UNIT:V

Organizational Change

Organizational change can be defined as the alteration in structure, technology or people in an organization or behavior by an organization. Here we need to note that change in organizational culture is different from change in an organization. A new method or style or new rule is implemented here.

An organizational change occurs due to two major factors namely:

* External factor: External factors are those factors that are present outside the firm but force the firm to change or implement a new law, rule etc. For example, all banks are bound to follow the rules laid down by the RBI.
* Internal factor: Internal factors are those factors that are caused or introduced inside an organization that forces a change. For example, no smoking in the workplace.

**Kurt Lewin’s Force Field Analysis**

Kurt Lewin, is a noted organizational theorist, who proposed the force field analysis for organizational change. In this theory, he has prioritized two factors for change in an organization, namely:

* Driving force: Driving force can be defined as an organizational force that makes a change with respect to structure, people and technology. In short, it drives the organization from one culture to another.
* Restoring force: Restoring force is the force which changes the culture from the existing state to the old state. It indicates a backward motion while the driving force indicates a forward motion.

**Importance of Organizational Change**

There is a need of change in an organization because there is always a hope for further development, and in order to survive in a competitive market, the organization needs to be updated with changes. However, we have listed some reasons to explain why changes are deliberately made and carefully planned by the organization before implementation.

* It improves the means to satisfy the economic requirements of people.
* It enhances the profitability of organization.
* It promotes employee satisfaction and well-being.

**Planned Change**

We can define planned change as any kind of alteration or modification which is done in advance and differently for improvement.

**The Need for Planned Change**

Planned change takes places in an organization when there is a demand for change due to two types of forces. These forces are grouped into internal sources and external sources.

Internal forces that lead to a planned change in an organization include obsolescence of production and service, new market opportunities, new strategic direction, increasing workforce diversity, and shift in socio-cultural values.

External forces that lead to a planned change in an organization include regulators, competitors, market force, customers, and technology. Each of these forces can create pressing demand for change in small or big, public or private, business or non-business organizations.

**Process of Planned Change**

Once the management decides to implement some changes in the organization, it needs to be done carefully as it is a very sensitive issue. It is very important for all the employees to adapt to change. According to Kurt Lewin, the planned organizational change is implemented in three different stages. They are:

* Unfreezing: In this stage, the organization studies if the change is required or not, what and why is the change necessary. Considering the entire situation, the organization decides for appropriate change. Thus a plan and strategy is formulated as required.
* Changing: In this stage, the organization executes the plan and program for change. For this purpose, proper precautions are taken in order to maintain cooperation and coordination between the employees and management, avoiding miscommunication or disputes. Adequate supervision and control is arranged as needed.
* Refreezing: This is the final stage, in order to bring organizational change. By way of supervision, the organization tries to evaluate the effectiveness of change. Collecting all this information, the management interprets whether to continue or replace change by some other alternatives or to make further minor changes.

**Types of Planned Change**

On the basis of a company’s requirement planned change is classified into three types. They are:

* Change in structure
* Change in technology
* Change in people

Change in Structure

We say that the planned change required is change in structure when development is required in these following areas:

* Change in management
* New management
* Change in position or location
* Change in objective, rules, regulations etc.
* Launching new branches

Change in Technology

We say that the planned change required is change in technology when development is required in these following areas:

* Need of office automation
* Installing new hardware and software
* Executing new working procedures
* New methods in production function
* Producing new products and devices
* New training, research and development program

Change in People

We say that the planned change required is change in people when development is required in these following areas:

* New candidate requirement
* Promotion or demotion
* Transfer to other location
* Suspension or dismissal
* Deputation
* Training and development

Resistance to Change

One of the most important tasks of managers is to facilitate changes smoothly. Change is always inevitable but so is resistance to change. It is basic human nature of people to try and keep their methods and customs constant. This is where change management comes into play. An organization always must strive to adapt to change if it wants to be successful.

Change is basically a variation in pre-existing methods, customs, and conventions. Since all organizations function in dynamic environments, they constantly have to change themselves to succeed.

Change management contains several strategies that help in facilitating the smooth adoption of such changes.

One of the most important facets of change management is resistance to change. It is simply human nature to counteract any changes and maintain the status quo.

