

Factors Affecting Quality of Work Life of Handicraft Workers- A Study of Handicraft Units in and around Moradabad

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Abstract: Indian economy is in need of a device to boost employment opportunities, raise income and its standard of living and to bring about a more balanced and integrated economy. Handicraft sector is the best solution for achieving all these goals.

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There is no denying the fact that India owns a lot of its cultural identity to its rich handloom and handicraft heritage. The colourful tapestry of bhandej, zardozi, kanjeevaram, bomkai, or tangail, the fragrance of sandalwood being carved into the intricate products, the tinkle of metal as it takes awesomely varied forms under the artisan's hammer, and the multitude of carpets and durries, boxes and bags, jewellery items and stone work may have, at some point of time in the distant past, been mere everyday activities and commonplace products in any typical village in any part of the country, but things are changing today. Our handicraft products are fast becoming major lifestyle statements and have secured a place for India in the lives of millions across the world. For a growing number of people at home and abroad, the exquisiteness and exclusivity of the handmade is working as a powerful lure against the

monotony of the mass produced, opening up huge possibilities of market expansion. The sector provides livelihood to over 130 lakh weavers and artisans, a large percentage coming from the marginalized sections of the society. The industry is largely environment friendly and low on energy consumption, and consciousness on these issues, as also on fair trade practices is growing fast. All this makes the sector a potentially powerful player in the country's economy and an important tool for the empowerment of crafts persons. There are several issues that need attention both in form of policy intervention and ground level implementation. There are issues of securing steady, dependable and affordable sources of finance for the artisans, taking good care of their health, skill up gradation, bringing in new and useful technology and innovations in designs.

Table 1. Region and States

Region	States	No. of Artisans as per census report (1995-96) (in lakhs)
Northern Region	Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana, Chandigarh (UT)	12.64
Central Region	Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand	11.77
Eastern Region,	West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa Jharkhand	8.37
North Eastern Region,	Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Meghalaya	8.89
Western Region	Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Daman & Diu (UT)	3.07
Southern Region –	Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Pondicherry (UT), Andaman & Nicobar (UT), Lakshadweep (UT)	2.87

Source: George, N. D., Socio- Economic Condition of Handloom Workers in India, Yojana- A Development Monthly, May 2011.

The data available is only of a few states. A nation wide survey of artisans of handicraft sector is required.

Although significant amendments were made in the Indian Factory Act (1987) after the tragedy focusing on hazardous industries, the necessity of basic minimum standards encompassing workers in the informal sector has not been a priority area for policy makers in India.

The handloom and handicraft sector in India is estimated to employ over 13.5 million skilled craft workers, who play a significant role in the Indian economy in terms of its share in employment, contribution to GDP and preservation of cultural heritage. A large skilled workforce has been engaged in traditional forms of craft in India for several hundred years; however, the occupational risks and hazards involved in these craft processes have not been researched and documented for relevant policy formation for the sector. Since majority of crafts workers in India are home based or work in small units not employing more than 10-12 workers, they are not covered under the provisions of labour laws in India.

In India, the enforcement of the legal and policy provisions regarding occupational health and safety is extremely weak. This may be largely due to the fact that occupational health is the mandate of Ministry of Labour and not the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Review of Literature

It has been divided into three sections-

1. Review of studies related to career satisfaction
2. Review of studies related to handicraft sector in India
3. Review of studies related to quality of work life

Studies Related to Career satisfaction

Career satisfaction is defined as the satisfaction individuals derive from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their careers, including pay, advancement and developmental opportunities. This is in contrast to job satisfaction defined as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job or job experiences. In the earlier studies it was observed that management theorists have the importance of coordinating the organisation-human relationship to enhance productivity and develop human capital (Maslow¹ 1954, Argyris² 1957, Herzberg³ 1968). Korman et al⁴ (1980) developed a construct called materialistic ethic. It states that a career is more satisfying if it is higher in prestige, income and power in comparison to other positions. In reviewing the literature, it is found that managers tend to evaluate their careers based on these factors.

It can be said that career satisfaction is largely a matter of an individual comparing his/her career and life expectations with those being offered. In shaping such career expectations, there are economic considerations (e.g. compensation and retirement benefits) and occupational and family considerations (professional satisfaction, job satisfaction, advancement opportunities, relocation, etc.). Some research indicates that a happy family life correlates with high levels of job satisfaction and objective career success. Career dissatisfaction can lead to employees' disengagement, such that dissatisfied employees are less engaged in their work and are likely to exhibit lower performance than satisfied employees. Korman, Wittig-Berman and Lang⁵, (1981).

