

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED STEEL PLANTS OF THE HYDERABAD KARNATAKA REGION

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Abstract

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is very important to enrich the well-being of the employees, job effectiveness and sustainability of the organization, especially in labour intensive industries such as steel manufacturing. The current study is an effort to study the vital factors affecting Q.W.L. and to assess the overall level of Q.W.L. of the workers employed in selected Hyderabad Karnataka region steel plants. The descriptive research design is used, primary data is collected from 492 employees by a structured questionnaire. The instrument for measuring the study was validated using reliability and validity test. Exploratory Factor Analysis and descriptive statistics are used for analyzing data. The findings indicate that the statutory welfare measures, non-statutory welfare measures, nature of job, compensation, working conditions, empowerment, social integration and constitutionalism are the key determinants of employee's Quality of life. The study reveals a positive insight in the quality of work life among the employees of QWL in the selected organizations, however, there is a need for management's attention in housing facilities, transport services, recreational facilities and co-operative stores. The study also emphasizes the necessity of improving employee welfare and organizational practices to boost job satisfaction, employee commitment, and sustainability of steel organizations.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, Employee Welfare, Steel Industry, Working Conditions, Organizational Performance, Exploratory Factor Analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's human resource management, Quality of Work Life (QWL) has emerged as an important paradigm. With increased competition in the industrial environment, organisations have recognised that employees are a key strategic asset. There is a strong link between long-term organisation effectiveness and the motivation, commitment and performance of employees. Improving employees' QWL is therefore an important organizational objective, particularly in industries with a high proportion of manual workers (like the steel industry), where workers are subjected to physically demanding, technologically sophisticated and safety-conscious operations. The Quality of Work Life is the extent to which the employees in their job roles can contribute to the delivery of an organisation's objectives and can fulfil their personal, social and professional objectives at the same time. This has not only been limited to compensation and has been extended to a range of dimensions such as safe working conditions, equal pay, opportunities for professional development, job security, employee participation in decision making, work-

life balance, social integration, constitutional rights and employee welfare. High QWL leads to greater employee satisfaction, increase in organisational commitment, productivity, innovation and organisational performance.

The steel industry is one of the pillars of the economic development of India, which serves the infrastructure, manufacturing, transportation, construction, defence and engineering industries. Despite continuous technological developments and modernisation of the steel industry, it remains a hazardous sector. Steel workers are subjected to high temperatures, heavy machinery, dust, noise and chemical emissions. Work places like these may have occupational risks, physical exhaustion, psychological stress, and work-related health issues (Rantanen, Parveen & Maimani, 2015). This makes it very important to maintain a high standard of living at work as a way of protecting the wellbeing of the employees and for sustainable development of the organisation (Nanjundeswara swamy & Swamy, 2013). During the past decade the State has witnessed a great advancement in industrialization in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, and the integrated steel plants and mini steel plants have made significant contribution in terms of employment and economic development of the region. Employees have a diverse background of education, technical skills and employment status (permanent, temporary, contractual). To manage such a heterogeneous workforce, organisations need to implement comprehensive welfare programmes, fair compensation systems, secure working environments with chances for professional advancement and supportive organizational practices that will enhance employees' quality of work life (Timossi et al., 2008; Kanten & Sadullah, 2012). Although different statutory and voluntary welfare measures have been adopted by steel companies, the attitude of the employees towards the measures varies from one company to another, depending on the organizational policies, Job nature and work place practices (Sirgy et al., 2001).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of work life (QWL) is considered as an emerging area of research in organisational and human resource management because it has a direct impact on people's health, commitment of employees to the organisation, sustainable organizational success and productivity. Many industrial companies, particularly those involved in steel manufacturing, operate in environments which can be challenging for workers, and demand high levels of physical effort and compliance with safety protocols to maintain efficiency and productivity. This has resulted in a growing interest in the organisational, psychological and environmental factors affecting the quality of work life of workers. Current empirical studies have demonstrated that QWL is more than employee satisfaction. It covers the safety and welfare at work, participative management, career development, work-life balance and support and prospects within the organisation