But since change is inevitable, instead of resisting changes the organization must try to implement them with minimum hassle.

Resistance to change may be either overt or implicit. For example, employees may react to a change in policies with outright rejection and protests.

They may even refrain from showing disapproval expressly, but they may do so implicitly by not accepting changes. Managers must understand these problems and help the employees adopt these changes smoothly.

Reasons for Resistance to Change

In order to facilitate transitions and changes, managers must first be able to identify the exact reason for resistance. Such resistance to change is common in all organizations. The following are some common reasons for this:

* People generally find it convenient to continue doing something as they have always been doing. Making them learn something new is difficult.
* Changes always bring about alterations in a person’s duties, powers, and influence. Hence, the people to whom such changes will affect negatively will always resist.
* People who are adamant on maintaining customs instead of taking risks and doing new things will always resist changes. This can happen either due to their insecurities or lack of creativity and will.

**Types of Resistance to Change**

Resistance to change may be of the following three types:

a) Logical resistance: This kind of resistance basically arises from the time people genuinely take to adapt and adjust to changes. For example, when computers became common, accountants had to shift from accounting on paper to digital accounting. This naturally takes time to adapt to.

b) Psychological resistance: Under this category, the resistance occurs purely due to mental and psychological factors. Individuals often resist changes for reasons like fear of the unknown, less tolerance to change, dislike towards the management, etc.

c) Sociological resistance: This resistance relates not to individuals but rather to the common values and customs of groups. Individuals may be willing to change but will not due to peer pressure from the group they are members of. For example, if a workers’ union protests against new management policies, all workers face pressure to protest together.

**Overcoming Resistance**

While change will almost always face resistance, it is certainly possible to overcome it. Managers must strive to help their employees adjust to changes and facilitate new variations in functioning.

Firstly, managers must be able to convince workers that the changes they are proposing are necessary. They should show how the workers and the organization itself will benefit from these changes.

Secondly, the management can keep the following considerations in mind to implement changes smoothly:

* Changes should not happen in one go because it is easier to implement them in stages.
* Changes should never cause security problems for the workers.
* Managers must consider the opinions of all employees on whom the proposed change will have an effect.
* If managers portray leadership by first adapting to the changes themselves, employees are less likely to resist.
* Sufficient prior training of employees can help them accept changes with confidence

Approaches to Managing Organizational Change

Organizational change occurs when a company makes a transition from its current state to some desired future state. Managing organizational change is the process of planning and implementing change in organizations in such a way as to minimize employee resistance and cost to the organization while simultaneously maximizing the effectiveness of the change effort.

Today’s business environment requires companies to undergo changes almost constantly if they are to remain competitive. Factors such as globalization of markets and rapidly evolving technology force businesses to respond in order to survive. Such changes may be relatively minor—as in the case of installing a new software program—or quite major—as in the case of refocusing an overall marketing strategy, fighting off a hostile takeover, or transforming a company in the face of persistent foreign competition.

Organizational change initiatives often arise out of problems faced by a company. In some cases, however, companies change under the impetus of enlightened leaders who first recognize and then exploit new potentials dormant in the organization or its circumstances. Some observers, more soberly, label this a “performance gap” which able management is inspired to close.

But organizational change is also resisted and—in the opinion of its promoters—fails. The failure may be due to the manner in which change has been visualized, announced, and implemented or because internal resistance to it builds. Employees, in other words, sabotage those changes they view as antithetical to their own interests.

**AREAS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

Students of organizational change identify areas of change in order to analyze them. Daniel Wischnevsky and Fariborz Daman, for example, writing in Journal of Managerial Issues, single out strategy, structure, and organizational power. Others add technology or the corporate population (“people”). All of these areas, of course, are related; companies often must institute changes in all areas when they attempt to make changes in one. The first area, strategic change, can take place on a large scale—for example, when a company shifts its resources to enter a new line of business—or on a small scale—for example, when a company makes productivity improvements in order to reduce costs. There are three basic stages for a company making a strategic change: 1) realizing that the current strategy is no longer suitable for the company’s situation; 2) establishing a vision for the company’s future direction; and 3) implementing the change and setting up new systems to support it.

