

. GRIEVANCE HANDLING MECHANISM (GHM): A DEVICE FOR BETTER MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Mrs. Chitralekha Kumar

Asst. Professor, Prin. L. N. Welingkar Institute of Management Development & Research, Mumbai

Abstract The objective of this study is to discuss the reasons for grievances and to check the availability of grievance handling mechanism in the management colleges. The study is based on secondary and primary data from various sources. SPSS version 20 has been used for various statistical tools for the analysis and interpretation of results. There is great need to have a functional GHM in every management institution. This helps to ensure the increased efficiency level of Faculties. The research paper suggests the importance for effective grievance handling mechanism to ensure the cultivation of a favourable learning environment.

Keywords : Education, Management, Grievance Handling, Sustained Growth

INTRODUCTION

India is home to world's largest number of B-Schools, i.e. close to 4000 but the irony is that the quality of education is questionable beyond the top 25 B-Schools in India. One of the critical factors for poor quality management education erupts from the fact that there is scarce quality faculty in Management Circles in India. And to add fuel to the fire is the heavy poaching of the quality faculty by competing rival B-Schools due to poor grievance handling mechanism in many B-Schools. Long teaching hours, consulting assignments coupled with additional administrative work have contributed in lesser opportunity for faculties to express their emotions, which in turn transforms to building blocks for stress and burn out. The grievances of the employees are related to the contract, work rule or regulation, policy or procedure, past practices, changing the cultural norms, individual victimization, etc.

The Grievance Handling Mechanism (GHM) in the management colleges ensures that the problems of the faculties are recognized and appropriately reviewed in a prompt and timely manner. The study has been presently conducted across a sample of 12 B-Schools across the length and breadth of Maharashtra, India. Grievance may be any genuine or imaginary sign or feeling of dissatisfaction, discontentment or injustice which an employee experiences about his job and its nature, his relationship with his colleagues, management policies, procedures and practices, rules and regulations. As human beings are different there is bound to be grievances among employees out of the day-to-day working relations in an organization leading to conflicts at the workplace. It must be expressed by the employee and brought to the notice of the management and the organization. Grievances take the form of collective disputes when they are not resolved. Also they will then lower the morale and efficiency of the

employees. Unattended grievances result in frustration, dissatisfaction, low productivity, lack of interest in work, absenteeism, etc. In short, grievance arises when employees' expectations are not fulfilled from the organization as a result of which a feeling of discontentment and dissatisfaction arises.

Grievance is a matter raised by employee to express dissatisfaction with management behaviour and is an attempt to bring out changes (D'Cruz, 1999). Grievance involves an individual's claiming that he or she has suffered or been wronged, often because of the actions or decisions made by the manager acting on behalf of the organization (Anderson & Gunderson, 1982). In a country like India, where there are approximately 4000 B-Schools, it is important to ensure that the Faculties are free from any kind of grievances. To avert any kind of conflicts within the academic institute, there is need for a proper grievance procedure so that the faculties feel that their grievances are addressed and redressed. This would ensure talent retention in the institutes. One of the effective ways of minimizing and eliminating the source of grievance is by having an 'Open Door policy'. An "Open Door Policy" facilitates upward communication in the organization where employees can walk into superiors' cabin at any time and express their grievances. The National Commission on Labour suggested a Model Grievance Procedure, which lays down the sequence of steps to be taken whenever a grievance is expressed. In the present study a semi-structured questionnaire was designed to collect responses from the faculties. Only the core faculty members have been taken as respondents. The total number of core faculties in these 12 colleges is 327 but only 298 questionnaires were usable for the purpose of the research. The researcher has also interviewed the head of the HR department to understand the GHM prevailing in those colleges. Only 8 out of these

12 colleges provided the permission to conduct interviews from the HR department. A total of 18 people were interviewed from the HR department.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature reviews that for a real grievance to have occurred there must have been a violation of an employee's rights on the job. Also, it must have been the employer or one of his/her agents -- like a supervisor or manager who has violated these rights, directly or indirectly. If an employee makes a complaint that doesn't involve the employer in some way, you may still have to deal with it, but it won't be a grievance (Trotta, Maurice S., 1976). In order to adjust the employees' concerns, there are recognized procedures that are applied by the organization in detailing every inch of the problems. The grievance procedures are part in the specified area of labour in which the main concept is to implement the system regarding the various concerns and complaints. People are important for the business leaders and managers, and to minimize the conflicts and other problem within the workplace, they have to handle the issue with fair treatment. Historically, the grievance procedures can formulate the positive outcomes and contribute to for the effectiveness of the management. This can be another tool for the management to maintain the relationships within the workplace. The grievance procedures provide the means of identifying the appropriate practices, procedures, and administrative policies that can cause the employee's complaints be considered (Bohlander, 1989). The creation of the grievance procedures began through the various conceptualizations of the people and their access in resolutions. The comparison of the female and male employees has difference means of grievance procedure. Mostly, women are anticipated in seeking justice but are lacked in the access in networks that are necessary towards the resolution. Meanwhile, the men are hesitant to embrace the formality of the grievance procedures for they were reluctant to damage their relationships with other people (Hoffman, 2005). Legislation now compels employers to refer grievance procedures in their statement of terms and conditions. They must also grant employees the right of accompaniment to certain hearings (Jackson, Tricia., 2000). There are recognized steps in handling the grievance which can be also applied in the process of the organizations. Firstly and maybe the most important, is to let the person or the people stand up and speak on what are the things they believed is wrong. Everybody has a right to be heard, and with the open communication, the problem can be easily resolved (Hardeman, 2004). For many years universities have enjoyed a strong position at the heart of the global

