



A study on quality of work life in public sector coal mining industry

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Abstract

Primarily in labor-intensive industries like coal mining, Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a crucial factor in determining employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational success. Coal mining companies in the public sector labor in challenging environments with high occupational dangers, stringent regulations, and socioeconomic obligations. With particular reference to Coal India Limited, this study investigates the quality of work life among workers in public sector coal mines. Working conditions, occupational health and safety, pay and benefits, job security, work-life balance, employee participation, training and development, and grievance redressal procedures are among the main aspects of QWL that are the subject of the study. Mine workers, managers, and administrative personnel were given standardized questionnaires to complete in order to gather primary data using a descriptive research approach. Government documents, business reports, and pertinent literature were the sources of secondary data. The study comes to the conclusion that enhancing quality of work life through improved safety regulations, employee wellness initiatives, ongoing skill development, and participative management techniques can boost morale, lower absenteeism, and boost operational effectiveness.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life (QWL), Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), Coal Mining Industry, Industrial Relations, Coal India Limited, Labor Productivity

Introduction

The term "quality of work life" (QWL) describes how well employees are able to meet significant personal requirements while working for the company. It includes possibilities for career advancement, job stability, equitable pay, safe working conditions, and work-life balance.

One of the most dangerous sectors of the world economy is the coal mining sector. Through Coal India Limited, which runs a number of open-pit and underground mines throughout several states, the public sector controls the majority of coal production in India. Physical risks, environmental difficulties, and rigorous shift patterns are all part of mining operations. Consequently, productivity, safety, and staff morale all depend on maintaining a high level of QWL.

The compensation that coal miners make has a big impact on their standard of living and living conditions. Their ability to obtain basic essentials including food, clothing, housing, healthcare, and education depends on their income. Quality of Work Life (QoWL), however, goes beyond financial compensation. Wages serve as the financial cornerstone of an employee's life, but a number of other factors, most notably the physical workspace, social context, and the employer's welfare and satisfaction programs, also influence work-life balance.

People in the coal mining business frequently labor in hazardous and physically taxing environments, particularly in public sector companies like Coal India Limited. As a result, QoWL needs to be viewed as a multifaceted notion that encompasses both psychological and material well-being. An important factor is the working environment within and surrounding the mine. While open-pit mines need heavy machinery and long working hours, underground mines may expose workers to dust, heat, humidity, noise, and possible accidents. Employees' perceptions of their work-life balance are greatly influenced

by safety precautions, protective gear, ventilation systems, and regulatory compliance.

Coal miners' work-life balance is influenced by a number of interconnected issues. Living conditions in mining colonies are directly impacted by the housing facilities offered. The general well-being of people is enhanced by adequate, clean housing with adequate sanitation. Given the demanding nature of mining job, clothing and food security are crucial for preserving physical health. A healthy living environment is guaranteed by having access to energy, potable water, and sanitary facilities.

Another essential element is health services. QoWL is greatly influenced by routine medical examinations, hospital accessibility, occupational health monitoring, and workers' compensation for injuries sustained on the job. Job satisfaction and stress are increased by stable employment and equitable working circumstances, such as suitable working hours, rest periods, and leave entitlements. Employees and their families are given long-term security through social security programs like provident funds, pensions, insurance plans, and gratuities.

Their standard of living is further influenced by communication facilities in remote mining locations, transportation services to and from mines, and educational opportunities for workers' children. The social well-being of mining families is also influenced by social variables such as community development projects, recreational facilities, and addiction treatment programs. Sports facilities, cultural events, and recreation centers encourage mental relaxation and social integration, which enhances life pleasure in general.

There are two different approaches to developing the study model for coal mining workers' Quality of Work Life (QoWL). According to the first method, QoWL is equivalent to a collection of objective organizational conditions and procedures. These consist of structured welfare programs, safe and healthy working environments,

fair salaries, supportive supervision, job enrichment, and employee participation in decision-making. This technique uses quantifiable workplace norms and organizational regulations to evaluate QoWL.

The second method compares the subjective perceptions of employees with QoWL. This viewpoint holds that QoWL occurs when employees feel valued, protected, content, and allowed to develop as people. It places a strong emphasis on psychological health, personal growth, professional dignity, and a feeling of community inside the company. QoWL is only significant when employees have a favorable perception of objective facilities, even if they do exist.

Therefore, Quality of Work Life in coal mining is an all-encompassing concept that incorporates economic, social, physical, and psychological aspects with the ultimate goal of enhancing organizational effectiveness and worker welfare.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the existing Quality of Work Life in public sector coal mines.
2. To identify factors affecting employee satisfaction.
3. To assess occupational health and safety measures.

Methodology

The research is primarily based on secondary data sources. Secondary data were collected from published and authenticated documents to ensure reliability and validity. Major sources include annual reports of Coal India Limited, which provide detailed information on employee strength, welfare schemes, safety initiatives, productivity levels, and corporate social responsibility activities. These reports offer insights into organizational policies and practices affecting employees' work life. In addition to company reports, data were gathered from peer-reviewed journals, research articles, and academic publications related to Quality of Work Life, occupational health and safety, and human resource management in mining industries. These scholarly sources helped in building the theoretical framework of the study and understanding previously identified determinants of QWL.

