

**CHAPTER 3**  
**EARLIER STUDIES ON QUALITY OF  
WORK LIFE**

### 3.1 Review of Literature

Review of literature shows that though there are a good number of studies on QWL in manufacturing organizations in many countries, studies on QWL in Bangladesh are rare to find.

*Anitha and Rao (1998)* dealt with the concept of quality of work life, its indicators, measurement and assessment in commercial banks. The study was carried out in two major commercial banks in India. This study showed the level of QWL in a most familiar service industry, i.e., banking. Walton's (1974) eight point criteria was adopted as a basis for measurement of QWL, though few more indicators like family, trade-unions and organizational structures and hierarchy were also used. Assessment was divided into four parts. They were—Economic Aspects, Physical Working Conditions, Social Aspect and finally Human Resource Development Aspect. Two banks were selected for the study—one from public sector i.e., Andhra Bank and another from private sector i.e., the Vysya Bank Ltd. Major initiative in the study was on the measurement of existing level of QWL. Based upon the opinions of management respondents, employees and members of trade union, Anitha and Rao suggested few measures. These are follows:

1. Employees are most dissatisfied with the Human Resource Allowance provided to them. Management of the bank should take steps to improve HRA especially for the employees in urban and sub-urban areas.
2. Employees of both banks are dissatisfied with almost all physical-working conditions. Management of both the banks should consider to improving minimum facilities like lunch room and sports facilities etc.

3. Both management and employees are dissatisfied with role played by 'Trade Unions' in the improvement of QWL. The union should realize the importance of QWL and strive towards its improvement.
4. Employees are dissatisfied with promotion policy, transfer policy and largely with management's co-operation in their career development. Management of both the banks should provide career-counseling facilities to the employees to guide them in their career advancement.

*Venkatachalam and Velayudhan (1997)* in their paper identified the factors that help measure QWL. The survey also revealed that QWL is positively related to organizational commitment and QWL is basically concerned with improving the work satisfaction of employees as an effective corporate motivational strategy. They stated from their survey that productivity increased with the change adopted through quality of work life of the employees and identified several factors which help measure QWL, such as security, autonomy, equity of pay, rewards, satisfaction, involvement, stress, working environment, and so on. According to them QWL is simple which involves giving the workers the opportunity to make decisions about their jobs, the design of their work places and what they need to make products or to deliver services more effectively.

*Gani and Ahmad (1995)* undertook a study on HMT, Kashmir with a sample of 150 workers and 50 managerial personnel. The study revealed the results, adequate financial returns from the job, the desire for job security, better working conditions and advancement opportunities to be the major consideration in the employees working lives. The empirical study was categorized into four factors:

1. Working environment,
2. Relational,
3. Job, and
4. Financial.

*Newstrom and Davis (1993)* referred the term QWL to the favorableness or unfavorableness of a total job environment for people. According to them QWL includes—

- Open communications,
- Equitable reward systems,
- A concern for employee job security and satisfying careers, and
- Participation in decision making.

They suggested QWL provides the higher-order needs of workers as well as their basic needs. They further summarized about QWL and job enrichment programmes as follows:

- In a general way, job enrichment and QWL programmes are desirable for both human and performance needs. They help employees and they help the firm.
- There is a contingency relationship. QWL improvements achieve better results in some situations than in others.
- QWL programmes bring costs as well as benefits. Both must be considered to determine net benefits and the desirability of a change.

*Havlovic (1991)* conducted a study concerned with the quality of work life and human resource outcomes. This study developed and tested hypotheses regarding the influence of quality of work life initiatives on absenteeism, accidents, grievances, and quits, using monthly longitudinal human resource archival data collected at a unionized Midwestern heavy manufacturing firm for the period from 1976 to 1986. Auto regression was utilized to examine the direct impact of QWL on human resource outcome. QWL was found to significantly reduce absenteeism, minor accidents, grievances and quits.

*Levine, Taylor and Davis (1984)* presented the results of a step-by-step Delphi analysis to develop a definition and measure of quality of work life (QWL) in a case specific setting. Sixty-four people were chosen to participate in the Delphi panel constituting a purposefully stratified sample of the parent population that engaged in defining QWL utilizing a six phase Delphi methodology. The composition of the set of seven significant QWL predictors pointed out an important lesson. More than half of the significant predictors of QWL extended beyond specific job content. The results of a 34-item QWL questionnaire developed from the Delphi panel that definition were tested with a sizable (n=450) sample of the company's employees identified the following seven significant predictors of QWL.