economy of knowledge, and business schools have been one of the major success stories in higher education over the last 40 years. But, in the view of limited quality faculty pool in the Management Circles in India, little has been done to keep them engaged through an effective Grievance Handling Mechanism (GHM) (Ivory et al. 2006:5, and Mintzberg 2005:377).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The study was planned with the following objectives:

- i) To identify the reasons for faculty grievances
- ii) To check the availability of grievance handling mechanism in the management colleges.
- iii) To identify the role of HR department towards faculty-grievance handling.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Looking at the importance of management education, there was a felt need to address the issue of grievance handling procedure for faculties in the B-Schools. Both primary and secondary data has been used for the research purpose. Secondary data was collected from various sources including internet and books. A state-wide survey was designed to collect data on grievance handling mechanism in the management colleges from the state of Maharashtra, India. A total of 12 management colleges were approached. The questionnaire was distributed to 327 faculties. 18 faculties refused to be the part of the survey and 11 of them gave incomplete response. 298 usable questionnaires were collected back after a rigorous two day follow up to ensure that all surveyors understand the rationale of the survey and use the questionnaire effectively. Eight of the colleges approached by the researchers allowed the interaction with the employees of the HR department. A total of eighteen people were interviewed. A semi-structured interview protocol was used, which included the following topics: grievance communication pattern, frequency of faculty grievances, grievance handling procedure, balancing the conflict etc. The respondents were encouraged to illustrate their experiences of managing this phase of grievance handling. The respondents described the challenges that they faced and they also made suggestions as to how this process could become more effective. Telephonic interview and exchange of emails was also done in some cases for follow up questions to clarify their point on the matter. The responses from the HR department were noted on paper on extensive manner and transcribed at the earliest possible time after the interviews. Various tactics were used to draw meaning from the data, contrast and comparisons, checking results with respondents. The result of this entire process is presented in the section on data analysis and interpretation.

RESPONDENTS PROFILE

The respondents included 37 percent male and 63 percent female faculties. With regard to the marital status 67 percent faculty respondents were married and 33 percent were unmarried. This shows a relatively higher percent of married faculties in the 12 colleges under study. In terms of teaching experience 50 percent respondents had less than 5 years of teaching experience, 30 percent respondents had 5-10 years of teaching experience and 20 percent of the respondents had more than 10 years of teaching experience.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: To identify the reasons for faculty grievances

Table 2 reflects the response on identification of the reasons of faculty grievances. The researchers first tried to identify the reasons for faculty grievances through continued discussions and consultations with the HR head of 4 B-schools. Based on the frequency of occurrence, nine reasons were identified. The respondents were asked to write yes/no against each of these nine reasons mentioned in the questionnaire. The analysis of the data reveals that 71% of the respondents agreed that lack of independent decision making was a reason of their grievance. 68 % said that salary/ rewards/ incentives were the reasons for their grievances. 67% faculties found workload and 66% found that additional administrative work was the reason for their grievances. Lack of support from the institute towards research was a reason for grievance by 53% of the faculties. 48% found HOD i.e Head of the department and 34% found the work environment to be their reasons for grievances. 34% faculties found work culture and 14% found social injustice as reasons for their grievances.

Objective 2: To check the availability of grievance handling mechanism in the management colleges.

Through the survey it was found that in all the 12 B-School's under study, there was no Grievance Handling Committee for the faculties. Through the interview with the HR department employees it was found that the HR department addressed the grievances of the faculties and in some cases it was taken to the director of the institute. Well defined separate grievance handling mechanism or department was not available in the colleges.

Objective 3: To identify the role of HR department towards faculty-grievance handling.

In order to identify the role of HR department towards faculty-grievance handling, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 18 employees in the HR department. The interviews highlighted that the HR department

encouraged the faculties to bring their grievances to the HR head instead of switching their jobs due to grievances. Drop boxes were kept in the open and reachable areas to the faculties, and they could drop in their grievances in the written form. This practice was followed in 5 colleges under study. The General Manager of HR departments agreed to this fact that most of these were complaints rather than grievances. In some cases where there was high attrition rate, the HR department took the initiative of introducing "e-portals" to address the grievances of the faculties; however these methods were not found to be much effective.

