

The Job satisfaction level of employees of Sulfex Mattress Company of Kerala and management strategies for enhancing output efficiency of workers- an organizational study

Deepu S.,

Assistant Professor,
Centre for MBA, Dr. P. K. Rajan Memorial
Campus Nileswaram, Puthariyadukkam PO,
Kasaragod, Kannur University, India.

Haritha Mohan P. V.,

Post Graduate
Student in the Centre for MBA, India.

ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is one of the most crucial factor which affect both quality and quantity of work output which ultimately reflect in the company's performance An organizational study was conducted at the Sulfex mattress company of Kannur district, Kerala, India to understand the working environment of the Company and analysed the dimensions of organizational employee satisfaction level by analyzing various factors affecting satisfaction level of employees. The chi square analysis of the primary data revealed that there existed no significant relationship between gender and job satisfaction level of the employees, between job satisfaction level and the department in which they are allotted to work and between gender and working environment satisfaction. Further, the Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed that there existed strong positive correlation between superior subordinate relationship and job satisfaction level of employees. Based on the research analysis, suggested probable management strategies to relieve stress and to motivate the workers to extract their maximum work output efficiency which will boost the performance of the company. The major lacuna observed in the company profile was poor marketing strategy. Periodical survey has to be conducted by the marketing wing to know the market trends and the company has to conduct more advertisement activities. The marketing team needs to introduce brand ambassador for the product in order to create the brand image in the mind of customers. The company should offer good quality of products at a lower price to overcome competition.

Keywords: Employee satisfaction, Sulfex mattress company, management strategy, Stress relief and employee motivation.

INTRODUCTION:

Job satisfaction is one of the most crucial but controversial issues in industrial psychology and behavior management in organizations. If a worker is not satisfied with the assigned work, both the quantity and quality of his output will be affected which ultimately reflect in the company's performance. Providing ideal conditions for employees satisfaction is a key factor to extract maximum output efficiency of the employees to attain the organizational goal. Identifying the signs of organizational stress, if any, is the first step in designing a strategy to address problems and if not addressed, the stress experienced by workers can work against attaining business goals. Managers and business owners should become familiar with the signs of stress in business and implement some simple motivational remedies to ward off the potentially negative organizational effects of employee stress. Poor emotional health of employees can weaken their immune system which may make the body amenable for

infections, lead to feelings of negativity, lack of enthusiasm and apathy which may result in increased work absenteeism, usage of health insurance and work-related accidents. The ultimate result is the poor turnover of the organization due to unmet expectations and deadlines.

Work related stress and employees dis satisfaction can occur when the employees are micromanaged and feel they are not being fairly compensated or sense a lack of respect from their managers or due to lack of opportunities for advancement or due to over abundance of rules. Work tasks with absolutely no room for creativity or professional growth can be psychologically stressful to employees as well, as tasks in which employees do not fully comprehend the strategic relevance and productive contributions of what they are doing. Dysfunctional co worker relationships or hostile relationship between supervisors and subordinates can have corrosive effects on employee morale which boosts the stress level. The workplace rules should revolve around mutual respects and professionalism on the job. Stressful workplace relationships introduce personal biases, emotional considerations and politics into an organization, potentially incurring the consequences of poor productivity and efficiency due to lack of team cohesiveness.

The Sulfex Mattress Company of Kannur was established by Mr. M.T. P. Muhammed Kunhi, a prominent NRI business personality with diverse interests in rubberized coir ply woods and construction in India and trading activities in the Middle East, and the group is a fast growing entity, surging ahead with various business interests. Fuelled by an undying passion to pursue excellence on all fronts, Sulfex aims to create lasting value for customers across the world. Beginning as the manufacturers of exceptional quality rubberized coir mattresses, the Sulfex group has grown a long way, today. Together, the two state-of-the-art manufacturing plants, viz Sulfex Fibre Products and Sulfex Mattress Company, strategically situated at Parassini Kadavu and Thaliparamba, Kannur, northern part of Kerala State, account for an annual production capacity of 8000 metric ton (which means over 2000 mattresses/day). Billed as having India's second largest and most sophisticated mattress company which is progressing positively.

The present organizational study was concentrated to understand the working environment of the Sulfex Mattress Company, Kannur, Kerala, India and encompasses the systematic and careful case study about how people perform within the organization and analyses the dimensions of organizational employee stress status and satisfaction level in the Company and suggested probable management strategies to relieve stress and to motivate the workers to extract their maximum work output efficiency which will boost the performance of the company. The organizational data collected were subjected to swot analysis to draw valid conclusions and to suggest suitable management strategies to the organization. The specific objectives were to analyse the various factors influencing job satisfaction of the employees, to study the superior subordinate relationship in the company, to understand the motivational factors provided to the employees by the company and to analyse the attitude of the employees towards assigned work.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The employee satisfaction is the pivot of performance of any industry which contribute maximum towards work output efficiency of the employees of the company. The organization can only thrive and survive when its employees are satisfied so that they work sincerely for attaining the business goals of the company. This study was conducted in such a way that the employees give their full, honest and frank opinion by remaining anonymous about how they feel about their jobs. The survey was a useful way to assess the training needs and the tangible expression of the management's interest in the employee welfare, which would give the employee a reason to feel better towards the management.