1. The degree to which my supervisors treat me with respect and have confidence in my abilities,
2. Variety in my daily work routine,
3. Challenge of my work,
4. Work at present leads to good future work opportunities,
5. Self-esteem,
6. Extent to which my life outside of work affects my life at work, and
7. The extent to which the work I do contributes to society.

*Schlesinger and Oshry (1984)* in their study, based upon the review of the experience of over 25 organizations, developed a systematic understanding of the problems faced by the middle managers and provided an action plan for the middle managers. The basic premises for this study are :-

- QWL activities tend to increase powers of the workers and consequently reduce the influence capabilities of the middle managers.

- While workers derive their influence and power from their proximity to the production process, there is no parallel power base for their middle managers.

According to the authors, the problems faced by the middle managers grow out of the inappropriate organizational structure and lack of support from the top management rather than the lack of skill, or intelligence on the part of middle managers. They suggested that the top management could take a number of steps to improve the middle managers functions and productivity and at the same time improving the QWL.

The action plan suggested by the authors to address to the problems faced by the middle managers are:-

- The top management must recognize the importance of the role of middle managers in QWL activities and the problems that make it difficult for them to function as organizational integrators if they are not integrated.
- The top management should develop a list of skills important to middle manager success as an organizational integrator in the context of QWL activities.
- The top management should devise a formal evaluation and reward system that supports the development and demonstration of desired skills by middle managers.
- The top management should develop appropriate organizational structure and job designs at middle managers level of the organization.

*Gadon (1984)* stated that quality of work life (QWL) has become an umbrella term for a host of activities. According to him QWL includes:

1. Personal and Professional Development: MBO (management by objectives), management development, career counseling, mental health counseling (employee assistance programmes), and physical health improvement (wellness in the work place).
2. Work Redesign: Job enlargement, job enrichment, workflow reorganization, and socio-technical systems.
3. Team Building: Quality circles, participation teams, task forces, project groups, and joint labour management productivity committees.
4. Work scheduling: Flexible working hours (flextime), staggered working hours, compressed workweeks, job sharing, and part-time work.
5. Total Organizational Change: Parallel organization, gain sharing and work councils and co-determination (employee representation in policy making assemblies, commonly found in Europe, but rare in the USA).

He focused in America quality of work life has circulated widely. Changing circumstances, international competition and attitudes toward work, a large-scale reconsideration of existing organizational practice are the cause taking attention to QWL. He expressed "quality of work life is not, therefore, a passing fancy, or even an appeal to better, more human values. It is a practical way of addressing our material and psychological needs in a harshly competitive world".

*Katz, Kochan and Goblille (1983)* presented a study covering the relationship among plant level measures of industrial relations performance, economic performance and quality of work life programmes. The data for this study were collected from company files on 18 plants in which joint efforts with the United Automobile Workers were under way during the years 1970–79. The plants were all in one General Motors (GM) division in which the technology and product were very similar. The results of this study reveal that the proposition which

measures of industrial relations performance, such as grievance and discipline rates, union management climate, absenteeism and difficulty in contract negotiations, are systematically interrelated and also strongly related to measures of economic performance, such as direct labour efficiency and product quality. Less conclusive are the results of tests of the proposition that QWL efforts have produced improvements in industrial relations and economic performance across the plants.

*Nadler and Lawler III (1983)* suggested a working definition of quality of work life (QWL) as “quality of work life is a way of thinking about people, work and organizations. Its distinctive elements are—1) a concern about the impact of work on people as well as on organizational effectiveness, and 2) the idea of participation in organizational problem solving and decision making”. From their definition two important aspects of QWL seem to be emerging out. First, QWL efforts should not focus on how QWL make people do their work better, but on how work help to make people feel better. Here the focus is not concerned with productivity or organizational enhancement efforts but on the outcomes of the individual. Second the major important aspect of QWL should be employee’s participation in decision making process of the organization.

According to Nadler and Lawler QWL activities are as follows:

1. Participative problem solving.
2. Work restructuring.
3. Innovative rewards systems.
4. Improving the work environment.