Rapoport and Rapoport⁶ (1983) supported this by showing that the family's morale support and the diversion that it entails make it an important factor affecting Quality of Work Life.

According to Gattiker and Larwood⁷ (1990), career satisfaction refers to the overall affective orientation of the individual toward his or her career. It is only one facet of a person's job satisfaction, since a person satisfied with his or her career may not be satisfied with another facet, e.g. working conditions of one's job.

Career satisfaction is a subjective measure that captures employees' perceptions of their satisfaction with their overall career goals, goals for income, goals for advancement and goals for the development of new skills (Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley, (1990))⁸.

In the opinion of Louis & Smith⁹ (1990), subsequently, organizations' cognizant of issues surrounding the concept of Quality of Work Life appear to be more effective at retaining their employees and achieving their goals.

Besides, an employee who feels a great deal of work related well being and little job distress is apt to have a good Quality of Work Life (Quality of Work Life), and vice versa Riggio¹⁰ (1990).

Previous studies have found linkages between career satisfaction and productivity and engagement, which in turn are linked to higher organizational commitment and increased creativity and innovation (Berg¹¹ (1991); Peluchette¹² (1993)). Nevertheless, employees have certain expectations when they join an organisation as suggested by Woods¹³ (1993) and when they are not fulfilled, job satisfaction is likely to decline and turnover is a likely consequence.

Based on Judge et al¹⁴ (1995), career success/achievement is defined as the positive psychological outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of experiences over the span

of working life which consists of objective career success (job title, salary or promotion) and subjective career success (one's own appraisal of career attainment). Research also suggests that job tenure and total time in one's occupation are positively related to career success/achievement besides the number of hours worked per week and salary and ascendancy. A positive relationship between ambition and career success has been found in several studies of managers and executives. Herriot recognizes that sometimes there is a conflict between personal life and work and differences in perceptions of "success" in life. The perception of career includes beliefs and values, expectations and aspirations.

Indeed, Quality of Work Life is a process by which an organisation responds to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow members to share fully in making decisions that design their lives at work. Robbins¹⁵ (1998).

Career satisfaction has been linked to several important organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, intentions to turnover and support for organizational change. Satisfaction with career is found to be negatively related to intention to leave and this relationship is as strong as perception of the labour market, the most reliable predictor in the research literature on turnover.

One of the interesting findings from pay satisfaction research is the modest strength of the relationship between how much people are actually paid and their satisfaction with pay. Although this relationship is consistently positive and statistically significant, actual salary generally accounts for less than 25% of the variance in pay satisfaction. Those with the highest pay are not always the most satisfied with their pay. Qualities of Work Life programs usually emphasize development of employee skills, the reduction of occupational stress and development of labor management relations.

Harter, Schmidt and Hayes¹⁶ (2002) also found that satisfaction is related to a number of other business outcomes including customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability and lower employee turnover at magnitudes that are important to organizations.

In addition, studies by Harter, Schmidt and Haye (2002) have found that employees who are more satisfied with their careers are more engaged and thus they are more likely to contribute actively to the organization's success.

According to Lawler¹⁷ (2005), society has entered a new era in the relationship between organisations and their employees. In this new era, people are the primary source for a company's competitive advantage and organisational prosperity and survival depends on how employees are treated.

Furthermore, it is critical that companies treat people in ways that make them feel committed, if not loyal, members. As such, employees expect their job to provide a certain amount of stability and loyalty from the organisation (Conlon¹⁸ 2003, McDonald & Hite¹⁹ 2005). From this perspective there has stemmed the notion of organisational responsibility and specifically of management, to ensure that employees who commit themselves fully to achieving the organisation's objectives should also experience a high Quality of Work Life Kotze²⁰ (2005).

General Studies on Handicraft Industries

According to Desai V²¹ (1999), the Indian handicraft industry, which comes under the small and cottage sector, represents India's rich cultural heritage. The sector has spread in various parts of India in small pockets is credited with production of a wide range of handicrafts, which are not found anywhere in the world. Because of their artistic and fine craftsmanship, the Indian handicrafts have carved out an important niche in the highly competitive international market. The sector also plays a substantial role in earning the much-needed foreign exchange for the country.