The present study could throw up useful suggestions to the organization regarding the present level of satisfaction, the needs and desires of the employees working in the company to be considered and thereby the company can improve its attitude towards the employees to their expected level of satisfaction so that the company can extract the full work output efficiency of the employees and finally, the performance of the company can be improved significantly.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE:

Employees Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction is how much an individual is satisfied with their occupation. Job satisfaction is considered as the driving force behind the output efficiency of the employees which boosts the company's profile (Ahsan et al., al. 2009). Job satisfaction moreover deduces excitement and happiness with one's work and finally leads to company's performance. William and Anderson (1991) is of the view that there is a necessity for good workplace

environment where the employee would be feeling safe in order to perform his/her tasks efficiently. Likewise they also gave multiple definitions from many of the scholarly writing portraying job satisfaction as "Useful and positive perspectives towards the business exhibit job satisfaction (Faragher et. al, 2005)" combination of feeling and emotions that the employees of the organizations had with respect to their present place of business (Lu et. al, 2005)". Bender et al. (2005) takes the concept of job satisfaction as the multi-dimensional concept. All around the relationship of the significant number of researchers have focused on the negative or positive impact of the employees towards their jobs and the role they perform in the organization. "Job satisfaction focuses on three sections of legitimate direct: that is scholarly, effective, and behavioral and is comprehensively used to choose general satisfaction in human capital organization" (Wright and Bonett., 2007).

Job satisfaction is solidly associated with that individual's direct involvement in the work put (Lu et al., 2005). Job fulfillment is the employees' sentiment, achievement and accomplishment at work. Job satisfaction recommends doing some work one acknowledges, doing it well and being made up for one's attempts. Job satisfaction moreover deduces excitement and happiness with one's work.

Job satisfaction can be portrayed in like manner as how much the member of the organization is substance with the prizes he or she gets away from his/her occupation, particularly to the extent inborn motivation (Illies et, al. 2009). The term job satisfaction implies the mindset and opinions people have about their work. Positive and extraordinary mindsets towards the business exhibit work fulfillment. Negative and troublesome mindsets towards the business show work disillusionment (Bruck et, al. 2002).

Work place stress:

Job stress or work place stress can be defined as an emotional state that people experience in situations where they perceive an imbalance between the demands placed on them and their ability to meet these demands. Job stress can also be defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that plays special physical, psychological and behavioral demands upon a person on job output efficiency. Beehr and Newman (1978) have defined job stress as the conditions arising from the interaction of people and their jobs, characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. Arnold and Feldman (1986) explained job stress as a person's reaction towards new or threatening factors in the work atmosphere. A person feels job stress due to specific job factors either due to overwork which cannot be completed in the scheduled time or due to the poor relationship with co workers and superiors. Randall and Elizabeth (1994) have explained job stress as the interaction of work conditions with the characteristics of the worker such that the demands of the work exceed the ability of the worker to cope with them.

Factors affecting the Job Stress level of employees:

There are many studies based on various factors affecting the job stress level of employees working in different sectors which are as follows: Richards (1998) analyzed the factors leading to high level of stress in work place as misfit between work demands and abilities of person, combined effect of high work load and low control and lack of reciprocity between efforts spent and reward obtained at work. Allen and Rao (2000) analyzed reasons for low level of quality of work life (QWL) among IT professionals and found out that higher work responsibility is a potential source of stress because managing the increased work demands results into spillover to family life thus creating an imbalance leading to increased level of job stress in employees. Maslach and Leiter (2001) opined that job stress and burnout is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. According to the authors, the past research has established the complexity of the construct, and places the individual stress experience within a larger organizational context of people's relation to their work. Saraji & Dargahi (2006) examined the major factors affecting the stress management of TUMS hospital employees, it was found that large volume of work and poor relations at work place were major contributors to stress and low level of QWL among hospital employees. Argentero et al., (2007) conducted a study to explore factors affecting the level of job stress in Italian health workers, it was found that relationships with colleagues in work organization and the weekly number of patients seemed to be important to determine the differences among the workers in the level of job stress experienced by them. Dolan et. al (2008) examined the factors affecting stress level and QWL of public health care employees in Spain. The study found that lack of supervisory support coupled with high job demands resulted into high stress levels and low QWL of employees. Ravindran and Vijayalakshmi (2010) conducted a study in Nokia Siemens Networks, Bangalore, to identify the factors influencing stress, the study revealed that ambitious targets, long working hours and working at night are the major factors influencing stress among the employees in the company. Khattak et. al (2011) investigated the reasons of occupational stress in bank employees of Pakistan, it was found that workload, long working hours, relationship at work, less time for family and job worries at home are major factors of occupational

stress in banking sector. Jeyarathnam and Malarvizhi (2011) explored the reasons of job stress of sugar mill employees in Tamilnadu, it was found that factors like work demands, unhealthy peer relations, tedious work and fatigue were responsible for a high level of job stress. Rajagopalan and Noyaline (2012) examined the reasons for increasing level of job stress in BPO employees and the reasons for high level of stress were found to be heavy work load, emotional exhaustion and health issues. Kumar (2012) analyzed the reasons for high level of job stress among BPO employees, it was found that the major factor responsible for job stress was overwork and long working hours which was affecting the work life balance of employees resulting into job stress. It can be seen from above mentioned studies that various factors affecting the job stress level of employees are volume of work, emotional exhaustion, working relations, personal abilities and nature of work. The volume of work has been considered a major factor by almost all the studies mentioned above, therefore it is analyzed in detail to ascertain the job stress level and the major reasons behind it and suggesting valid management strategies to relieve employee stress and extracting maximum work output efficiency.