They expressed their concern about the confusion of the concept of quality of work life. They brought out this confusion thus –

Definition of quality of work life (QWL) (as emerged during six time intervals)

First definition (1969 – 1972) :	QWL	=	Variable.
Second definition (1969) – 1975) :	QWL	=	Approach
Third definition (1972 – 1975) :	QWL	=	Methods
Fourth definition (1975 – 1980) :	QWL	=	Movement
Fifth definition (1979 – 1982) :	QWL	=	Everything
Sixth definition — :	QWL	=	Nothing.

They also suggested three major components of QWL efforts that must manage well for a programme to be successful. The components are –

1. The development of projects at different levels,
2. Area of activity involves in management system and organizational arrangements, and
3. Changes in senior management behaviour.

*Sing (1982)* pointed out the status of quality of work life activities and suggested a need to enlarge the concept of QWL to include search for work. According to him works in quality of work life area have different connotations like new forms of work organization, industrial democracy, job redesign etc.

*Ghosh and Kalra (1982)* in their study of QWL tried to show how different aspects of it were influenced by factors like age, income, qualifications, experience etc. of workers. They selected 12 factors from Carlson's 16-dimension QWL concept and added 3 more dimensions to it. Their 15-dimension QWL concept includes the following factors:

1. Advancement based on merit,

2. Employee commitment,
3. Opportunities to use one's own capacities,
4. Job security,
5. Employee state of mind,
6. Safe and healthy working conditions,
7. Union – management relations,
8. Physical working environment,
9. Employee welfare,
10. Relations with supervisor,
11. Work group relations,
12. Adequate financial compensation,
13. Employee involvement on the job,
14. Absence of undue job stress, and
15. Standing of the organization in the society.

*De (1982)* stated quality of life and quality of work life systematically inseparable, particularly in face of problems like poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth. He declared a few propositions to show interpenetrability of the two concepts. The propositions are:

1. Within the organization itself there is scope for extending critical consciousness of the members from work place to their immediate environmental context.
2. Employees of productive organizations can become leading parts in influencing the quality of decision-making, planning process and implementation machinery by their productive intervention.

3. The likely positive impact of the experiences of productive workers on the style and the ethos of functioning of burgeoning government agencies can bring about transformation in their organizational goals and priorities.
4. Quality of work life in micro organizations can derive its substance and broaden its horizon by drawing upon the insights of the quality of life movements.
5. Need to perceive the life-sized burning problems, which cast deepening shadow of threats upon quality of life and work.

According to De, the concept of working life includes life and performance for quality of work life including quality.

*Takezawa et al., (1982)* conducted a study on the changing patterns of the quality of work life in three major industries in Japan. The period under investigation varies slightly among industries but generally covers a period when active improvements were made in the quality of work life. This study described the dynamic changes in the working life in Japanese industry and it also revealed that the changes installed in the work place, mostly through the joint efforts of unions and management. The observations of Takezawa et. al., pointed out that worker's 'yarigai' (a sense of worth in doing) and 'ikigai' (a sense of fulfilment in living) have raised their level of satisfaction with work. The three major industries (viz. Shipbuilding, Electrical machinery and Automobile manufacturing) considered collaboration between employers and trade unions through small group activities had brought about a notable improvement in the quality of work life and job satisfaction of the workers.

*Holley, Feild and Crowley (1981)* focussed on the more narrowly defined area of job enrichment factors (that is, the intrinsic aspect of work such as responsibility, opportunities for advancement) as well as the more broadly defined area of quality

of work life, which encompasses not only job enrichment factors, but also other issues such as availability of tools and equipment and working conditions. They examined the relationships among selected latitudinal variables, demographic data and union participation indicators with the preferred degree of union involvement for various issues. This research revealed a number of conclusions that serve as a basis for considerations to be taken in implementing quality of work life programmes.

First union members appeared to strongly support collective bargaining for traditional negotiation issues and joint union-management efforts for quality of work life issues.

Secondly the altitudinal variables were the best predictors of union members interests in collaborative efforts involving productivity and quality of work life issues.

Last this research indicated that new role for the union and management in dealing with productivity and quality of work life issues may be involving into more joint participation between these groups.

Ultimately, the results showed strong support to collective bargaining in joint-management efforts when quality of work life issues were involved.