Technological changes are often introduced as components of larger strategic changes, although they sometimes take place on their own. An important aspect of changing technology is determining who in the organization will be threatened by the change. To be successful, a technology change must be incorporated into the company’s overall systems, and a management structure must be created to support it. Structural changes can also occur due to strategic changes—as in the case where a company decides to acquire another business and must integrate it—as well as due to operational changes or changes in managerial style. For example, a company that wished to implement more participative decision making might need to change its hierarchical structure.

People changes can become necessary due to other changes, or sometimes companies simply seek to change workers’ attitudes and behaviors in order to increase their effectiveness or to stimulate individual or team creative-ness. Almost always people changes are the most difficult and important part of the overall change process. The science of organization development was created to deal with changing people on the job through techniques such as education and training, team building, and career planning.

**RESISTANCE TO CHANGE**

A manager trying to implement a change, no matter how small, should expect to encounter some resistance from within the organization. Resistance to change is normal; people cling to habits and to the status quo. To be sure, managerial actions can minimize or arouse resistance. People must be motivated to shake off old habits. This must take place in stages rather than abruptly so that “managed change” takes on the character of “natural change.” In addition to normal inertia, organization change introduces anxieties about the future. If the future after the change comes to be perceived positively, resistance will be less.

Education and communication are therefore key ingredients in minimizing negative reactions. Employees can be informed about both the nature of the change and the logic behind it before it takes place through reports, memos, group presentations, or individual discussions. Another important component of overcoming resistance is inviting employee participation and involvement in both the design and implementation phases of the change effort. Organized forms of facilitation and support can be deployed. Managers can ensure that employees will have the resources to bring the change about; managers can make themselves available to provide explanations and to minimize stress arising in many scores of situations.

Some companies manage to overcome resistance to change through negotiation and rewards. They offer employees concrete incentives to ensure their cooperation. Other companies resort to manipulation, or using subtle tactics such as giving a resistance leader a prominent position in the change effort. A final option is coercion, which involves punishing people who resist or using force to ensure their cooperation. Although this method can be useful when speed is of the essence, it can have lingering negative effects on the company. Of course, no method is appropriate to every situation, and a number of different methods may be combined as needed.

**TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING CHANGE EFFECTIVELY**

Managing change effectively requires moving the organization from its current state to a future desired state at minimal cost to the organization. Key steps in that process are:

* Understanding the current state of the organization. This involves identifying problems the company faces, assigning a level of importance to each one, and assessing the kinds of changes needed to solve the problems.
* Competently envisioning and laying out the desired future state of the organization. This involves picturing the ideal situation for the company after the change is implemented, conveying this vision clearly to everyone involved in the change effort, and designing a means of transition to the new state. An important part of the transition should be maintaining some sort of stability; some things—such as the company’s overall mission or key personnel—should remain constant in the midst of turmoil to help reduce people’s anxiety.
* Implementing the change in an orderly manner. This involves managing the transition effectively. It might be helpful to draw up a plan, allocate resources, and appoint a key person to take charge of the change process. The company’s leaders should try to generate enthusiasm for the change by sharing their goals and vision and acting as role models. In some cases, it may be useful to try for small victories first in order to pave the way for later successes.

Change is natural, of course. Proactive management of change to optimize future adaptability is invariably a more creative way of dealing with the dynamisms of industrial transformation than letting them happen willy-nilly. That process will succeed better with the help of the the company’s human resources than without.

Organisational effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is defined as an extent to which an organization achieves its predetermined objectives with the given amount of resources and means without placing undue strain on its members.

Sometimes efficiency and effectiveness are used as synonyms. However, there exists a difference between the two concepts. Therefore, it is important to explain the difference between the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency to understand why organizations may be effective but not efficient, or efficient but not effective. Effectiveness is a broad concept and takes into account a collection of factors both inside and outside an organization. It is commonly referred to as the degree to which predetermined goals are achieved. On the other hand, efficiency is a limited concept that pertains to the internal working of an organization. It refers to an amount of resources used to produce a particular unit of output. It is generally measured as the ratio of inputs to outputs. Further, effectiveness concentrates more on human side of organizational values and activities whereas efficiency concentrates on the technological side of an organization.