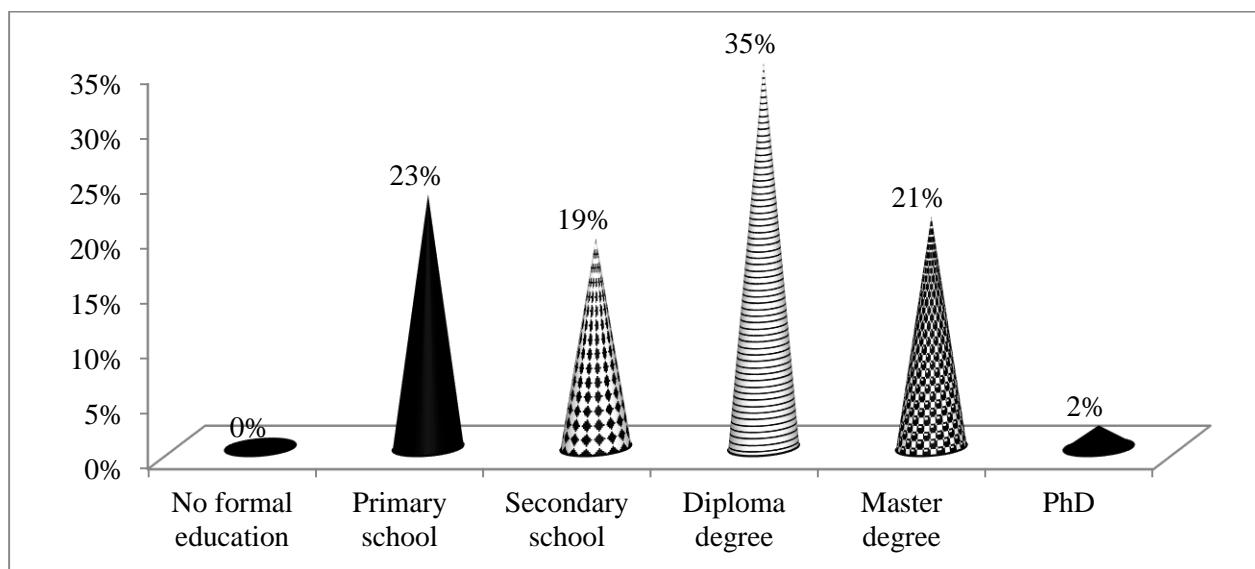
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY/ APPROACH:

Probability sampling method was used to obtain the sample from the whole working population of the company. In total 75 random sample respondents out of a total of 356 employees were approached for data collection and data were collected using questionnaire method. The primary data for the study were collected from the respondents by administering a structured questionnaire and also through observation, interview and discussion with various departments of the organization. The secondary data were collected from annual reports, company documents, company websites & reports prepared by other students, journals, text books, internet etc. The analytical tools used for the study were graphical tools like bar diagram & pie diagram and statistical tools like percentage analysis, Spearman's rank correlation, chi square test etc. for drawing conclusions.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

The randomly selected respondents of the study included 62 % females and 38 % males. The majority of the respondents (56%) belonged to the age group of 36-50 years followed by 32% respondents in the age group of 26-35 years. Among the respondents, 15% were widowed and 8% were unmarried. The educational status of the respondents (Fig.1) indicated that most of the employees were educated (graduates and post graduates).

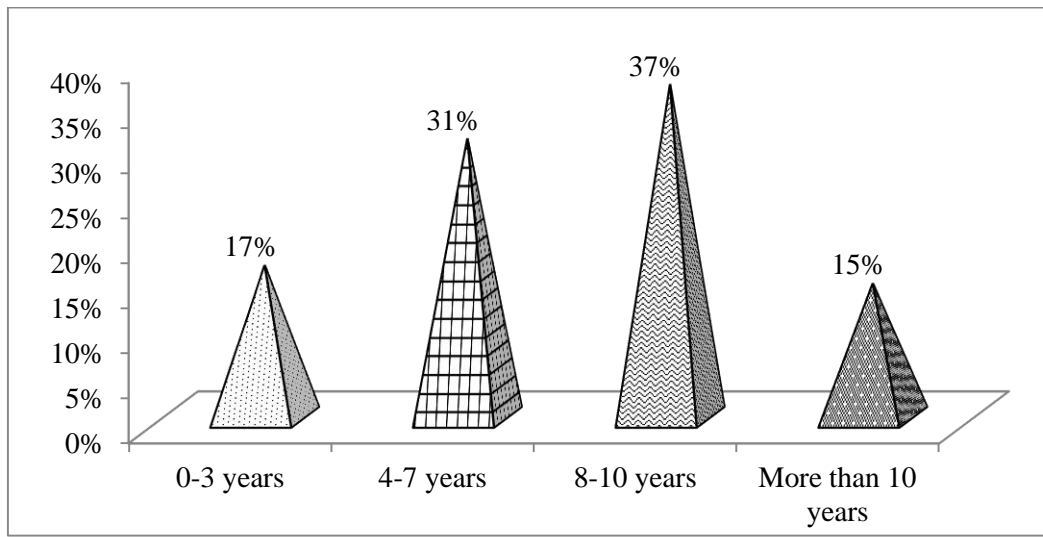
Fig. 1: Educational qualification of the employees of the Sulfex mattress company



Source: primary data

Though a few employees were highly experienced (15%), majority (68%) of the employees were having adequate experience of 4-10 years, with a minority having less than 3 years experience (fig.2).