*Sinha and Sayeed (1980)* conducted a study to develop an inventory for measuring quality of work life. They considered Carlson's (1978) working dimensions of quality of work life and decided to add some other dimensions which they deemed to be applicable in the Indian settings. They thought Carlson's working dimensions to be theoretically exhaustive in the western context. Sinha and Sayeed proposed 18 dimensions QWL concept and finally they decided to drop one dimension (job stress) from their list of QWL dimension because 'job stress'

dimension lacked the required extent of reliability. The 18 dimensions of QWL and their operational definitions are presented here:

1. Economic Benefits (EB): Receiving adequate monetary income and financial rewards.
2. Physical Working Conditions (PWC): Conditions effecting physical comfort and convenience on and at the job.
3. Mental State (MS) : Feeling of depression or being up set at work.
4. Career Orientation (CO): Progressing for career objectives and having opportunities for progress.
5. Advancement on Merit (AM): The extent to which rewards and punishment are based on merit.
6. Job Stress (JS): Absence of excessive pressures and undue work demands, which might hamper with the job.
7. Effect on Personal Life (EPL): Effect of job on personal life. The hangover effect on the individual, which may be either positive or negative.
8. Union – Management Relations (UMR): The relationship between union and management, consideration of each other’s point of view.
9. Self – Respect (SR): The feeling of being treated as an adult with respect and due dignity.
10. Supervisory Relationship (RS): The relationship with supervisor and mutual understanding.
11. Intra-Group Relations (IGR): The way workers in a group interact.
12. Apathy (A): The workers concern and ambition for work.
13. Confidence in Management (CM): Belief that the management is aware of and concerned about workers problems and interests.
14. Meaningful Development (MD): Opportunity to learn more and apply skills and abilities meaningfully and in a challenging way.
15. Control, Influence and Participation (CIP): The extent to which workers are involved in decision-making, their influence and control.
16. Employee Commitment (EC): Loyalty to the company and concern for it’s future.

17. General Life Satisfaction (GLS): Fulfillment of 'life' needs apart from the work situation, i.e., in family, in society and so on.

18. Organizational Climate (OC): The organization's or industry's outlook and approach in the interest of the worker for the betterment of the industry.

Source : Sinha, P. and Sayeed, O. B. (1980), "Measuring Quality of Working Life: Development of an Inventory", *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, 41(3), 219-226.

Westley (1979) addressed the type of problems generated by the factory system. The problems faced by people at work are classified into four types: political (insecurity), economic (inequity), psychological (alienation), and sociological (anomie). To solve these problems he recommended individual remedies such as: worker directors, profit sharing, job enrichment, and socio technical design in terms of their capacity. The study explored roots of the quality of work life (QWL) as follows:

Kinds of claims made on work organizations.	Work problem	Agency for solving the problem	Indicators	Proposed remedies
Economic 1850 - 1950	Inequity	Unions	Dissatisfaction strikes and sabotage	Co - ops. profit sharing productivity agreements
Political 1850 - 1950	Insecurity	Political parties	Dissatisfaction strikes and sabotage	Worker self- management Worker directors Worker councils.

World War II

Psychological 1950 - present	Alienation	Change agents	Sense of detachment Absenteeism and Turnover	Job enrichment
Sociological 1950 - present	Anomie	Self development groups	Sense of meaninglessness Absenteeism and Turnover	Sociotechnically designed work groups.

Fig 5 : Roots of the quality of work life.

Source : Westly, W. A. (1979), "Problems and Solutions in the Quality of Working Life", *Human relations*, 32(2), 113-123.

*Cooper and Erid (1979)* focused on work humanisation experiments in Eastern and Western Europe. They discussed the general issues raised by the quality of work life measurements, trade unions and other interested parties. Finally their works were devoted to work humanisation.

*Davis and James (1979)* indicated the styles and models of job design. Their initiatives devoted to the evaluation of job design, the current conditions and the recent theoretical trends, job centered and work system studies. They came to an end with speculations about the future of job design.

*Ganguli (1979)* found that security, safe and healthy working condition, and, work organization, adequate compensation, opportunity for growth and social integration in work–organization had important considerations for QWL activity.

*Guest (1979)* talked about feelings of an employee about his work while defining quality of work life and pointed out the effect of QWL on person's life. His QWL programme covered more than 3800 human beings at Tarrytown, a General Motor car plant in New York State. According to him – a new collaborative approach on the part of management, unions, and workers improve the quality of life at work in its broadest sense. He suggested considering the following points for developing QWL programme.

