



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2020; 6(3): 152-154
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 08-01-2020
Accepted: 12-02-2020

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Meaningful employment contributes to an improved quality of life

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the role of meaningful employment for enhancing the quality of life. Globally all the academicians, politicians, developmental economists and social scientists are concerned with enhancing the possibilities and capabilities of human beings so that they can spend their life in a qualitative and desirable way. Quality of life is complex and broader term which has many dimensions such as long and healthy life, education and decent standard of living. The stability of the job, pay according to the work, recognition of the ability, fair treatment by employer and all such conditions which contribute to economic prosperity of an individual and this in turn leads to high quality of life. The paper seeks to highlight the role of meaningful employment in enhancing the quality of life through job satisfaction, fulfillment of basic needs and satisfaction of social and psychological needs of an individual. Quality of individual lives is critical for the overall development of any nation especially in this globalized world.

Keywords: Meaningful, contributes, improved quality

Introduction

Improving the quality of life while living within the caring capacity of supporting ecosystem is the primary focus of global development agenda. Globally all the academicians, politicians, developmental economists and social scientists are concerned with enhancing the possibilities and capabilities of human beings so that they can spend their life in a qualitative and desirable way. Quality of life is complex and broader term which has many dimensions such as long and healthy life, education and decent standard of living (UNDP, 2014) [1]. The last dimension i.e. decent standard of living is dependent upon income and sources of income such as job/business/or any kind of employment to earn livelihood. So, employment is most desirable and powerful determinant for improving the quality of life. The factors such as full-time employment, satisfaction at work, healthy environment at work place, stability of the job, proper reward of the work and happiness at the work are crucial for personal and social well-being of the individual and his family.

The basic meaning of quality of life is the well-being of individual and societies. To determine the actual meaning of quality of life, it is important to separate the word quality and life. Quality describes the standard or the degree to which performance meets expectations whereas life is the period between the birth and death of the individuals or living beings. World Health Organization defines quality of life as individual's perceptions of their positions in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. Quality of life should not be confused with the standard of living. Standard of living is only one component of it and depends initially on income or economic satisfaction. Fulfillment is another basic component of quality of life; it is about life satisfaction which is based upon happiness, inner peace and meaning in life of an individual. Quality of life is a multifaceted concept that includes various individual and societal elements. The major individual element of quality of life is subjective well-being and the societal elements include the place of livings, environment, access to public goods and relationship with the society etc. (Grayson & Young, 1994) [8].

Quality of life is considered to be the product of the interplay among social, health, economic and environmental conditions which affect human and social development (Ontario Social Development Council, 1997) [9]. A person's quality of life is dependent on the objective facts

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of his or her life and the subjective perceptions he or she has of these factors and of oneself (Dissart & Deller, 2000) [3]. Social contact and good personal relationships with the family members, friends and colleagues leads to emotional security and subjective well-being of an individual. The access to social and public goods such as long and healthy life, education, safe and secure living conditions, freedom to follow his or her value system etc. contribute to social well-being of an individual. The health and education are the two major ways to enhance the quality of life. The stability of the job, pay according to the work, recognition of the ability, fair treatment by employer and all such conditions which contribute to economic prosperity of an individual leads to high quality of life. The availability of job opportunities according to the capabilities of the individuals has a positive impact on the economic well-being of the individual. The equitable distribution and sustainable use of natural, social and economic resources are instrumental to good quality of life (World Bank, 2016) [12]. Besides these above-mentioned factors, the advances in Science which are beneficial for raising the standard of livings of individuals are highly responsible for raising the quality of life (Freidman, 1997) [6].

Role of meaningful employment in enhancing the quality of life

Quality of life is a complex term and it depends upon so many factors. But the role of meaningful employment is critical for enhancing the overall quality of life of different human beings. The role of meaningful employment for improving the quality of life is summarized as follow:

1. Job satisfaction and quality of life

As the developments in Science and Technology are enlarging, the need for efficient and effective employees is also increasing. The efficient and effective employee can lead to better productivity of the organization by proper utilization of economic and human resources. The efficiency and effectiveness of an employee are dependent on the job satisfaction of the person. If a person is capable and gets a job according to his/her qualification, then he / she is getting promotions and other rewards for his or her work then he or she can be considered as satisfied with their job. In addition to these, the better environment at the work place can enhance the quality of life by increasing the job satisfaction of the person. The job satisfaction is a complex term which has different meaning to different persons. Some think that the perception and attitude towards the job and how far the other needs are fulfilled through this job are known as job satisfaction.