Approaches to Organizational Effectiveness

However the concept of organizational effectiveness is not simple because there are many approaches in conceptualizing this term. Such approaches can be grouped into following three approaches:

1. Goal Approach

Goal attainment is the most widely used criterion of organizational effectiveness. In goal approach, effectiveness refers to maximization of profits by providing an efficient service that leads to high productivity and good employee morale. Several variables such as quality, productivity, efficiency, profit, turnover, accidents, morale, motivation and satisfaction, which help in measuring organizational effectiveness. However, none of the single variable has proved to be entirely satisfactory.

The main limitation of this approaches the problem of identifying the real goals rather than the ideal goals.

1. Functional Approach

This approach solves the problem of identification of organizational goals. Parson states that since it has been assumed that an organization is identified in terms of its goal, focus towards attainment of these goals should also aim at serving the society. Thus, the vital question in determining effectiveness is how well an organization is doing for the super-ordinate system.

The limitation of this approach is that when organizations have autonomy to follow its independent courses of action, it is difficult to accept that ultimate goal of organization will be to serve society. As such, it cannot be applied for measuring organizational effectiveness in terms of its contributions to social system.

Both the goal and functional approach do not give adequate consideration to the conceptual problem of the relations between the organization and its environment.

1. System Resource Approach

System-resource approach of organizational effectiveness emphasizes on inter-dependency of processes that relate the organization to its environment. The interdependence takes the form of input-output transactions and includes scarce and valued resources such as physical, economic and human for which every organization competes.

The limitation of this model is that an acquisition of resources from environment is again related to the goal of an organization. Therefore, this model is not different from the goal model.

Thus, discussion of organizational effectiveness leads to the conclusion that there is no single indicator of effectiveness. Instead, the approach should focus on operative goals that would serve as a basis for assessment of effectiveness.

Managerial effectiveness is a causal variable in organizational effectiveness. It has been defined in terms of organizational goal-achieving behavior, i.e., the manager’s own behavior contributes to achievement of organizational goals.

Organizational Effectiveness Model

The organizational effectiveness model can be presented in a more complex way i.e. at three different levels such as the individual, group and organizational levels in order to make the organization more effective.  The effective organization is built of effective individuals who work collectively in groups.



The extent to which individual and organizational goals are integrated, affects the degree of organizational effectiveness, i.e., each individual tries to satisfy his goal by working in an organization and simultaneously satisfying organizational goals. He may see his goal satisfaction in satisfying organizational goals. If there is no perfect integration of individual and organizational goals then organizational effectiveness is affected adversely. However, organizational effectiveness is not a result of integration between individual and organizational goals only but there are other causal variables affecting it.

Factors Affecting Organizational Effectiveness

Likert has classified the factors affecting organizational effectiveness into following three variables:

1. Causal Variables: Causal variables are those independent variables that determine the course of developments within an organization and the objectives achieved by an organization. These causal variables include only those independent variables, which can be altered by organization and its management. Causal variables include organization and management’s policies, decisions, business and leadership strategies, skills and behavior.
2. Intervening Variables: Intervening variables according to Likert are those variables that reflect the internal state and health of an organization. For example, loyalties, attitudes, motivations, performance goals and perceptions of all the members and their collective capacity for effective interaction, communication and decision-making.
3. End-Result Variables: End-Result variables are the dependent variables that reflect achievements of an organization such as its productivity, costs, loss and earnings.

­­­­­­Inter-Relationship of Variables

The three variables such as causal, intervening and end-result ore interrelated. The inter-relationship may be visualized as psychological process where stimuli or causal variables acting upon the organism or intervening variables and creating certain responses or end-result variables. The causal, intervening and end-result variables comprise a complex network with many interdependent relationships. The causal variables are the key to organizational effectiveness.  Hence, to make organization effective, attempt should be made to improve the causal variables, while other variables will be corrected or improved automatically because of causal variables.

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Organizational Culture and Climate

Organizational culture can be defined as the group norms, values, beliefs and assumptions practiced in an organization. It brings stability and control within the firm. The organization is more stable and its objective can be understood more clearly.

Organizational culture helps the group members to resolve their differences, overcome the barriers and also helps them in tackling risks.

