b>53.20 %</b>	<b>Monetary Gains &amp; Appreciation</b>
FB 6	Education Assistance	0.839		
FB 3	Health/Life Insurance	0.790		
MI 6	Competitive compensation	0.738		
MI 5	Reward & Recognition	0.663		

It was found through factor analysis that factors like bonuses, education assistance, life & health insurance ,competitive compensation and transparent reward & recognition programs along with recreation & canteen facility where heavily loaded together. This indicates that monetary gains along with recreation and other facilities have a positive impact on quality of Work life of individual.

**Factor-2**

**Table : 4 Factor Analysis Interpretation - Physical Ambience & Job Design**

Q No	Measurable values	Weights	Variance	Identified Factor
QWL 3	Elements attached with the jobs allows me to be creative and productive	0.673	<b>10.74 %</b>	<b>Physical Ambience &amp; Job Design</b>
Infra1	Ambience	0.623		

It was found through factor analysis that the physical ambience & job design has an overall impact on the creativity and thinking of an individual and hence improves his overall Quality of work life.

**Factor-3**

It was found through factor analyse that welfare facilities, stress management & job security has a huge impact on Quality of Work Life of an individual.

**Table : 5 Factor Analysis Interpretation - Job Security & Welfare facilities**

Q No	Measurable values	Weights	Variance	Identified Factor
QWL 7	The HRD department assures that every employee has his/her job security.	0.918	<b>8.43%</b>	<b>Job Security &amp; Welfare facilities</b>
QWL 6	The HRD department is concerned about the welfare facilities given to the employee	0.806		
QWL 4	The safety & security of workers are at highest priority for the HRD department	0.791		
QWL 8	The HRD department regularly organizes stress management workshops and fun activity session to motivate its employees	0.739		
QWL 5	This organization ensures employees' welfare to such an extent that the employees can save a lot of their mental energy for work purposes	0.676		

**Factor 4**

Supportive work environment and friendly colleagues goes a long way in keeping a good quality of work life.

**Table : 6 Factor Analysis Interpretation - Supportive Colleagues**

Q No	Measurable values	Weights	Variance	Identified Factor
MI 2	Supportive Seniors & Juniors	0.967	4.90 %	Supportive Colleagues
MI 1	Friendly Co-workers	0.951		

**Table 7 : Total Variance Explained Method PCA**

Component	Intial Eigen Values			Extractions Sums of Squared Loadings		Cumulati ve %
	Total	% of Varia nce	Cumulati ve %	Total	% of Variance	
1	12.929	53.872	53.872	12.929	53.872	53.872
2	2.433	10.138	10.138	2.433	10.138	64.01
3	1.888	7.865	7.865	1.888	7.865	71.875
4	1.118	4.658	4.658	1.118	4.658	76.533
5	0.875	3.646	3.646			
6	0.648	2.702	2.702			
7	0.508	2.116	2.116			
8	0.486	2.023	2.023			
9	0.403	1.679	1.679			
10	0.364	1.517	1.517			
11	0.343	1.428	1.428			
12	0.291	1.212	1.212			
13	0.238	0.993	0.993			
14	0.219	0.912	0.912			
15	0.206	0.86	0.86			
16	0.195	0.814	0.814			
17	0.173	0.722	0.722			
18	0.15	0.627	0.627			
19	0.136	0.568	0.568			
20	0.113	0.471	0.471			
21	0.101	0.422	0.422			
22	0.9	0.374	0.374			
23	0.048	0.201	0.201			
24	0.043	0.181	0.181			

**Factors Affecting QWL and there Question Number in the Questionnaire****Table :9 Dimensions of QWL and there Question Number in the Questionnaire**

S. No	Dimension of QWL	Question Number in the questionnaire
1	Respect at workplace	1
2	Opportunity to use & develop Human Skills	2,3
3	Safe & Healthy Working condition	4 &9.4
4	Employee Welfare Facility	5,6,10.3
5	Job Security	7
6	Occupational Stress	8
7	Reward & Recognition Program	11.5
8	Adequate & Fair Compensation	11.6 &10.5
9	Physical Environment	9.1,9.2,9.3
10	Flexible Work Arrangement	10.4
11	Fringe Benefits	10.1, 10.2, 10.6
12	Friendly & Supportive co workers	11.1
13	Supportive Seniors	11.2
14	Social Relevance of Work	11.3
15	Interesting & Challenging Work Assignment	11.4

**Implication & Conclusion**

It was found through the studies that of the five telecom companies on which this study was undertaken of which 4 were private and 1 were public ltd company the quality of life and the various related factor depended mainly on four factors .These factors were extracted from the 15 sub-factors which were initially studied after an intense review of literature. The factors include Monetary Gains & Appreciation, Physical Ambience & Job Design Supportive Colleagues, Job Security & Welfare facilities and accounted for more than76.54 % of total variance.

There have been many studies on Quality of Work Life of employees in various sectors but when it comes to a sector like telecom, we don't found much of qualitative work done here so far. On the basis of our study it was found that dimensions like organizational commitment, growth & future opportunity, flexi hours & recreation facilities, safety & health wellness which in the initial phase of the research were thought of importance to the employee, post analyses were found to be of little importance. The Telecom Sector in India is also going through its worst phase with the entire sector getting squeezed into 3 to 4 companies, probably a survey of this sort in an year or two again with the dust is settled may come up with some new findings and factors which impact the QWL of employee and suggest the organizations ways to improve it.

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