Singh (2025) has made a relative study of the worker participation in management practices in Tata Steel and Bokaro Steel Plant. The study found that there is a significant disparity between the participation of employees in decision making of organization by two organizations. Tata Steel was much more of a participative management, open

communication, mutual trust and more employees involvement. Workplace employees believed that they were actively involved in organizational decisions that increased organisational commitment and increased contentment among the employees. On the other hand, Bokaro Steel Plant followed a rather hierarchical management structure with relatively little employee participation. These differences affected employees' perceptions of justice, motivation and relationship at work. The importance of employee welfare and safety remains as vital a part of work quality. Above all, life, particularly in heavy industries, where the occupational risk is much greater. Thangapandian, Gayathri Devi and Velmurugan (2025) made a study on employee satisfaction regarding the safety and welfare practices in Madura Steel Industries Pvt Ltd. The study revealed that employees were happy with the occupational safety measures and they were thankful to the management for their efforts made to ensure the standard of occupational safety. But the study revealed that the concern from the employee welfare side was lacking in the field of health services, wellness programmes, recreation facilities and supporting facilities. This finding suggests that a range of physical safety measures is not enough to improve the work experience of employees. The equally significant is the implementation of a comprehensive welfare system, which meets the physical, psychological and social needs of the employees, so as to create a positive working atmosphere.

Previous studies have made a significant contribution to the understanding of the concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and the role that it plays in organisational success. QWL is not confined to employee welfare but it is an umbrella term for the various factors of the workplace which affect the employee's overall experience and well-being. The 2025 study by Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation revealed that employee engagement, a positive culture at work, avenues for professional development and participative management procedures significantly contribute to an organisation's performance. Interestingly, the research also noted that the concept of QWL is not static and is continually developing as organisations recognise and embrace the evolution of technology, working practices and the aspirations of their employees. The results suggest that to improve QWL, organisations should take a holistic approach by establishing a positive, inclusive and growth-oriented work environment, instead of focusing solely on providing employee benefits. General conceptual research has also broadened the knowledge of Quality of Work Life as a multidimensional construct of the organization. The study on Quality of Work Life in APPOWARL (2025) highlighted that the employee engagement, sympathetic work environments, professional progressive opportunities and participative management are important factors to the organizational effectiveness. In the same way, in its overview, Quality of Work Life (2025) explains that QWL is a "moving" concept influenced by the changing expectations of organizations, technological advancements and employees' changing career aspirations. These studies agree that Organisations should go beyond the traditional welfare approach to implement more holistic human resource management practices that improve employee wellness and organisational performance. Working conditions remain one of the strongest determinants of employee well-being in industrial settings. Lazarenkov et al. (2025) examined occupational conditions within foundry production and highlighted the adverse

effects of hazardous environments, physical strain, and operational risks on employees' health and work experiences. Although the research focused on foundry operations rather than steel manufacturing, its findings have considerable relevance because both industries expose workers to comparable occupational hazards, including excessive heat, noise, dust, and heavy machinery. The study highlights the significance of implementing effective occupational health and safety measures to reduce workplace risks and improve employees' quality of work life. The association between Quality of Work Life and employee burnout has also received growing scholarly attention. Mohamed, Al Deeb, and Abdulla (2024) investigated employees working in Bahrain's engineering industrial sector and found that higher levels of Quality of Work Life significantly reduced occupational burnout. The study identified fair wages, supportive supervision, job security, opportunities for promotion, and healthy interpersonal relationships as major contributors to employee well-being. Employees who perceived these organizational factors positively reported lower emotional exhaustion and stronger organizational commitment. The Findings illustrate that investing in work life quality not only improve employee satisfaction but also function as preventive measures against occupational stress and burnout.