1. For quality of work life to succeed, management must be widely competent in running the business as a profit–making enterprise.
2. The union must be strong.
3. Management has to be the first party to initiate change.
4. Quality of work life should never be used by either party to circumvent the labour management agreement.

5. Top management and top union officials must make an explicit commitment to support quality of work life.
6. Even with agreement at high levels and a demonstrated concern on the part of rank-and-file employees, it is essential that middle management and front line supervisors not only know what is taking place but also feel they have a say in the change process.
7. A quality of work life programme is unlikely to succeed if management's intention is to increase productivity by speeding up the individual worker's work pace, or if it uses the programme as such, to reduce the work force through layoffs.
8. A programme should be voluntary for the participants.
9. Quality of work life should not be initiated with a detailed master plan. It should be flexible.
10. At each step in developing programme, misunderstandings must be talked out and solved on the spot.
11. It is not enough to expose employees to the principles of effective interpersonal communication and problem solving skills.
12. Quality of work life efforts should not be thought of as a 'programme' with a finite ending.

He further suggested management might have the formal power to drop quality of work life efforts summarily.

*Lippitt (1978)* in his paper expressed businesses, industrial units, government installations, voluntary agencies, universities and health institutions renew their functions and provide quality of work life. According to him, trends of change are accelerating at an uneven rate, but at a rate of speed that is challenging all our institutions, as well as the individual who works within them. The total picture can be described as a transition from the industrial to the postindustrial society, and involves massive change that is not under control. Organization renewal can

create out of this transition and organizations are functioning different from the past. This study revealed an interest to the better quality of work life by three interrelated conditions:

1. In the well-fed society in which we live, with full employment and rapid technological changes and challenges, it becomes more and more possible for an individual to make a personal choice as to where he or she will work and this choice can be based upon his or her own needs and goals.
2. There is an increasing importance attached to human dignity in our society and greater recognition that work must be organized and managed to take human dignity fully into account.
3. Findings from the behavioral sciences show that work that is organized to meet people's needs, as well as to achieve organizational requirements, tends to produce the greatest productivity and the highest quality of work.

He stated that organization renewal and QWL are processes and philosophies, not techniques or gimmicks. They are ways by which all of parties can begin to make their organizations growth toward the state of maturity that is required if they are going to develop a quality of work life for their colleagues, employees and self.

*Joseph (1978)* in his study of quality of work life and job attitudes relationship measured QWL of 96 skilled and semi – skilled technicians in a public enterprise in terms of four dimensions –growth, mastery, involvement and self-control. Job attitudes were measured in terms of work, pay, promotion, co-workers and supervision. In brief, the findings were:

1. Attitude towards the nature of work is closely related to QWL. The more one consider one's work to be interesting, challenging and achieving the higher would be one's quality of work life;
2. Co-workers play a role to make the QWL high or low; and

3. Attitudes towards supervision and pay seem to be least related to quality of work life.

*Carlson (1978)* conducted a survey on quality of work life in General Motors (GM) dealt with the following 16 dimensions:

1. Employee Commitment; feeling of loyalty to GM: a commitment to and concern for the future of the organization.
2. Absence of developing apathy: a measure of employee concern and ambition regarding their work.
3. On the job development and utilization: opportunity for the employee to learn and apply skills and abilities in a meaningful and challenging way.
4. Employee involvement and influence: the extent to which employees feel involved in decision – making.
5. Advancement based on merit: the extent to which management is interested in the progress of the individuals and rewards people on the basis of ability, performance and experience.
6. Career goal progress: making progress in the achievement of career objectives and the belief that there are opportunities for further progress.
7. Relation with supervisor: the working relationship with one's supervisor as reflected in fairness, honesty, and mutual respect.
8. Work group relations: the way employees in a work group provide mutual support and encouragement.
9. Respect for the individual: the feeling of being treated as an adult with respect and dignity.
10. Confidence in management: belief that management is aware of and concerned about employee problems and interests.
11. Physical working environment: conditions affecting employees health, comfort and convenience.

12. Economic well-being: receiving adequate financial rewards and having income protection.
13. Employee state of mind: whether the employee feels upset or depressed while at work.
14. Absence of undue job-stress: the relative absence of excessive work demands and pressure which might interfere with doing the job well.
15. Impact on personal life: spillover effect of the job on employees personal lives.
16. Union-management relations: the extent to which the union and management recognize mutual goals are working together.

*Boisvert (1977)* had listed a number of components of QWL. After reviewing relevant literature on quality of work life, he identified the following dimensions as important components of QWL.