Elements of Organizational Culture

The two key elements seen in organizational culture are −

* Visible elements− These elements are seen by the outer world. Example, dress code, activities, setup, etc.
* Invisible elements− These inner elements of the group cannot be seen by people outside the group or firm. Example, values, norms, assumptions, etc. Now let us discuss some other elements of organizational culture. They are −
* Stories− Stories regarding the history of the firm, or founder.
* Rituals− Precise practices an organization follows as a habit.
* Symbol− The logo or signature or the style statement of a company.
* Language− A common language that can be followed by all, like English.
* Practice− Discipline, daily routine or say the tight schedule everyone follows without any failure.
* Values and Norms− The idea over which a company is based or the thought of the firm is considered as its value and the condition to adopt them are called norms.
* Assumptions− It means we consider something to be true without any facts. Assumptions can be used as the standard of working, means the employees prepare themselves to remain above standard.

Different Types of Organizational Culture

The culture a firm follows can be further classified into different types. They are −

* Mechanistic and Organic culture
* Authoritarian and Participative culture
* Subculture and Dominant culture
* Strong and Weak culture
* Entrepreneurial and Market culture

Mechanistic and Organic Culture

Mechanistic culture is formed by formal rule and standard operating procedures. Everything needs to be defined clearly to the employees like their task, responsibility and concerned authorities. Communication process is carried according to the direction given by the organization. Accountability is one of the key factors of mechanistic culture.

Organic culture is defined as the essence of social values in an organization. Thus there exists a high degree of sociability with very few formal rules and regulations in the company. It has a systematic hierarchy of authority that leads towards free flow of communication. Some key elements of organic culture include authority, responsibility, accountability and direct flow towards the employee.

Authoritarian and Participative Culture

Authoritarian culture means power of one. In this culture, power remains with the top level management. All the decisions are made by the top management with no employee involvement in the decision making as well as goal shaping process. The authority demands obedience from the employee and warns them for punishment in case of mistake or irregularity. This type of culture is followed by military organization.

In participative culture, employees actively participate in the decision making and goal shaping process. As the name suggests, it believes in collaborative decision making. In this type of culture, employees are perfectionist, active and professional. Along with group decision making, group problem solving process is also seen here.

Subculture and Dominant Culture

In subculture, some members of the organization make and follow a culture but not all members. It is a part of organizational culture, thus we can see many subcultures in an organization. Every department in a company have their own culture that gets converted to a subculture. So, the strength and adaptability of an organizational culture is dependent on the success of subculture.

In dominant culture, majority of subculture combine to become a dominant culture. The success of dominant culture is dependent on the homogeneity of the subculture, that is, the mixture of different cultures. At the same point of time, some cold war between a dominant culture and a minor culture can also be seen.

Strong and Weak Culture

In a strong culture, the employees are loyal and have a feeling of belongingness towards the organization. They are proud of their company as well as of the work they do and they slave towards their goal with proper coordination and control. Perception and commitment are two aspects that are seen within the employees. In this culture, there is less employee turnover and high productivity.

In a weak culture, the employees hardly praise their organization. There is no loyalty towards the company. Thus, employee dissatisfaction and high labor turnover are two aspects of this culture.

Entrepreneurial and Market Culture

Entrepreneurial culture is a flexible and risk-taking culture. Here the employees show their innovativeness in thinking and are experimental in practice. Individual initiations make the goal easy to achieve. Employees are given freedom in their activity. The organization rewards the employees for better performance.

Market culture is based on achievement of goal. It is a highly target-oriented and completely profit-oriented culture. Here the relationship between the employees and the organization is to achieve the goal. The social relation among the workers is not motivating.

How to Create an Organizational Culture

An organizational culture is created with the combination of certain criteria that are mentioned below −

* The founder of the organization may partly set a culture.
* The environment within which the organization standards may influence its activities to set a culture.
* Sometimes interchange of culture in between different organizations create different new cultures.
* The members of the organization may set a culture that is flexible to adapt.
* New cultures are also created in an organization due to demand of time and situation.

The culture of an organizational can change due to composition of workforce, merger and acquisition, planned organizational change, and influence of other organizational culture.