Further evidence regarding the determinants of Quality of Work Life was presented by Gazi et al. (2024), who conducted an empirical investigation among industrial workers in Bangladesh. Their research identified several organizational factors influencing employees' perceptions of Quality of Work Life, including workplace environment, organizational culture, managerial support, compensation systems, availability of work resources, employee autonomy, job security, and interpersonal relationships. The study demonstrated that employees' perceptions of fairness and organizational support substantially influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These findings are particularly relevant for labour-intensive industries such as steel manufacturing, where organizational culture and management practices directly affect employee motivation and operational performance.

The relationship between Quality of Work Life and organizational change has also emerged as an important research area. Halim and Kovara (2024) argued that organizations implementing change management strategies must simultaneously strengthen Quality of Work Life to ensure successful organizational transformation. Their study suggested that organizations capable of maintaining employee well-being during periods of change experience lower absenteeism, stronger employee morale, and higher productivity. The research emphasizes that organizational change should be accompanied by transparent communication, employee involvement, and supportive human resource practices to minimize employee resistance and maintain organizational effectiveness. Collectively, the reviewed studies demonstrate that Quality of Work Life is influenced by multiple organizational, social, psychological, and environmental factors rather than by a single dimension. Employee participation in management, occupational safety, welfare programmes, supportive leadership, equitable compensation, opportunities for career development, work-life balance, organizational culture, and effective communication consistently emerge as important determinants of employees' workplace experiences.

Although several recent studies have examined these factors individually across different industrial settings, relatively limited research has investigated their combined influence within integrated steel manufacturing organizations, particularly in the Indian context. Furthermore, comparative analyses examining how demographic characteristics interact with Quality of Work Life dimensions remain scarce. These research gaps justify the need for the present study, which seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of Quality of Work Life among employees working in selected steel plants and to identify the organizational factors that most strongly influence employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology adopted for studying the factors affecting the Quality of Work Life (QWL) among employees working in selected steel plants in Hyderabad Karnataka region. Methodology includes research design, population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection methods, questionnaire development, study variables, reliability and validity assessment, statistical techniques for data analysis and ethical considerations. A systematic methodology ensures reliability and validity of findings thus giving a sound basis to achieve the objectives of the study.

A. Design of the Study

The present study used a quantitative research approach and a descriptive and analytical research design. Descriptive component was used to measure the employees' perception on statutory welfare measures, non-statutory welfare measures, Quality of Work Life Dimensions, job satisfaction and job performance. The analytical part was used to analyse the relationships among these variables and the factors affecting the Quality of Work Life of the employees.

B. Nature of the Study

The study is of an empirical nature and is based on primary data collected from employees working in selected steel manufacturing organisations. The secondary information was also analysed to define the theoretical basis of the study.

C. Data Sources Primary Data

Primary data were collected from employees of selected steel plants through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included the statements on employee welfare measures, Quality of Work Life dimensions, job satisfaction and job performance.

D. Study Population

The population under study consisted of employees working in designated steel plants in Hyderabad Karnataka region. The study population consisted of employees from different departments like administration, engineering, manufacturing and other supporting departments. To obtain a complete picture of the employees' perception of Quality of Work Life, permanent, temporary and contractual employees were included.

E. Sampling Procedure

Respondents were selected from the participating steel plants using a probability sampling approach. Employees were selected from numerous departments and employment categories to effectively represent the workforce. The sampling procedure allowed for responses from employees with different demographic and occupational characteristics.

F. Number of Samples

The study was carried out with a total of 492 employees. All filled-in questionnaires were checked for completeness and the valid responses were used for statistical analysis.

Moreover, the sample size was also tested by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy. The result was 0.925, which indicates that the sample was very adequate for multivariate statistical analysis.

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND DISCUSSION

A. Questionnaire Design

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected demographic information regarding gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, monthly income, employment status, and job role. The second section measured employees' perceptions of organizational welfare measures and Quality of Work Life using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire consisted of 82 measurement items distributed across the study constructs.