1. Control over work,
2. Extent of use of one's judgement,
3. Importance of decisions made,
4. Learning opportunities,
5. Use of skills and abilities,
6. Control over criteria of work adequacy,
7. Feedback performance,
8. Challenge in the job,
9. Work variety,
10. Interaction with co-workers,
11. Recognition at work,
12. Possibilities for taking pride in one's work,
13. Possibilities for relating work to final product,
14. Extend of preparation on the job for a desirable work future, and
15. Participation in organizational decision making.

*De (1977)* further discussed the theme of motivation in the context of the following parameters—

- the characteristics of work system design and its impact on motivation,
- the mode of work system design and consequences on the motivation,
- a search for alternative work system design with an expectation that some adverse influences on human motivation can be halted and overcome, and
- the role of employee participation in redesigning the mode of work systems.

The author contained in his studies, work redesign in BHEL, and job enrichment in LIC and Post Offices.

*Davis and Cherns (1975)* dealt with enhancing, measuring and changing the quality of work life; technology and quality of work life. They focused from the standpoint of change and bargaining and as a central issue in industrial relations. The articles also contained case studies pertaining to changes of participation and relationships, new design in organizational structure, organizational structural redesign and changes in design of jobs.

*De (1975)* drew a futuristic scenario for India. The author relies heavily on the quality of work life which he feels the crux of futurology studies. The scenario is constructed on excerpts from various newspapers and bulletins and data from other sources.

*Trist (1975)* suggested the planning development which may provide the appropriate climate and setting for sociotechnological assessment, choice of technology and design of organizations and jobs. He further made an urge for the importance of QWL in a developing country. According to him in a developing country the QWL can become both an end and means. It is an end in itself because

it is a highly significant component in the quality of work life in general and it is a means by which the employees can acquire civic competencies and skill.

*Walton (1973)* identified job dissatisfaction at all organizational levels, addressed this problem comprehensively by defining the major criteria for the quality of work life and examined their interrelationships. He pointed out possible conflicts among these criteria and discussed their variations across different working groups. According to him eight major criteria for the quality of work life are as follows:

1. Adequate and fair compensation,
2. Safe and healthy working conditions,
3. Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities,
4. Future opportunity for continued growth and security,
5. Social integration in the work organization,
6. Constitutionalism in the work organization
7. Work and total life space, and
8. The social relevance of work life.

He observed that QWL concept was being used more and more “to describe certain environmental humanistic values neglected by industrialized societies in favor of technological advancement, industrial productivity and economic growth. Within business organizations, attention has been focused of the quality of human experience in the work place. At the same time many firms have questioned their viability in increasingly competitive world markets. These dual concerns have created a growing interest in the possibilities of redesigning the nature of work. Many current organizational experiments seek to improve both productivity for organization and the quality of work life for its members”. Walton considered the following questions as central to both research and action programme with QWL:

How should the quality of work life be conceptualized?

How can QWL be measured?

What are the criteria of QWL and how are they related?

How is each related to productivity? And

Are these criteria uniformly salient for all employee groups?

### **3.2 QWL in Other Countries**

Quality of work life (QWL) represents a real concerns for human values in today's society with an awareness that all individuals devote the greater part of their mature lives to work, expending time, energy and physical and mental resources to this endeavor. Experiments are being conducted in industrially advanced countries to find out cause of general frustration among employees, misunderstandings between management and employees and the ultimate industrial sickness and unrest.

#### **India**

The concept of quality of work life made its appearance in India in the mid seventies when the country was passing through a phase of intense labour unrest (Sengupta, 1985: p. M.150). 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 (Anitha & Rao, 1998: p.16).

India is a country with various cultures, values' systems and varied interests. As such it is difficult to assess the impact of a particular concept in the country as a

whole. De (1977) an important protagonist of QWL movement in India, emphasized the relevance of some hygiene factors in the course of his experiments on work design in India. According to him in the work redesign approach the emphasis is “on creating an on-going urge for an improved quality of work life” among the workers (1977: p. 248).

In India, the order of preference in improving various aspects of QWL should change from place to place, depending upon the preference of the workers and their attitudes at that place. This is so, especially in case of small and medium scale industries in backward states. Where as large-scale industries and multi-nationals are fast realizing the need for improvement of QWL. Sinha (1977) suggested that—the realities of acute poverty, high unemployment, and unreasonably high disparity between the poor and rich cast some doubt on the authenticity of the QWL concept.