The Indian handicrafts industry is highly labor intensive, cottage based and decentralized industry. The industry is spread all over the country mainly in rural and urban areas. Most of the manufacturing units are located in rural and small towns, and there is huge market potential in all Indian cities and abroad. Handicraft industry is a major source of income for rural communities employing over six million artisans including a large number of women and people belonging to the weaker sections of the society.

Numerous artisans are engaged in crafts work on part-time basis. The industry provides employment to over six million artisans (including those in carpet trade), which include a large number of women and people belonging to the weaker sections of the society.

According to a Report of Development Commissioner Handicraft Board, (2001)²² the term handicraft refers to the hand made articles which are produced by the craftsmen with or without the tools, simple instruments or implements operated directed by craftsman mainly by hand. Within the category of hand made goods, some such as handicraft products often have an additional identifying feature such as; the traditional or artistic feature, deriving from the geographical region or country of production, the production by craftsmen, working generally on a cottage industry basis.

According to Garg, A.K., (2004)²³, although exports of handicrafts appear to be sizeable, India's share in world imports is miniscule. It is a sector that is still not completely explored from the point of view of hidden potential areas. India, a country with 26

states and 18 languages and more than 1500 dialects offers an enormous range of handicrafts from each of the states. Major centres in Uttar Pradesh are Moradabad also known as the "Peetalnagari" (City of Brass), Saharanpur for its wooden articles, Ferozabad for Glass. The North Western state of Rajasthan has to offer the famous Jaipuri quilts, Bagru and Sanganer printed textiles and wooden and wrought iron furniture from Jodhpur. The coastal state of Gujarat comes with embroidered articles from Kutch. Narsapur in Andhra Pradesh is famous for its Lace and Lace goods.

Studies Relating to Quality of Work Life

The Hawthorne experiments conducted by Elton Mayo and his Harvard associates²⁴ (1953) revealed the inter-relatedness of various elements at work and demonstrated that changes in physical conditions of work such as working hour, rest pauses, monotony, fatigue, incentives, employees attitude, the formal and informal organization result in high morale, productivity and job satisfaction.

Milton L. Blum²⁵ (1956) in his study noted the significance of the relationship between job satisfaction and general satisfaction. He states that job satisfaction in part may be a function of general satisfaction or attitude towards life.

George V Haythorne²⁶ (1963) conducted a study to examine what can employers and government do to assist workers in improving productivity and what can workers themselves do. In his view the productivity improvement can best take place in the context of economic growth. The study reveals that many workers face the problems of change and insecurity. This can be overcome by training and retraining programs and adequate provision of workers to move to other work within the same industry. He opined that the productivity can only be achieved through effective teamwork and the fruits of increased productivity should be shared fairly among employers, workers and public generally.

The study conducted by H.C. Ganguly²⁷ (1964) on Indian workers attempted to examine various factors leading to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and ranked adequate earnings at the first place. Other factors which are ranked high are job security and opportunity for advancement. Other factors such as job status and prestige, working hours, relation with colleagues etc. have been ranked as low motivators.

Zavala²⁸(1965) in his study explains the following causes of the failure in maintaining the accuracy, validity and reliability of employee evaluations or performance appraisal through various methods or techniques: (i) The supervisor plays a dual and conflicting role of both the judge and the helpers;

(ii) Too many objectives often cause confusion; (iii) The supervisor feels that subordinate appraisal is not rewarding; (iv) A considerable time gap exists between two appraisal programs; (v) The skills required for daily administration and employee development are in conflict; (vi) Poor communication keeps employees in the dark about what is expected of them; (vii) There is a difference of opinion between a supervisor and a subordinate in regard to the latter's performance; (viii) Feed back of appraisal is generally unpleasant for both supervisor and subordinate; and (ix) Unwillingness on the part of supervisors to tell employees plainly how to improve their performance.

Walton²⁹ (1975) proposed eight major conceptual categories relating to Quality of Work Life as (1) adequate and fair compensation, (2) safe and healthy working conditions, (3) immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, (4) 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) social relevance of work life. Several published works have addressed the constructs that make up the Quality of Work Life domain and key elements of Quality of Work Life programs.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the quality of work life in the major conventional handicraft units in and around Moradabad. Keeping this in view, the following specific objectives are set for the study.

- 1) To review the socio-economic background of the employees working in the handicraft industries.
- 2) To identify various factors affecting quality of work life of employees working in the handicraft industries.
- 3) To locate the most important factor/ factors of quality of work life.
- 4) To study whether health of handicraft workers also has a bearing on productivity of the workers like other variables of QWL.
- 5) To make suggestions based on the findings of the study.