Working Conditions

Due to exposure to dust, heat, noise, and dangerous subterranean surroundings, working conditions in coal mines are frequently difficult. The effectiveness of ventilation systems, illumination, automation, break periods, and the accessibility of protective gear must all be considered when assessing QWL. The level of machinery maintenance and modernization has a direct impact on the comfort and safety of employees.

Occupational Health and Safety

In mining, safety is a crucial aspect of QWL. Examining accident statistics, safety training curricula, emergency preparedness plans, and routine health examinations are all part of the examination. A healthy work-life balance is indicated by the efficient application of safety rules and health monitoring initiatives.

Compensation and Job Security

Structured pay scales, pension plans, allowances, and other social security benefits are typically offered by public sector coal miners. Analyzing employee satisfaction with pay,

benefits, and the stability provided by permanent employment is part of evaluating QWL.

Welfare Facilities and Work-Life Balance

The living conditions of employees are greatly impacted by housing colonies, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and transportation services. Workload and shift patterns also have an impact on work-life balance. Examining these elements makes it easier to assess how well the company supports workers outside of the office.

Compensation and Benefits

One of the main elements affecting satisfaction is fair and sufficient compensation. Financial stability is greatly enhanced by structured pay scales, bonuses, allowances, pension plans, health benefits, and housing amenities. Employee job satisfaction rises when they believe their compensation is fair and appropriate for their risks and efforts.

Working Conditions and Safety

Employee morale is directly impacted by safety conditions, because coal mining is intrinsically dangerous. Risks at work are decreased by the availability of protective gear, adequate ventilation, automated tools, and frequent safety training sessions. When the company puts its workers' health and safety first, they feel safer and more appreciated.

Job Security and Stability

Employment in the public sector is frequently linked to high job security. Fear of the future is lessened by the guarantee of steady work, retirement benefits, and social security measures. Long-term dedication to the organization and loyalty are fostered by this stability.

Work Environment and Supervision

Employee satisfaction is positively impacted by courteous treatment, supportive supervision, and open communication between management and employees. Participatory decision-making and efficient grievance redressal procedures increase engagement and trust.

Work-Life Balance and Welfare Measures

Regional locations, overtime responsibilities, and shift schedules can all lead to stress. Welfare services like housing, healthcare, child care, transportation, and recreational facilities assist workers in better juggling their personal and professional lives.

Workplace Safety Infrastructure

This involves assessing mechanized equipment, lighting configurations, fire safety systems, ventilation systems, and roof support mechanisms. Operational risks are greatly decreased by using contemporary technology and maintaining machines properly. Additionally, the quality and accessibility of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as safety boots, gloves, masks, and helmets are assessed.

Safety Training and Awareness Programs

Mining enterprises require regular safety training programs. Employees need to be trained in first aid, hazard detection, emergency protocols, and safe equipment handling. Refresher courses and mock drills improve readiness and reduce the likelihood of accidents.

Medical and Health Facilities

The availability of well-equipped hospitals or clinics, routine medical examinations, and monitoring of occupational diseases are important aspects of occupational health. Early detection and treatment are ensured by keeping an eye on respiratory conditions, hearing loss, and other health problems associated with mining.

Accident Reporting and Prevention Mechanisms

Systematic operation accident reporting, investigation, and remedial action are necessary for effective safety management. Organizational commitment to ongoing improvement is demonstrated by the existence of safety committees and compliance with legal requirements.

Conclusion

In public sector coal mining companies to be productive, efficient, and sustainable over the long run, quality of work life, or QWL, is essential. Workers in labor-intensive, high-risk industries like coal mining are subjected to physically taxing jobs, dangerous surroundings, and difficult working conditions. As a result, upholding a high standard of QWL is crucial for organizational performance and goes beyond simple welfare initiatives.

Large advantages like solid job security, structured pay ranges, housing facilities, medical services, pension plans, and other statutory welfare measures are offered to workers by public sector coal mining firms, especially Coal India Limited. These clauses establish social security and financial stability, which boost staff morale and organizational dedication. Loyalty to the company is increased and fear about future uncertainty is decreased when permanent employment and retirement benefits are guaranteed.

However even with these benefits, certain things still need to be improved. Because underground and open-pit mining activities carry inherent risks, safety conditions continue to be a major concern. To reduce accidents and occupational health risks, extensive safety training programs, stringent enforcement of safety regulations, and routine equipment updating are crucial. Additionally, employees' physical and mental health may be impacted by stress brought on by long hours, remote work, and shift work. Employee satisfaction can be greatly increased by implementing stress management programs, counseling services, and better work-life balance measures.

Another crucial component of QWL is efficient management-employee communication. Trust and workplace harmony are fostered by open and honest policies, timely grievance redressal procedures, and participatory decision-making. Employee motivation and output rise when they feel appreciated and heard.

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