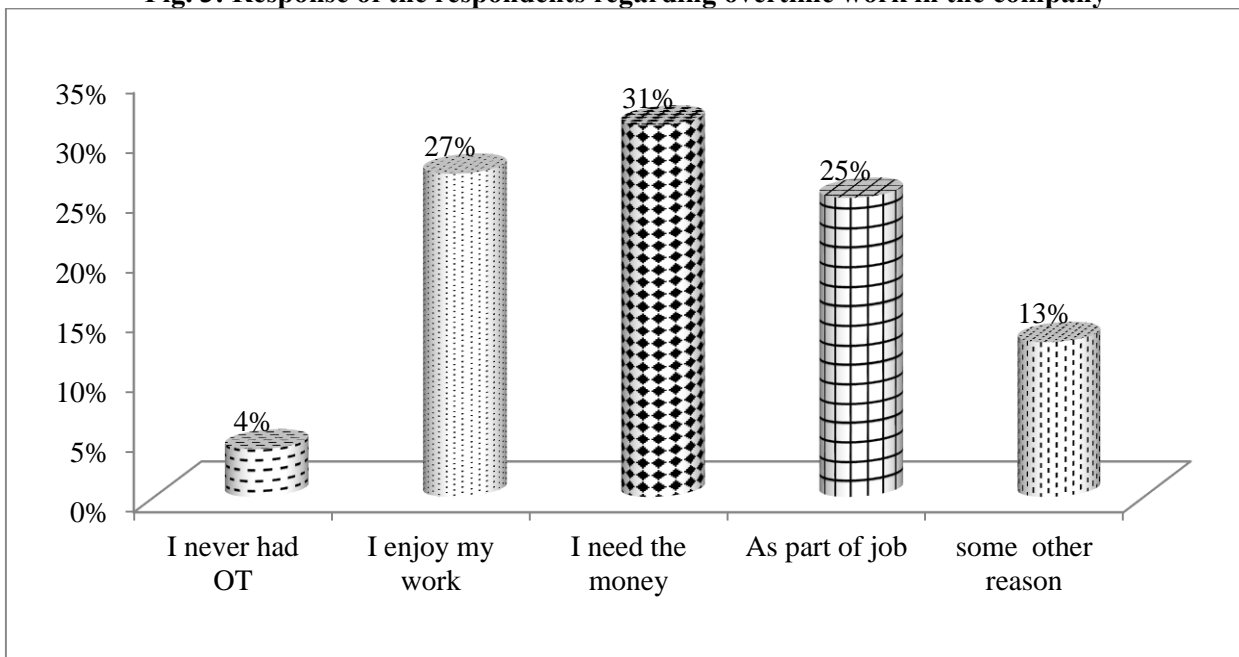
Fig. 2: Classification of employees based on experience



Source: primary data

Twenty seven percentage of the respondents were permanent, 31% were appointed for fixed term whereas 17% were temporary employees. Overtime work is a regular feature in the company and only 27% employees were doing overtime work with enjoyment. Thirty one percentage of the employees were doing overtime work as they were in high need of money whereas 27% were doing overtime work due to the need and compulsion from the company.

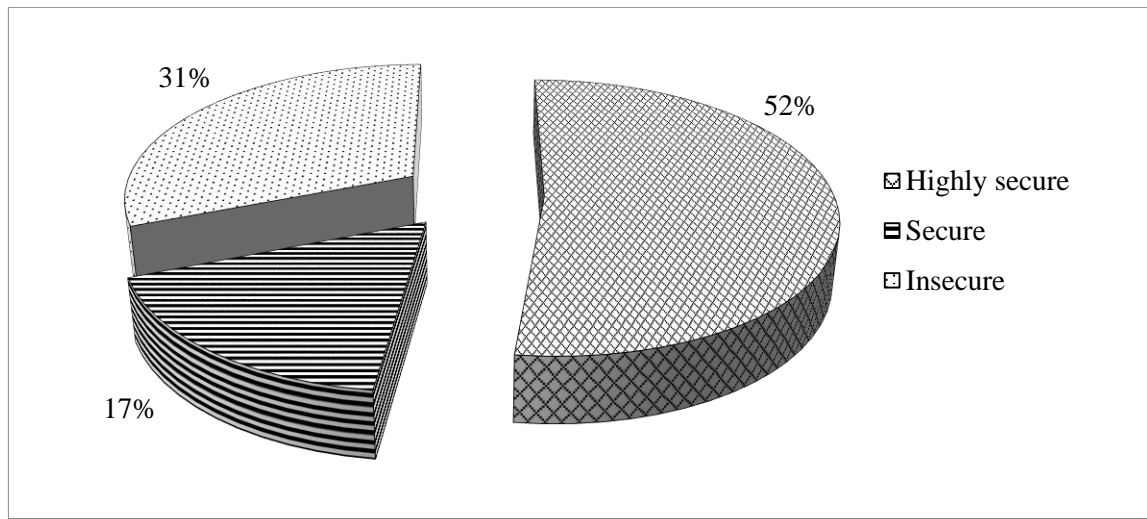
Fig. 3: Response of the respondents regarding overtime work in the company