Power and Politics in Organisation

Power and Politics in Organizations

Power and politics in organizations are a reality that no organization can ignore. Though the evolution of the modern corporation and the concomitant rise of the managerial class with a professional way of running the firms is touted to be one of the contributory factors for the decline on power politics in organizations, one cannot just simply say that there are no power centers or people with vested interests even in the most professionally run and managed firms. The reason for this is that power and politics are as old as human nature and recorded history and hence, one cannot simply wish away the primal urge to resist those in power and in turn, try an impose the will by those in power. This is the interplay of forces within organizations wherein the top management and the senior leadership often tries to have it their way whereas those in the middle and those who have been passed over for promotion as CEOs and other C level positions try to resist such power moves.

Power and Politics are Integral to Human Nature

Having said that, it must be noted that not all power struggles lead to negative outcomes as it is often the case that the winning faction might be a result of the losing faction becoming too autocratic or despotic. This is the case in firms such as Hewlett Packard and Apple where the power struggles resulted in the induction and return of the old guard to the benefit of the firms. Moreover, it is always good to have a system of checks and balances within firms so that any excessive centralization of power and control are minimized. It is also good to have specific attempts at dissent because the more divergent the views and the more diverse the opinions, the healthier it is for the firm to decide on the best course of action.

Indeed, it is better for the decision makers to listen to multiple perspectives rather than surrounding themselves with yes men and sycophants who have their own interest in glorifying their masters. Further, decision making which takes into account all the viewpoints is any day better than unilateral styles. In conclusion, while power and politics are as old as humanity, it is also the case that the balancing mechanism whenever there is a tendency to cross the limits means that such power and politics should be assessed from this perspective rather than taking a negative view.

Impact of Power Struggles on the Stakeholders

Talking about the impact of power and politics on shareholders and other stakeholders, it is often the case that the rank and file employees are the major losers in the power games. This is because they find that those at the top are bickering and always fighting and hence, are demoralized to work resulting in attrition and lackadaisical performance. In addition, it is the case that the rank and file employees find that they are caught between rival factions and feel that they are being sacrificed by the factions whose only interest is furthering their own agendas. Indeed, as the saying goes, when elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers, whenever there is a power struggle in the organizations, it is those at the bottom and the middle to some extent who suffer the most. Of course, the smarter ones among them ally themselves to one faction or the other and hence, find that it is safe to take sides rather than being caught in the crossfire. In addition, they also find that it is better to hitch their fortunes to a particular faction so that they play the power game. Needless to say, all this has an impact on the productivity and performance of the organization. This is the reason why many shareholders and particularly the institutional ones among them who step in whenever the power games become too intense and impact the financial and operational performance of the firms.

Power Struggles in Family Owned Businesses

Of particular interest to our discussion is the way in which family owned businesses often have a greater component of power politics in them. The reason for this is that family owned businesses often have rival power centers allied to the different family members. For instance, in organizations such as Fidelity which is a family concern, it is often the case that there are multiple power centers with different factions being propped up by the different family members. Indeed, the reason for choosing this example is the fact that in recent years, the succession struggle is gaining traction and is responsible for most of the intra firm politics in that company.

Talking about succession struggles, there can be no better example than the case of the Reliance conglomerate which witnessed an internecine power struggle between the various family members after the demise of the family patriarch. Indeed, this case has become so famous that many western universities have come up with case studies on why it happened, who gained and who lost and whether it was in the benefit of the shareholders and the employees.

Quality of Work Life, Work life Balance

Quality of Work Life

The present era is an era of knowledge workers and the society in which we are living has come, to be known as knowledge society. The intellectual pursuits have taken precedence over the physical efforts.

Some knowledge workers work for more than 60 hours a week. As a result of this, their personal hobbies and interests clash with their work. Life is a bundle that contains all the strands together and hence the need to balance work life with other related issues.’

One must have both love and work in one’s life to make it healthy. Gone are the days when the priority of employees used to be for physical and material needs. With the increasing shift of the economy towards knowledge economy, the meaning and quality of work life has undergone a drastic change.

Quality of work life (QWL) refers to the favourableness or unfavourableness of a job environment for the people working in an organisation. The period of scientific management which focused solely on specialisation and efficiency, has undergone a revolutionary change.

The traditional management (like scientific management) gave inadequate attention to human values. In the present scenario, needs and aspirations of the employees are changing. Employers are now redesigning jobs for better QWL.

The QWL as strategy of Human Resource Management has assumed increasing interest and importance. Many other terms have come to be used interchangeably with QWL such as ‘humanisations of work’ ‘quality of working life, ‘industrial democracy’ and ‘participative work’.