SUGGESTED GRIEVANCE HANDLING MECHANISMS:

As an outcome of the present research it is suggested that there must be a special grievance handling cell or a committee for the faculties. The manager in-charge should be capable to identify all grievances and must take appropriate steps to eliminate the causes of such grievances so that the faculties remain loyal and committed to their work. For effective grievance management the managers should adopt the following approach to manage grievance effectively-

1. Quick Action- As soon as the grievance arises; it should be identified and resolved. Training must be given to the managers to effectively and timely manage a grievance. This will lower the detrimental effects of grievance on the faculties and their performance.
2. Acknowledging Grievance- The manager must acknowledge the grievance put forward by the faculties as manifestation of true and real feelings of the faculties. Acknowledgement by the manager implies that the manager is eager to look into the complaint impartially and without any bias. This will create conducive work environment with instances of grievance reduced.
3. Gathering Facts- The managers should gather appropriate and sufficient facts explaining the grievance's nature. A record of such facts must be maintained so that these can be used in later stage of grievance redressal.
4. Examining the causes of grievance- The actual cause of grievance should be identified. Accordingly remedial actions should be taken to prevent repetition of the grievance.
5. Decision Making- After identifying the causes of grievance, alternative course of actions should be thought of to manage the grievance. The effect of each course of action on the existing and future management policies and procedure should be

analysed and accordingly decision should be taken by the manager.

6. Execution and Review- The manager should execute the decision quickly, ignoring the fact, that it may or may not hurt the faculties concerned. After implementing the decision, a follow-up must be there to ensure that the grievance has been resolved completely and adequately.

An effective grievance procedure ensures an amiable work environment because it redresses the grievance to mutual satisfaction of both the faculties and the managers. It also helps the management to frame policies and procedures acceptable to the faculties. It becomes an effective medium for the faculties to express the feelings, discontent and dissatisfaction openly and formally.

ASAMPLEGRIEVANCEHANDLING MECHANISM PROCEDURE

1. Formal academic grievances must be submitted in writing to the Registrar/ Manager. Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged within five working days.
2. The Registrar/ Manager will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the academic outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.
3. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview with the complainant, they can ask another person to accompany them.
4. The Registrar/Manager will then endeavour to resolve the academic grievance and provide a written report to the complainant within fifteen working days on the steps taken to address the grievance.
5. A written report of the reasons and a full explanation of decisions and actions taken during stage one of this procedure will be made available to the complainant or respondent, upon request. A copy of the report must be sent to the director's of respective B-Schools.

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study reveals that the Grievance Handling Mechanism is average in the 12 B-schools as none of these have a separate cell/committee to address faculty grievances. Thus, talent retention becomes a problem and attrition rate becomes high. The organization should recognize the importance of satisfying the faculties and retaining them. Further improvements can be made so that all faculties are highly satisfied with the management. Care should be taken in the way managers approaches the problem and perceiving the pros and cons of the situation. Proper procedures for handling employee grievances within the broader context of employee engagement develops the trust of employees in the organisation and

addresses employee's concerns before they develop into disputes. They also help to identify areas for improvement to strengthen employee morale and satisfaction. The reasons of faculty-grievances as identified by this survey must be looked into with greater concern as they may become a major problem if ignored. Faculties must be free from these stress boosters as it may damage their quality and performance in their lectures. The management should take active role in this process. The cooperation from both parties is the pre-requisite to handle the problem and effective settlement of the grievances. Conscious use of professional self can help managers in the grievance handling process. Ultimately, the above contribute to the development of a committed and motivated workforce.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The limitations of the study were that the surveys were completed by the faculties working in 12 B-School and only 18 people in the HR department could be interviewed. Another limitation was the area of research as it was confined to the State of Maharashtra only; the results may vary in different regions.

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Annexure:

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Profile

Demographic Variables	Demographic characteristics	Frequency	percentage	Total
Gender	Male	110	37%	298
	Female	188	63%	
Marital Status	Married	200	67%	298
	Unmarried	98	33%	
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	148	50%	298
	5-10 Years	90	30%	
	More than 10 years	60	20%	

Table 2: Reasons for faculty grievances

Reasons for grievances	Number (Response-Yes)	Frequency (%)	Rank	Number (Response-No)	Frequency (%)	Total
Work Environment	101	34	7	197	66	298
Salary/ Reward/ Incentives	202	68	2	96	32	298
Head of Department	142	48	6	156	52	298
Social Injustice	42	14	9	256	86	298
Lack of support towards research						
Work Culture	158	53	5	140	47	298
Workload	100	34	8	198	66	298
	200	67	3	98	33	298
Additional admin Work	198	66	4	100	34	298
Lack of Independent decision making	212	71	1	86	29	298