Source: Primary Data

Eighty one percentage of the employees opined that there was proper communication of the company mission among the employees whereas 19 % were ignorant of the Company mission. Fifty two percentage of the employees opined high job security and 19% expressed job security in the company whereas 27% employees expressed job insecurity feeling in the Company (fig.4)

Fig. 4: Response of the respondents regarding job security



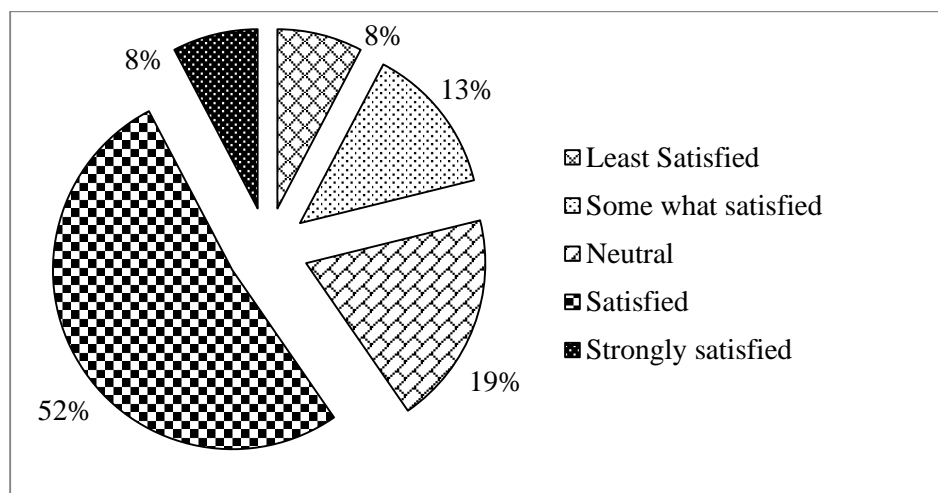
Source: primary data

Seventy five % of employees felt that their employment was according to their qualification and skill and the remaining 25% felt that their allotted work was not according to their qualifications. Majority of the respondents (35%) were working in production department followed by 27% in human Resource Department, 12% in stores department and 8% in finance department,

The study revealed that there was a good team work in the organization. 46% of the respondents were satisfied with the amount of team work in the organization whereas only less than 10% respondents were least satisfied with the team work in the organization.

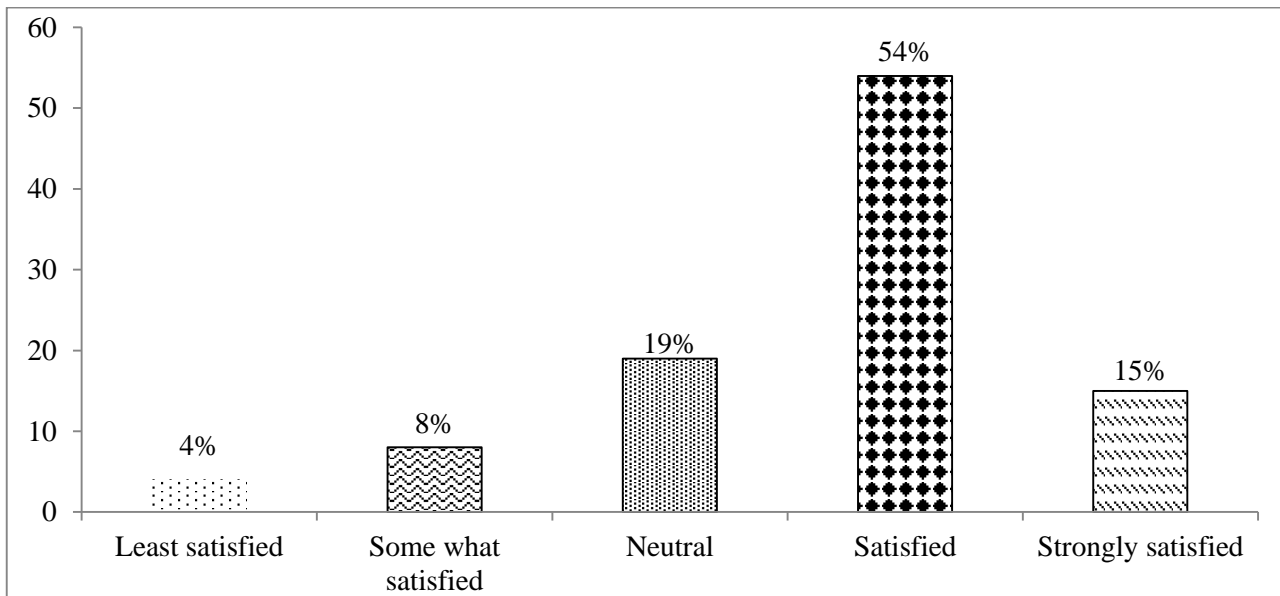
The company provided adequate vacation for the employees for family entertainments and sick leave for the recovery of ill health. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the amount of vacations and sick leave provided for them. In the same manner, the company was in favour of paid health care and most of the employees were satisfied with the present condition and less than 4% respondents were least satisfied with it. More than 50% of the respondents were satisfied with the supervisor’s leadership skill (fig.5) and about 69% were satisfied with the supervisor’s management and professional skill (fig.6)