Methodology

In pursuance of the above mentioned objectives and hypotheses, the following methodology was adopted for this study. The study is an empirical one based on both primary and secondary data. The first objective of the study was pursued by the collection and analysis of data from secondary sources whereas all the other objectives have been achieved by collection and analysis of primary data.

Secondary Data

The secondary data have been drawn from various publications and also from personal discussions with the officials of various agencies. Various studies and publications from which secondary data have been drawn are:

1. Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts
2. District Industrial Center, Moradabad
3. Small Scales Industries Development Corporation

Research studies conducted in this and related areas in different universities, books and journals dealing with the subject and various reports published by agencies working in this field were the other sources of secondary data.

Primary Data

The study is mainly based on primary data, obtained from a well designed interview schedule and open discussion with employees and executives of handicraft industries. For this purpose an interview schedule was prepared, covering all aspects of quality of work life. This interview schedule has been finalized after conducting a pilot survey study among a sample of fifteen employees. Appointments were taken in advance and interview timing was fixed accordingly.

Population

All the employees of the handicraft firm registered with EPCH as on January 2011 are considered as population for the purpose of this study.

Present paper focuses on the health issues of handicraft workers in and around Moradabad.

Quality of Work Life can be conceptualized by the following four prime dimensions:

- Career and employment security
- Health and well being
- Skills development
- Reconciliation of working and non- working life.

The last two dimensions are already covered by the 'conceptualization of evaluation criteria' namely by 'employability' and 'work/ life balance'. As far as 'career and employment security' in a life- course perspective is concerned, it is particularly important to analyse the vertical implications of certain time arrangements. With respect to 'health and well- being' there is substantial empirical evidence that new patterns of working hours are leading to increasing demands on employees' flexibility at the work place. Empirical research has also revealed that changing and increasing work loads increase the overall level of stress which could lead to health risks.

Major Factors Analysed

The factors analysed in detail for studying quality of work life in the selected handicraft industries are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Factors Analysed in the Study

Factors	Variables Identified
V _I Adequate and fair compensation. (10 sub variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary in comparison with cost of living, • Salary in comparison with other originations, • Salary in comparison with employees' ability, • Overtime wages, • Incentives, • Contribution to provident fund, • Gratuity and group insurance, • Advance payment of salary in times of emergency, • Prompt payment of salary, and • Mental attitude to continue in the present job regardless of pay.
V _{II} Safe and healthy working conditions. (15 sub- variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest period, • Canteen facilities, • Drinking water facilities, • First aid/ Medical facilities, • Facilities for sports and games, • Library and reading room, • Lunch room, • Sanitary facilities, • Ventilation and air circulation facilities, • Facilities for disposal of waste and dust, • Measures for controlling pollution,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of machines and equipments, • Safety plan, • Health care measures, and • Health after days work.
V _{.III} Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities. (9 sub- variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational structure, • Appreciation of employee's idea to bring new changes, • Employees' participation in technical planning, • Clarity and transparency in communication, • Freedom in work, • Provision for information about work process and its results, • Attitude of supervisor, • Equitable treatment, and • Appreciation of good work.
V _{.IV} Opportunities for continued growth and security. (12 sub-variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment of work on the basis of abilities, • Work of organizational planning, research and development, • Assignment of work within the limits of workers' ability, • Facilities for individual creative work, • Facilities for using new knowledge for further work, • Opportunities for improvement of job, • Training, • Job rotation, • Promotion opportunities, • Performance appraisal based on objective assessment, • Appreciation of idea to make new changes, and • Willingness to continue the organization till retirement.
V _{.V} Social integration in the work organization. (14 sub-variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees' feeling of sense of one community, • Identification of a member purely on the basis of skill and potentialities without regard of race, sex or age, • Members' interaction in terms of ideas and feelings, • Easiness in working as a group, • Preference to work collectively than individually, • Attention of grievances raised by juniors favorably by seniors • Consideration of workers' views in resolving problems, • Encouragement of organization in reciprocal help, • Workers acceptance in rapid changes in technology, • Workers cooperation for expansion and diversification, • Participation in decision making process, • Consultation by the supervisor before taking decisions, • Co- workers relationship, and • Management- worker relationship.
V _{.VI} Constitutionalism in the work organization. (5 sub- variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking Care of the welfare of workers of all ages, • Equal treatment to all workers, • Different approaches to work according to the nature of job and ability of the worker, • Maintenance of privacy regarding personal matters, and • Functioning of conflict resolution mechanism.
V _{.VII} Work and total life space. (4 sub- variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction of employees' needs by the job, • Awareness about health in spite of the nature of the job, • Social and individual requirements, and • Effect of energy and time spent on the job on workers life.