De (1976) pointed out that “quality of work life is an indicator of how free the society is from exploitation, injustice, inequality, oppression and restrictions on the continuity of growth of man, leading to his development to the fullest.” In the Indian context, we need to recognize employee’s economic, social and self actualization needs accordingly so that they could develop their potential qualities and experience better quality of work life (Jain, 1991: p. 43).

Indian philosophy advocates self-actualization as the goal of life and work as a way of life instrumental in achieving the ultimate goal (Monappa & Saiyadain, 1996: p. 377). Work life, according to the Indian view, is itself a spiritual discipline. The process of refinement to realize this objective or the identity of the self is *yoga* or work (Yuktananda, 1990: p. 40–43). The Indian approach towards QWL and work ethic has a spiritual-metaphysical dimension to the personality, which is inherently superior to that of the worker’s economic, biological, and social, dimension (Chakraborty, 1987: p. 140).

## **Norway**

In Norway the nation-wide industrial democracy project was jointly controlled by union and management from the outset. This project blazed the trail to innovative approaches to work organization in other parts of the world (Beinum, 1984: p. 133). Several experiments have been made on improving the quality of work life in manufacturing organizations, ships and banks. Success is reported in respect of job redesigns, improvement in training, and developing involvement of workers. Earlier Emery and Thorsurd (1969) had carried out a study of 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. An important element of the Norwegian experience was the close collaboration between the national unions and employer's federation. The experimental phases were followed by discussion and legislation, providing for a better working environment including psychological environment.

## **Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland**

The European approach to QWL involves industrial democracy via legislative arrangements for the employees and the labour involvement in work-related decision-making (Dwivedi, 1995). 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 participative management (Anitha and Rao, 1998: p. 14). In Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Switzerland a number of local initiatives grew. Experimentation around autonomous work groups, technological changes

and attempts to provide meaningful work grew. Some of the better known studies are those at Kalmar and Scania (1975), and most European countries at the same time enacted some legislation's and set up research institutes.

Sweden must be considered an important special development, for it has made a national commitment to enhance the quality of work life by means of democratization of the work place, a commitment supported by the unions, employers and dominant political party (Myrdal,1971).

### **The United Kingdom**

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in England in 1950s and '60s developed design strategy, which was based on an explicit set of values, principles and notions about organizations as systems and about the behaviour of people in organizations. It refers specifically to an approach to the design and operation of organizations in accordance with the values of democratic society. We can call this the organizational approach to QWL. 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 of QWL. Wilson (1973) has reported English experiences.

Shell U.K Ltd., launched QWL programmes in its Microwave department to overcome impending labour problem like low morals, high cost and poor maintenance. ICI to improve sales levels introduced QWL into their organizations. These programmes produced good results to these organizations. More decision-making power was given to the employees and restructuring of job task was done in UK.

Many other organizations in UK have also started practicing QWL improvement programmes for the betterment of their organizations.

## **United States of America**

A federal productivity commission sponsored a series of labour management QWL experimental in 1969 and 1973, that were jointly managed by the University of Michigan Quality of Work Program and newly formed National Quality of Work Center (Nadler, Lawler, 1983). The approach to QWL in the USA has been voluntary in nature, jointly undertaken by the management and the worker as a mutual responsibility (Dwivedi, 1995). 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 Richard E. Walton proposed to measure QWL made the task easy worldwide. Still these factors are mostly used in measuring QWL. The term QWL came to be used in a much broader perspective after the Arden House meet in New York in 1972 that led to the formation of International Center of QWL (Gani, Ahmad, 1995).

The multi dimensional nature of the Quality of Work Life (QWL) as it developed in USA has been collected together by Bharadwaj (1983).

Some of these are listed below:

1. Westing House Corporation (USA) named its efforts of productivity improvement through participative management as 'Theory Management'.
2. Willam Batten, Chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, in his lecture at Wharton Business School, in November 1979 described a new productivity – impacting social technology as Quality Work Life (QWL).