Fig. 5: Satisfaction Regarding Supervisor’s Leadership Skill



Source: primary data

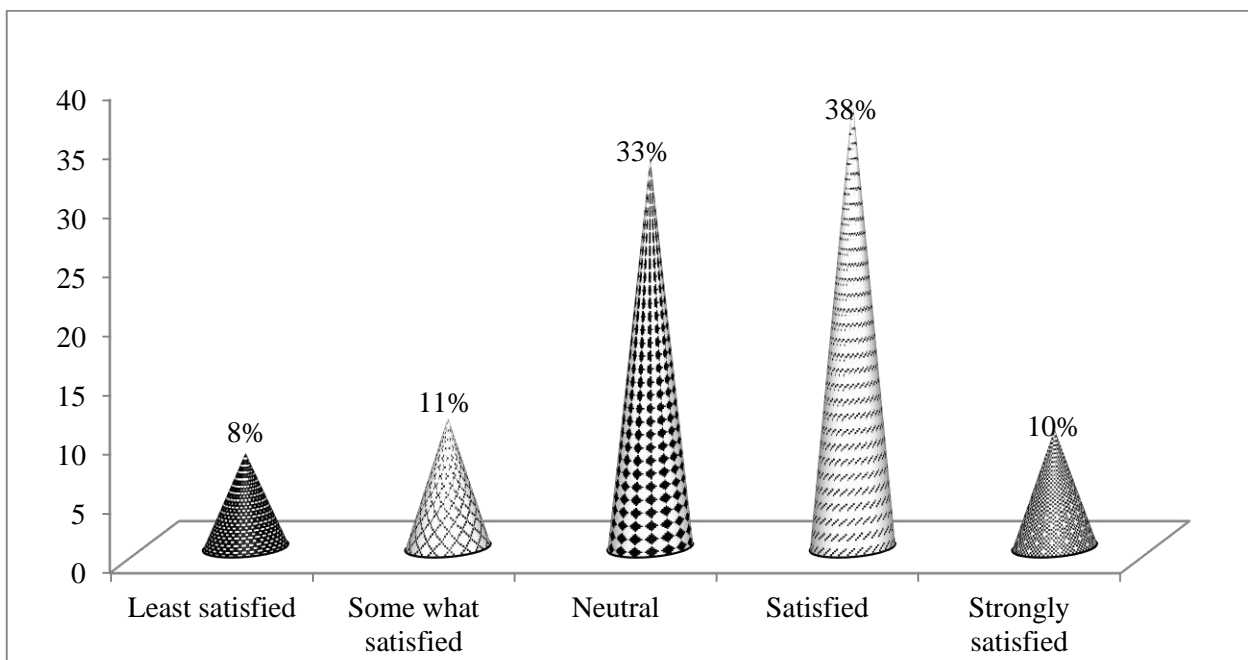
Fig. 6: Satisfaction regarding supervisor’s management and professional skill



Source: primary data

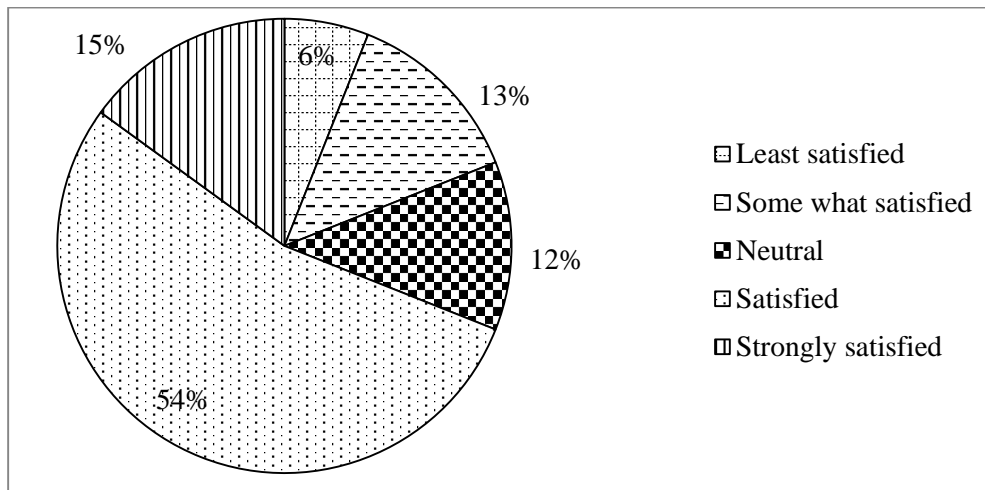
It was surprising to note that most of the respondents were satisfied with the job in the company and none of the employees gave a negative response. Moreover, the company’s work environment met the expectation of the employees and most of the respondents expressed satisfaction. About 50% employees were satisfied with the supervisors conflict resolution skill (fig.7), about 69% of the employees were satisfied with the available opportunities in the company for improving skills (fig.8) and about 54% employees were satisfied with the career advancement programme prevailing in the company (fig.9)