B. Variables included in the Study

Different variables used for the study are listed in Table 1

Table 1: Different Variables for the Study

Independent variables:	Dependent Variables
Statutory Welfare Measures	
Non-Statutory Welfare Measures	Quality of Work Life
Nature of Job	Job Satisfaction
Compensation	Job Performance
Working Conditions	
Opportunity for Growth and Development	
Social Integration	
Constitutionalism	

C. Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha as shown in Table 2

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Values

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Statutory Welfare Measures	8	0.797	Good
Non-Statutory Welfare Measures	15	0.882	Good
Nature of Job	4	0.730	Acceptable
Compensation	7	0.811	Good
Working Conditions	5	0.693	Acceptable
Opportunity for Growth and Development	10	0.892	Good
Social Integration	11	0.850	Good
Constitutionalism	5	0.689	Acceptable (Exploratory)
Job Satisfaction	8	0.807	Good
Job Performance	4	0.727	Acceptable
Overall Scale	82	0.958	Excellent

The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.958, indicating excellent internal consistency: These coefficients indicate satisfactory reliability of the measurement instrument for behavioural research.

D. Validity of the Instrument

Construct validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.925, indicating excellent adequacy of the sample. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2671.441$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis.

Principal Component Analysis was employed for factor extraction. The factor loadings ranged from 0.544 to 0.984, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50. Therefore, all questionnaire items were retained for subsequent analysis. The results confirm that the measurement instrument possesses satisfactory construct validity.

E. Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical techniques were employed:

- Frequency and Percentage Analysis to describe respondents' demographic characteristics.
- Mean and Standard Deviation to determine employees' perceptions regarding each construct.
- Cronbach's Alpha to assess reliability.
- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to examine sampling adequacy.

- Exploratory Factor Analysis using Principal Component Analysis to establish construct Validity. The level of statistical significance was fixed at 5% ($p < 0.05$).

V. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the major dimensions of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and its associated outcomes. Overall, the findings indicate that employees in the selected steel plants perceive their quality of work life positively, with all major constructs recording mean values above 4.20 on a five-point Likert scale. This suggests a high level of satisfaction with the welfare measures, work environment, organizational support, and employment conditions provided by the steel plants.

Table 3: Quality of Work Life (QWL) Dimensions

Rank	Dimension	Overall Mean	Typical SD*	Interpretation
1	Job Satisfaction	4.58	0.67	Very High satisfaction with high agreement
2	Job Performance	4.58	0.59	Very High-performance perception with very high agreement
3	Nature of Job	4.57	0.69	Very High satisfaction with consistent responses
4	Statutory Welfare Measures	4.53	0.76	Very High satisfaction with moderate agreement
5	Social Integration	4.53	0.65	Very High satisfaction with strong agreement
6	Opportunity for Growth & Development	4.51	0.67	Very High satisfaction with consistent perceptions
7	Work and Total Life Space	4.51	0.67	Very High satisfaction with strong agreement
8	Compensation	4.49	0.69	High satisfaction with relatively consistent responses
9	Working Conditions	4.48	0.68	High satisfaction with strong agreement
10	Constitutionalism	4.45	0.73	High satisfaction with moderate agreement
11	Non-Statutory Welfare Measures	4.22	1.06	High satisfaction but comparatively greater variation

The descriptive findings reveal that employees reported **high to very high levels of Quality of Work Life**, as reflected by the overall mean values ranging from **4.22 to 4.58**. Simultaneously, the standard deviations indicate varying levels of agreement among employees regarding different organizational practices. Among all constructs, **Job Satisfaction (Mean = 4.58)** and **Job Performance (Mean = 4.58)** recorded the highest mean scores with relatively **low standard deviations (approximately 0.60–0.70)**. This combination suggests that employees not only experience a high degree of satisfaction and performance but also demonstrate strong consensus in their perceptions. The low variability indicates that these positive opinions are shared consistently across the

workforce. Similarly, the **Nature of Job (Mean = 4.57; SD $\approx$ 0.69)** received very favorable evaluations, indicating that employees generally perceive their work as meaningful, engaging, and appropriately matched to their skills. The relatively small dispersion further demonstrates a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the intrinsic characteristics of their jobs.