There are divergent views as to the exact meaning of QWL.

A few definitions given by eminent authors on QWL are given below:

1. “QWL is a process of work organisations which enable its members at all levels to actively; participate in shaping the organizations environment, methods and outcomes. This value based process is aimed towards meeting the twin goals of enhanced effectiveness of organisations and improved quality of life at work for employees. ”

—The American Society of Training and Development

1. “QWL is a way of thinking about people, work and organisations, its distinctive elements are (i) a concern about the impact of work on people as well as on organisational effectiveness, and (ii) the idea of participation in organisational problem-solving and decision making. ” —Nadler and Lawler
2. “The overriding purpose of QWL is to change the climate at work so that the human-technological-organisational interface leads to a better quality of work life.”

-Luthans

1. “QWL is based on a general approach and an organisation approach. The general approach includes all those factors affecting the physical, social, economic, psychological and cultural well-being of workers, while the organisational approach refers to the redesign and operation of organisations in accordance with the value of democratic society. ”

—Beinum

From the definitions given above, it can be concluded that QWL is concerned with taking care of the higher-order needs of employees in addition to their basic needs. The overall climate of work place is adjusted in such a way that it produces more humanized jobs.

QWL is viewed as that umbrella under which employees feel fully satisfied with the working environment and extend their wholehearted co­operation and support to the management to improve productivity and work environment.

Work life Balance

Work-life balance is a term used for the idea that you need time for both work and other aspects of life, whether those are family-related or personal interests. The saying goes that ‘all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’.

But work, or at least some kind of contributory effort, whether paid or voluntary, is often recognised as being important for personal satisfaction, so it seems likely that ‘all play’ would be dull too.

A ‘work life’ balance refers to an employee’s ability to maintain a healthy balance between their work roles, their personal responsibilities, and family life. Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of helping their employees to achieve this balance as more staff are experiencing conflict between their work and personal roles. In today’s age, many workers are seeing their personal responsibilities increase, from childcare and elderly care, to volunteer work, and family commitments. This comes at a time when their work responsibilities are also increasing, resulting in a conflict between personal and work commitments and an increase in stress.

Another factor which is contributing greatly to the difficulty in achieving a work life balance is the changing landscape in how and where employees are expected to work. As more and more companies embrace the technological age and move into globalization, work is no longer restricted to the workplace. Employees can work from almost any location with the use of laptops, tablets, and smart phones; and telecommuting is on the increase. Employees can access work emails and assignments 24/7, meaning that they can also be accessible to employers and clients. Although there are multiple benefits to this flexible working pattern, it can run the risk of blurring the lines between work and personal life. Remote working also means that staff may now find that their typical work week is no longer restricted to the traditional 40 hours a week.

The result of a poor balance between work and personal life not only affects employees, but it also affects the companies that they work for. Employee stress can increase to the level of burnout, resulting in lower productivity at work, a higher potential for stress related health problems and absenteeism, with the associated costs related to these being passed on to the company. In addition to this, employees may also experience poor personal and co-worker relationships and reduced job satisfaction.

There are several ways in which companies can help to encourage a work life balance for their employees, both in the policies that they implement and in ensuring that managers actively encourage employees to take advantage of these policies. Offering employees flexible working options helps employees design their work pattern to fit their personal commitments, ultimately reducing conflict between work and personal responsibilities. Flexible working options include allowing employees to work from home, adjust their working hours to meet personal commitments, use remote working, compressed work weeks, and job sharing. Managers should encourage staff to use annual leave and help employees to set boundaries by encouraging staff not respond to work related emails and calls during non-working hours. Some organizations are also implementing wellness programs, which include offering stress reduction and time management workshops, while others are creating wellness centers on the work site, helping to connect employees with physicians, mental health counselors, or on-site gyms.

An employee’s satisfaction in their personal life and their ability to meet personal commitments greatly affects their success as a worker, which greatly benefits any company. Helping employees to achieve a good work life balance increases work satisfaction, increases their loyalty to their employer, and helps employers to achieve career longevity. A company which recognizes these benefits and implements policies to promote a work life balance is one which will not only see an increase in the productivity of their workforce but which also sees increased retention of staff and reduction in costs associated with high turnover.