Fig. 7: Satisfaction regarding supervisor’s conflict resolution skill



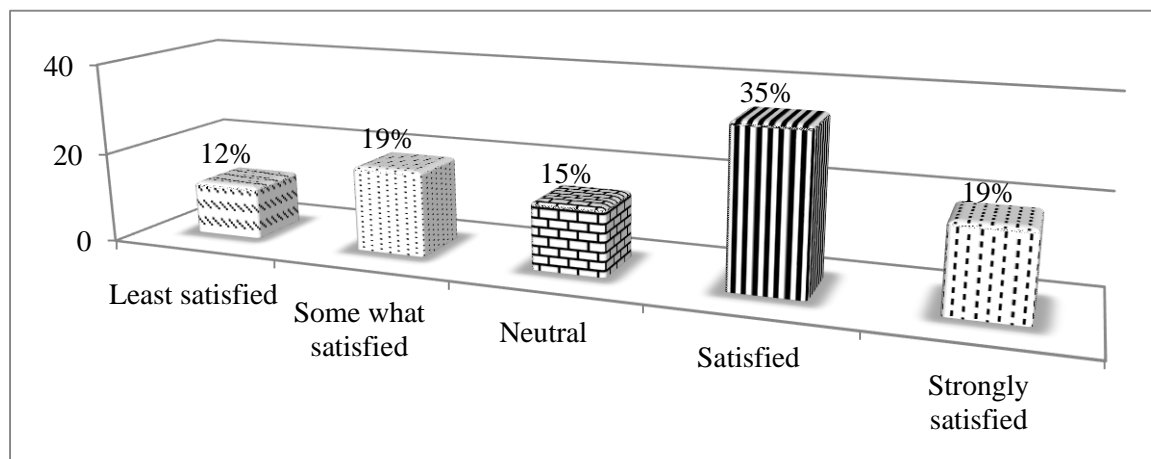
Source: primary data

Fig. 8: Satisfaction regarding available opportunities for improving the skills



Source: primary data

Fig. 9: Satisfaction regarding career advancement opportunities



Source: primary data

Further it is interesting to note that majority of the employees (71%) were satisfied with the working environment of the company, superior sub ordinate relationship (86%), nature of job (79%), training opportunities (61%), salary package (60%), vacation provided in the company (61%) and team work (58%) prevailed in the company. The chi square analysis of the primary data revealed that there existed no significant relationship between gender and job satisfaction level of the employees (table 1.), between job atisfaction level and the department in which they are allotted to work (table 2) and between gender and working environment satisfaction (table 3). Further, the Spearman’s rank correlation analysis revealed that there existed strong positive correlation between superior subordinate relationship and job satisfaction (table 4).

Table 1: Association between gender and job satisfaction of employees

Job satisfaction	Male	Female	Total
Strongly satisfied	8	20	28
Satisfied	6	7	13
Neutral	5	5	10
Some what satisfied	1	0	1
Least satisfied	0	0	0
Total	20	32	52
χ^2 value (0.05)			2.458 (NS)

Table 2: Association between department and job satisfaction level

Department	Strongly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Some what satisfied	Least satisfied	Total
Finance	1	2	1	0	0	4
Human Resource	6	5	3	0	0	14
Purchase	2	2	1	0	0	5
Store	3	1	2	0	0	6
Production	14	1	2	1	0	18
Marketing	2	2	1	0	0	5
	28	13	10	1	0	52
□ ² value (0.05)						4.086 (NS)

Table 3: Association between working environment satisfaction of employees and gender

Opinion	Male	Female	Total
Strongly satisfied	6	12	18
Satisfied	7	12	19
Neutral	4	6	10
Some what satisfied	1	2	3
Least satisfied	2	0	2
Total	20	32	52
□ ² value (0.05)			0.6469 (NS)

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN superior sub ordinate relationship and job satisfaction

Satisfaction about job	Superior subordinate relationship
28	26
13	19
10	3
1	4
0	0
Spearman’s rank correlation ρ	0.9**

The pros and cons of the organization:

The location and layout of the company are suitable for production of mattresses and the productivity and production capacity is good. The products were in different attractive sizes, designs, colours and prices. The company does enough marketing activities beyond the Malabar area. Employees are provided with proper monetary benefits and they are also covered well by welfare schemes. Customers are attracted by the quality and the design of the mattress. There existed healthy relationship among the superiors, subordinates and co workers. The company focussed highly on quality. Sulfex produces both luxury and economy models of mattress which aims at various segments of the market.

The administrative office of the company is located away from the factory and the company does not spend sufficiently on promotional activities.

Suggested management strategies for the betterment of the company:

The administrative office of the Sulfex should be shifted nearer to the factory. A strong distribution channel along with reasonable price should be the essential part of the industry’s marketing strategy. The present marketing strategy of the company was observed as weak and hence a research wing has to be created to analyse the marketing potentiality and assessing the feasibility of the same. The segmentation of marketing has to be oriented to target the customers and the company has to conduct more advertisement activities. Effective marketing team has to be formulated in order to create the brand image in the mind of customers.