Different person can have attitudes towards the various aspects of job such as the type of work he/she does, his or her pay, relationship with coworkers or supervisors (George & Jones 2008) [7]. And these attitudes contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards the job. Job satisfaction is a complex and comprehensive term which has different meaning to different persons due to their subjective experiences of satisfaction. But it can best be defined as the positive or pleasurable emotional state of a person resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences. (Locke 1976). One of the most often cited definitions on job satisfaction is the one given by Spector according to whom, job satisfaction has to do with the way how people feel about their job and its various aspects. Job satisfaction is closely

related to personal and professional growth of the individual. When a job is fulfilling all the basic needs of the individual and his family, then his or her standard of living is also increasing. With enhancing standard of living the value of that person is also increasing in the society. The meaningful employment requires intrinsic motivation and this is generated through the equitable opportunities for growth and promotion in job. The two-factor theory for job satisfaction emphasizes the role of environment in job satisfaction (Herzberg 1967) [5]. The physical and mental environment of the job, relationship with the authorities and coworkers, the promotion policy, autonomy to work position, humanistic values of the organization, retention of the workers, salary and other working conditions are also very important for job satisfaction.

2. Fulfillment of basic needs and improving the overall living standards

One can afford a better home and other value goods for oneself and one's family. This fulfillment of needs is responsible for meaningful life. So, the meaningful life is reciprocally related to meaningful employment. The meaningful employment is crucial for overall well-being of the individual. The meaningful employment provides handsome salary to the individual and through this, individual fulfills his needs of food, clothes, housing etc. This money is used by the individual to satisfy the basic needs of his/her family. Through money, the individual improves his overall living standards. Proper food and nutrition will also lead to healthy lives of such individual and this in turn will be save them from diseases and other health issues. Good clothing and a house with basic amenities will help to maintain a proper social status in the society. The satisfaction of basic needs is must for the realization of other social and psychological needs. A person without job or salary will not be able to survive in a proper way in the globalized society. He/ She may commit crimes to get some money for the fulfillment of his/her needs. The rising crime rates in the society can be easily tackled if the job opportunities are available according the knowledge and skills of all persons. At present, when all the developing countries are emphasizing and directing their efforts towards the massification of higher education, then it is also quite pertinent that these countries should also work to provide meaningful employment to all.

3. Satisfaction of social and psychological needs of a person

Human beings are basically active by nature. They can't sit idle for long time. If a person has nothing to do then he or she can develop different kinds of psychological problems. The social value of a person is directly related to his or her work. The quality of life of an individual is dependent on the social environment of the individual (Clark, 2000). The engagement of people with work is closely to the dignity and respect. The social and economic status of a person relies on his or her work position. Through work of job, one can improve his or her status in the society. The stability of the job is a major determinant of the economic security of a person.

The meaningful employment is also beneficial to the society as whole because it generates social capital. At workplace the person comes in contact with other coworkers and makes a new relationship. These relationships lead to social

security of that person. He or she can share his or her feeling/ emotions with his coworkers and this sharing generate a feeling of social well-being of the person. Besides providing economic and social security, a job is also very essential for psychological well-being of a person. The healthy environment at the workplace gives a feeling of happiness to the person. When due regard is given to work done by a person, when he or she gets proper reward for his or her hard work, when proper autonomy is given to a particular position then the person feels psychologically satisfied with his job. This job satisfaction is reciprocally related to life satisfaction. Life satisfaction and economic prosperity both increase the quality of life of a person (Massam, 2002) ^[1]. If a person is happy with his job, he will remain happy in his personal life also. Happiness arises from the mental or emotional well-being of a person. To be happy the basic condition is fulfillment of all basic needs such as physical, emotional and social needs. And these needs can be fulfilled through the job. These needs are fulfilled in a manner which is in accordance with the principles of ecology and thus this fulfillment leads to sustainable development.

Conclusion

Improving the quality of life while living within the caring capacity of supporting ecosystem is the primary focus of sustainable development. Globally all the academicians, politicians, developmental economists and social scientists are concerned with enhancing the possibilities and capabilities of human beings so that they can spend their life in a qualitative and desirable way. Quality of life is more important than the life itself. Quality of life is difficult to define but in simple terms it can be defined as the overall well-being of an individual. It depends upon many factors but the most important one is standard of living. Standard of living is directly related to job. Having a job according to the capability and healthy attitude towards the job is known as job satisfaction. The job satisfaction of the person gives meaning to his life. So, meaningful life is directly dependent on meaningful employment. Meaningful employment is essential for the fulfillment of daily needs of a person and his or her family. Besides giving economic security to the person, the meaningful employment is crucial for social and personal well-being of the individual. The healthy and happy environment at work place enhances the quality of life of an individual in many ways. So, the governments and employers should ensure that everyone should get the opportunities as per their capabilities, so that, they can lead improved lives and contribute their best for the overall development of a nation.

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