V.viii Social relevance of the working life. (8 sub- variables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social responsibility of the organization, • Nature of job and social prestige • Effect of job to improve social security, • Nature of organizational goals, matching of work life and social life, • Organisation’s awareness of method of industrial pollution, • Price of the goods and services from social point of view, • Importance to quality of products and services, and • Contribution towards improving culture of the society.
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Comparison of the level of quality of work life of employees is made on the basis of their personal, job related and organizational profiles. Basis of classification of employees is shown in the following table.

Concepts and Definitions

Concept	Definition
Quality of Work Life	It refers to values and attitudes contained in working life of an employee. A high score on quality of work life scale indicates “better quality of working life”.
Adequate and fair compensation	Compensation is said to be adequate and fair if the income from the work meet socially determined of sufficiency or the subjective standard of the recipient.
Safe and Healthy Working Conditions	Work environment which helps a worker to perform his duties in hygienic working conditions and such work will not injure any part of the body or mind of the worker.
Immediate Opportunities to Use and Develop Human Capacities	Provision of job which enable workers to use and develop their skill and knowledge, affecting their involvement, self- system and the challenges obtained from the work itself.
Opportunities for Continued Growth	Allotment of work which provides career opportunities for development of new abilities and expansion of existing skills on a continuous basis.
Social Integration in the Work Organization	The nature of personal relationship help in acceptance of the work based on work related traits, skills, abilities and potential without regard to race, sex physical appearance etc. and the sense of one community in work organization.
Constitutionalism in the Work Organization.	Constitutionalism to the work place to protect employee from exploitative actions by employer and any other member in the organization.
Work and Total Life Space	The relation between an employee’s family life, social life and work life is described as work and total life space.
The Social Relevance of the Working Life	Provision of work which should not only be a source of material and psychological satisfaction but a means of social welfare.
Factory Subordinate Workers	All workers in the factory working under the control of another employee and have no power to control any other employee and include helpers, watchmen, cleaners, sweepers and other regular factory workers.
Factory Supervisors	Employees in the factory having the power to watch over and direct another employee or employees and include foreman, gang boss, speed boss, and shop disciplinarian.
Office Employee	Employees working in the administrative section, but having no power to control other employees and include

	clerks, attendees, peons and office helpers.
Office Supervisors	Office employees having the power to control other employees and include, section officers, head officers, head accountant and office superintendent.
Manager	An employee having the power to control all other employees or the employees of a section of the organization and include general manager, factory manager, purchase manager, sales manager and personnel manager.

Conclusion of the study

The following are the major conclusions arrived at based on the findings of the study.

1. Richard Walton's eight point factors can be successfully used for measuring quality of work life.
2. Financially and socially employees in the major conventional handicraft units are standing backward.
3. The educational level of employees in the majority of handicraft units is also very low.
4. Social security and health care measures taken by handicraft units are poor.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the fact that very reliable results may also be generalized have been arrived at, the researcher would like to point out some unavoidable limitations that have entered in to the study. They are stated below:

- 1) For measuring quality of work life Richard Walton's eight point factors have been considered. There may be other factors having impact on quality of work life which are not considered for this study.
- 2) For each of the factors several sub- variables were identified. They have been selected on the basis of various theories, models; seminar/study reports etc. more variables could have been included in the tentatively selected independent variable to make it more conclusive. However the researcher has felt that the selected items grouped under eight factors are more vital and sufficient and therefore, have higher logical correlation with the quality of work life than with the left- out items.
- 3) A comparison of the total quality of work life in the handicraft sector has not been made since any standard index of quality of work life has not been available.
- 4) In some SSI units owners themselves are working as managers. Since they are not employees, they are excluded from the lot at the time of selection of employees.
- 5) The findings of this study are based on the information supplied by the respondent's readiness to give correct information.

Possibility of hiding certain facts on the part of respondents could not completely be ruled out, although all possible efforts have been made to elicit authentic information.

In spite of these limitations, an earnest attempt has been made to arrive at fairly objective and representative conclusions by analyzing the data discretely and tactfully.

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