The dimensions of **Statutory Welfare Measures (Mean = 4.53)**, **Social Integration (Mean = 4.53)**, **Opportunity for Growth and Development (Mean = 4.51)**, and **Work and Total Life Space (Mean = 4.51)** also achieved very high mean scores with standard deviations generally below **0.75**. These findings indicate that employees consistently appreciate the welfare facilities, supportive interpersonal relationships, career development opportunities, and work-life balance initiatives implemented by the organizations. Likewise, **Compensation (Mean = 4.49; SD $\approx$ 0.69)**, **Working Conditions (Mean = 4.48; SD $\approx$ 0.68)**, and **Constitutionalism (Mean = 4.45; SD $\approx$ 0.73)** demonstrate positive employee perceptions accompanied by moderate variability. The relatively low standard deviations suggest that most employees share similar opinions regarding compensation fairness, workplace safety, organizational policies, and employee rights.

In contrast, **Non-Statutory Welfare Measures (Mean = 4.22; SD $\approx$ 1.06)** exhibited the lowest overall mean and the highest variability among all dimensions. The comparatively large standard deviation indicates that employees' experiences with non-statutory welfare provisions differ considerably across the surveyed steel plants. Examination of the individual indicators reveals that **housing facilities (SD = 1.445)**, **housing quarters (SD = 1.551)**, **consumer cooperative stores (SD = 1.634)**, **recreational facilities (SD = 1.385)**, and **transport facilities (SD = 1.325)** recorded the greatest dispersion. These findings suggest that while some employees are satisfied with these welfare provisions, others perceive substantial deficiencies, possibly reflecting differences in facility availability, accessibility, or implementation across organizations. Conversely, statutory welfare facilities such as **drinking water (SD = 0.608)**, **washing facilities (SD = 0.592)**, **restroom facilities (SD = 0.633)**, and **first-aid facilities (SD = 0.680)** displayed relatively low variability, indicating that these legally mandated facilities are consistently maintained across the selected steel plants.

Overall, the combination of **high mean scores and relatively low standard deviations** across most dimensions demonstrates that employees generally perceive their Quality of Work Life positively and that these favorable perceptions are consistently shared by the majority of respondents. However, the comparatively higher variability observed for non-statutory welfare measures indicates that these facilities require greater managerial attention to ensure more equitable and consistent welfare provisions across all steel plants

Inference

The descriptive analysis confirms that employees working in the selected steel plants experience a **high level of Quality of Work Life**, thereby fulfilling **Objective 2** of the study. The consistently high mean scores across most QWL dimensions, together with

relatively low standard deviations, indicate that employees largely agree on the positive quality of welfare measures, work environment, organizational support, and career development opportunities. Nevertheless, the larger standard deviations observed for non-statutory welfare measures reveal unequal employee experiences, particularly regarding housing, transport, recreational facilities, and cooperative stores. These findings suggest that while the organizations have successfully established a favorable work environment, improvements in non-statutory welfare provisions would promote greater uniformity in employee experiences and further enhance the overall Quality of Work Life.