3. General Motor Corporation involved the United Automobile Worker's Union as co-equal stakeholders in seven years 'Quality of Work Life (QWL) joint labour management effort'.
4. In 1980, the big ten steel workers of USA concluded their triennial national collective bargaining agreement with United Steel Workers of America, calling for joint union-management 'participation committees' for problem-solving exercises, geared to operational improvement.
5. In 1980, the Ford Motor Company and United Automobile Workers Union formally announced a long developing 'Employee-Involvement' (EI) programme.
6. Since 1980-81, there has been an explosive proliferation in the U.S. enterprises, of 'Quality Circles' (QC or QCC) modeled on the Japanese worker-involvement structure for joint operational 'Problem-solving' (cited in Jain, 1991, *Quality of Work Life*, New Delhi : Deep & Deep Publications).

A few Federal Agencies like National Centre for Productivity and Quality of Work Life as well as some of the private organizations like American Quality of Work Center are working for the development of QWL concept. Research programmes are also going on in universities and management institutes.

In North America QWL was first raised in collective bargaining in 1971 by Irving Bluestone of the UAW. In 1973, it became part of the UAW master contract with General Motors (Beinum, 1984: p. 134).

## **Italy**

The QWL movement in Italy placed within a historical context as they fought against Tayloristic approach of routines and tightly controlled task. In Italy high attention paid towards QWL in early 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 'Kstitutue de studi Lavora' and Istituto di Ricerca Intervento Svi Sistemi Organiativi'. Organization like 'Olivetti', 'Fiat', 'Proctor and Gamble', 'IBM', 'Italidev' and 'Philips' are practicing QWL improvement programmes.

## Japan

Japan can be said as torchbearer in introducing QWL improvement programmes. The Japanese have a two-way approach towards QWL improvement programmes i.e., flexible employment of work force and employees general acceptance to technological changes. In Japan and U.S.A., small autonomous workgroups (usually consisting of 5–10 workers) described as 'Quality Circles' have been formed in many organizations and given necessary support by the management. They consider approaches for improvement of work designs, layouts, use of materials and work out solutions to different types of shop-floor problems. Encouraging results have been reported from several organizations (Rogers, 1982).

A group of Japanese experts express that in a wider use, the quality of work life may embrace all the possible aspects of work related life, including wages and hours, work environment, benefits and services, career outlook, human relations etc. that are relevant to workers satisfaction and motivation (Takezawa et al. 1982).

It was in early 1970s when Japanese management found the concept of QWL. Much of QWL components are found to be consistent with Japanese traditional human resource and industrial relations practices. For example, many Japanese firm have a practice of promotion from within as the result of human resource development based upon in-service training and job enlargement. They usually

cherish the idea of team production, which is supported by small group activities at the shop floor level. A further scheme of workers participation in decisions regarding their work is there through collective bargaining and joint consultation (Inouye, 1991: p. 311).

Takezawa et.al. (1982: p. 157) further concluded that the quality of work life seems to be understood by labour and management representative in the following ways :

1. The 'work life' referred to both on-the-job and off-the-job lives of all the employees with their lifetime perspectives taken into account. Its 'quality' hence, meant the total 'values' and individual world derive from his or her association with the enterprise both in material and non-material ways.
2. Improvements in the quality of work life were considered to be matters of mutual interest by both union and management representatives, both of whom accepted their relationships as involving elements of 'confrontation and harmony'. The quality of work life was apparently a significant concern also to management alone.
3. Initiatives for improving quality of work life came from both unions and management freely. There was no suspicion on the union side that it was merely a management-initiated 'gimmick'. Regular consultations and joint efforts by both parties seemed also very common.
4. There was a clean recognition that the working life continuously expanded the scope of 'labour problems'. As worker's aspirations rose, new problems, facts came to the force. Also, older problem areas demand an increasingly greater degree of attention and resource allocation. Thus, both 'basic' and 'higher' problem dimensions constituted the quality of work life issues.
5. Both the union and management representatives participating in the study duly admitted that substantial improvements had been made in their respective industries during the decade covered by the study. These improvements, made in such a short time, may have few parallels in the history of industrial relations.

Takezawa (1975) made the following conclusions to labour, management and government leaders for long – range policy considerations:

1. The quality of work life problems seem to cover a wider range of human needs in Japan than in already advanced, slower moving industrial nations.
2. The central concern of Japanese – workers still seems to involve material acquisition. This is probably the result of as well as the driving force toward, accelerated economic growth.
3. At the practical level, the parties concerned must consider, in their policy decisions, the generational characteristics of the work force.
4. Continuing value changes will necessitate a shifting emphasis in the policy mix in future years.