The company should offer good quality of products at a lower price to overcome competition. Periodical survey has to be conducted by the marketing wing to know the market trends.. In order to make the customer aware of the product, the company can introduce brand ambassador for the product.

The Promotion of employees should be done both on merit and on seniority basis. The company has to retain the permanent employees by providing additional benefits. The organization has to provide adequate job security to the employees. Work should be assigned to the employees according to their qualification and skill. Organization can appoint experienced persons in different departments to improve the functioning of the organization. Department of the employees should be fixed on the basis of their skills and experience. The supervisors should possess adequate management and professional skills and he should be able to solve conflict among employees. The organisation has to improve the opportunities for skill development as well as working environment through adequate facilities. Recreational pursuits should be promoted to reduce tension and stress of the employees. The organisation has to provide further career advancement opportunities for their employees. Incentive system should always be periodically updated in accordance with changing requirements of employees and incentive scheme should be conducive for employees all round development. The organisation has to promote team work in the organisation as a whole as well as in each department. Employees in the organization have to be provided with adequate leave such as sick leave, paid health care and other such vacations. Top management should make adequate effort to reduce the work load of employees and should treat them fairly. Promotion should be based on the efficiency of the employees to enhance the morale of the employees. The management should identify the reason behind dissatisfaction of employees regarding their promotion opportunities and should make correct assessment of their requirement. Managers have to provide everyone with the chance to comment on proposed changes and should respond to the suggestions from employees.

The company should appraise the employee performance periodically and rectify the defects immediately for maximum output efficiency from the employees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The authors are grateful to the Sulfex mattress company, Kannur for providing facilities for conducting the study and the Kannur University for providing necessary fund for the study.

REFERENCES:

- Ahsan, N., Abdullah, Z., Fie, D. G., & Alam, S. S. (2009). A study of job stress on job satisfaction among university staff in Malaysia: Empirical study. *European journal of social sciences*, 8(1), 121-131.
- Allen, D.R. and Rao, T.R. (2000). *Analysis of Customer Satisfaction Data*, ASQ Quality Press, Milwaukee, WI.
- Argentero, P., Miglioretti, M. and Angilletta, C. (2007). Quality of Work Life in a Cohort of Italian Health Workers, *Supplemento A, Pricologia*, 29 (1), 50-54.
- Arnold, J. & Feldman, C. (1986). *Organizational Behavior*; McGraw Hill, New York
- Beehr, T.A. & Newman, J.E. (1978). Job stress, employee health & organizational effectiveness: A facet analysis, *Model and Literature review, Personal Psychology*, pp. 665-669.
- Bender, K. A., Donohue, S. M., & Heywood, J. S. (2005). *Job satisfaction and gender segregation*. Oxford economic papers, 57(3), 479-496.
- Bruck, C. S., Allen, T. D., & Spector, P. E. (2002). The relation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction: A finer-grained analysis. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 60(3), 336-353.
- Dolan, S. L., Garcia, S., Cabezas, S. and Tzafir, S.S. (2008). Predictors of QWL and poor health among primary health care personnel in Catalonia, *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 21(2), 203-218.
- Faragher, E. B., Cass, M., & Cooper, C. L. (2005). The relationship between job satisfaction and health: a meta-analysis. *Occupational and environmental medicine*, 62(2), 105-112.
- Ilies, R., Wilson, K. S., & Wagner, D. T. (2009). The spillover of daily job satisfaction onto employees' family lives: The facilitating role of work-family integration. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(1), 87-102.
- Jeyarathnam, M. & Malarvizhi, V. (2011). QWL among sugar mill employees in Tamilnadu, *Zenith International Journal of Business Eco. and Manag.*, 1(3) December.
- Khattack, J. K., Muhammad, A. K., Ul Haq A., Muhammad A. and Minhas, A. A. (2011). Occupational stress and burnout in Pakistan's banking sector, *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(3), 810-817, 4 February
- Kumar, Arun (2012). *A study to find out the present level of attrition in BPO industry*, Unpublished MBA dissertation submitted to Karunya University, Coimbatore.
- Lu, H., While, A. E., & Barriball, K. L. (2005). Job satisfaction among nurses: a literature review. *International journal of nursing studies*, 42(2), 211-227.
- Maslach, C., Schanfeld, W.B. and Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397-422.

- Rajagopalan. V. and Noyaline. A. (2012). Stress Management-An empirical analysis, *SMART Journal of Business Management Studies*, 8 (2), July-December.
- Randall, R. Ross and Elizabeth M. Altmaier (1994). *Intervention in Occupational Stress*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Ravindran, G. and Vijayalakshmi, R. (2010). Factors influencing stress among employees working in Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN), Bangalore, *Business Plus*, 1(2), July.
- Richards. J. (1998). Stress at work, *Mental Health Care* 1(8), 278.
- Saraji, G. Nasl. and Dargahi, H. (2006). Study of Quality of Work Life, *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, 35(4), 8-14.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 17(3), 601-617.
- Wright, T. A., & Bonett, D. G. (2007). Job satisfaction and psychological well-being as nonadditive predictors of workplace turnover. *Journal of Management*, 33(2), 141-160.