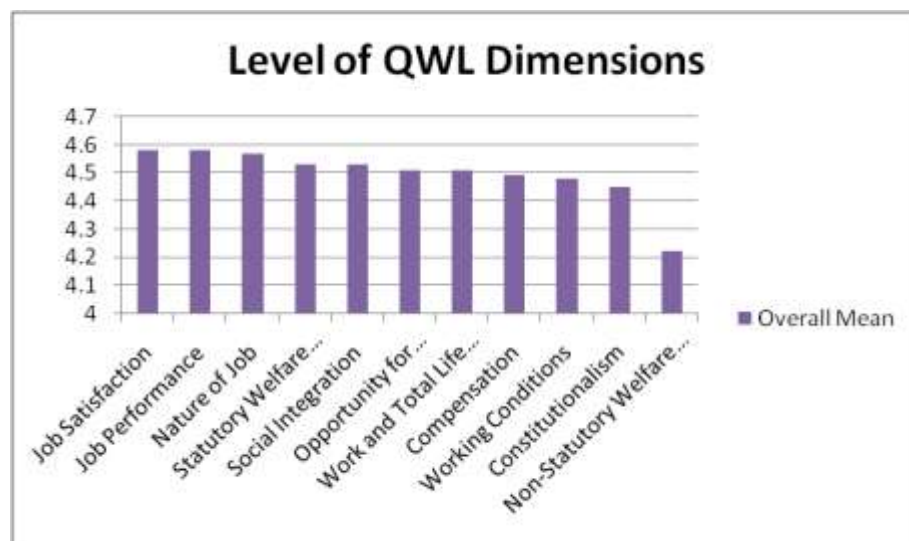


Figure 1: Mean of QWL Dimensions

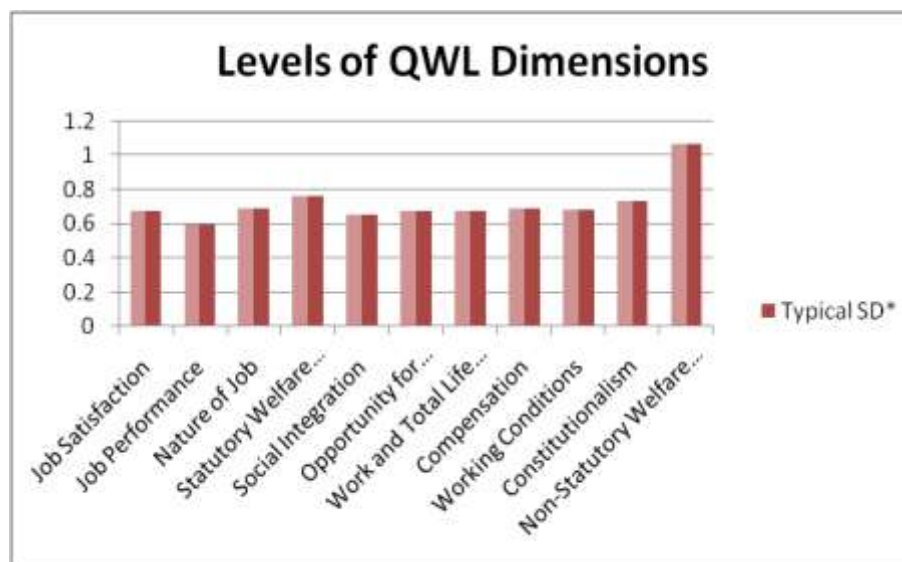


Figure 2: Standard Deviation of QWL Dimension

VI. CONCLUSION

The study outcome resulted in a multi-faceted approach to assess the Quality of Work Life (QWL) which include the following dimensions: statutory and non-statutory welfare services, job nature, and compensation, working conditions, growth and development opportunities, social integration, constitutionalism, job satisfaction and job performance. The findings from statistical analysis via reliability and factor analyses indicated that these dimensions are valid and reliable to interpret employees' work experiences. The overall evaluation also revealed high levels of Quality of Work Life, with the average scores on each dimension ranging from 4.22 to 4.58 (positive perceptions by employees). Job Satisfaction, Nature of Job, Statutory Welfare Measures and Social Integration were rated with the highest satisfaction highlighting a conducive organizational environment. Conversely, comparatively low ratings for Non-Statutory Welfare Measures (particularly housing facilities, cooperative stores, recreational amenities and transport services) indicate managerial areas requiring attention. The implementation of these welfare provisions along with continuous employee development and organizational practices would further add to the well-being, commitment and productivity of the employees, which would ensure the sustainable organizational performance within the steel industry.

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