

Grievance Handling: Motivational tool for Employees

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Abstract- Grievance is very much present in every workplace especially in today's era of globalization, if not tackled on time a minute grievance can become a conflict. A lack of interest has been found in the organisation to handle the grievance and also to use the grievance handling as a tool to motivate the employees. This empirical research discusses the various motivational theories and various grievance handling styles and at last the relationship between these two factors through the various cases. This empirical research study is based on the objective of finding the relationship between grievances of employees and their motivation. After considering various cases filed in Indian courts, it has been found that there is a relationship found between the grievances and motivation that every manager has to consider before the grievance turns into conflict. If the managers of the public or private organisations do not handle grievances at the initial stage, the consequences can be severe. To motivate the employees, grievance handling can be used as an effective motivational tool. Findings from this study will help manager motivate their employees by handling employees grievances at the earliest. The managers will learn to take care of even a minute grievance of employees.

Index Terms- Grievance, Motivation, Conflict, Negotiation

I. INTRODUCTION

Grievance is the dissatisfaction factor which an employee feels when working in a workplace. The grievances of the employees are related to the contract, work rule or regulation, policy or procedure, health and safety regulation, past practice, changing the cultural norms unilaterally, individual victimization, wage, bonus, etc. Grievance management is all about handling the grievance in more productive way. Conflict is the latent stage of grievance. Grievance, if not resolved on time, changes into conflict.

Motivation is basically motivating the employees to work in favour of their workplace to increase productivity of both employees and organisation. Effective grievance handling can be a motivational tool to boost the productivity of both, the employees and the work place. Because increasing rate of grievance can decrease the motivation and productivity of employees, it affects the productivity of workplace directly.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Grievance

Grievance is a matter raised by employee to express dissatisfaction with management behavior 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 organisation (Anderson & Gundersen, 1982). A substantiated grievance is a signal that a manager's behavior was in error or manager has breach worker's right (Meyer, 1994). Often in organisations, the grievance arises because of lack of clarity in the explicit company's rules (Hook, et. al, 1996). Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, (2003) pointed out that too many grievances may indicate a problem but so may too few. According to them, a very low grievance rate may suggest a fear of filing a grievance, a belief that the grievance procedure is not effective or a belief that representation is not adequate.

According to Michael J. Jucius, "Grievance means any discontent or dissatisfaction, whether expressed or not and whether valid or not, arising out of anything connected with the company that an employee thinks, believes or even feels, is unfair, unjust, or inequitable."

In an industrial enterprise, grievance may arise because of several factors such as:

- Violation of management's responsibility such a poor working conditions,
- Violation of company's rules and practices,
- Violation of collective bargaining agreement,
- Violation of labour laws,
- Violation of natural rules of justice such as unfair treatment in promotion, etc.

2.2 Motivation

Motivation is a driving force that propels people to action and continues them to action. It is the process of stimulating people to action to accomplish desired goals. It explains how and why the human behavior is caused. It is through motivation that managers attempt to inspire the employees to work for the organisation.

The term 'motivation' has been derived from the word 'motive' which means anything that initiates or sustains activity. It is an inner state that energizes, activates or moves and that directs or channelize behavior towards goals. Motivation is a psychological force within an individual that sets him in motion for the achievement of certain goals or satisfaction of certain needs.

"Motivation is something that moves a person to action, and continues him in the course of action already initiated."

"Motivation refers to the way in which urges, drives, desires, aspirations, or needs direct, control or explain the behavior of human beings."

It refers to the way a person is enthused at work to intensify his desire and willingness to use his potentialities for the achievement of organisational objectives. The role of motivation

is to develop and intensify the desire in every member of the organisation to work effectively and efficiently in his position.

2.3 Various Motivation Theories

2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1940's)

One of the first behavioural scientists to make management aware of the complexity of human needs and their effect on motivation was Abraham Maslow, a famous US psychologist. Abraham has classified needs in a logical conventional way that has important implications for managers. In this theory, he has pointed out and explained how needs influence human behaviour. Maslow viewed human motivation as a hierarchy of five needs ranging from most basic physiological needs to the highest needs for self – actualization.

1. **Physiological needs:** These are most basic needs including food, shelter and clothing. These needs are the most powerful motivators as individual can't survive without them. Physiological needs must be satisfied to some extent or partially satisfied, before the individual moves to satisfy other higher category needs.

2. **Safety and Security Needs:** It includes the needs for protection against physical and psychological threats in the environment and confidence that physiological needs will be met in the future. Buying an insurance policy or seeking a secure job with a good pension plan are manifestations of security needs.

3. **Social Needs/Need for Affiliation:** It includes a feeling of belonging, of being accepted by others, of interacting socially and of receiving affection and support.

4. **Esteem Needs:** It includes self respect, achievement, competence, respect of others and recognition.

5. **Self actualization Needs:** It includes fulfillment of one's potential and growth as a person. It is an open – ended need because it relates to the need to become more and more of what one is capable of becoming.

2.3.2 Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Herzberg, a US behavioural scientist, has proposed a theory of employee motivation based on satisfaction. Herzberg research has discovered two sets of factors associated with satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the employee, therefore, it is known as 'Herzberg's Two Factor Theory'.

The first set of factors known as 'satisfiers or motivators' are responsible for self motivation of employees. These factors include job, its importance, opportunity it provides for advancement, achievement, recognition and sense of responsibility, etc. These factors are known as '**Job content factors**' and are real motivators because they are capable of providing satisfaction to the employee. These are known as '**Intrinsic Factors**'.

The second set of factors called '**hygiene or maintenance or dissatisfier**' which include working conditions, job security, salary, quality of supervision, organisational policies, interpersonal relationships and other factors in the immediate work environment. They are **job context** and **extrinsic** to the job. Any deficiency or absence of these factors would simply create dissatisfaction, de-motivation and low performance but their presence does not motivate the employees. They have been considered as hygiene or maintenance factors because their role is supportive just to maintain healthy and congenial atmosphere in work setting.

2.3.3 Motivation Theory:

1. McClelland's Theory – Achievement
2. ERG Theory of Motivation – CLAYNTON ALDERFER
3. Equity Theory:- J.S. ADAM
4. Vroom's Valence– Expectancy Theory
5. Porter & Lawler's Model/Modern Theory
6. McGREGOR'S Theory X and Y
7. Ouchi's Theory Z
8. Reinforcement Theory

2.4 Grievance handling methods and Motivation theories

Various methods of handling grievance were discovered from which two are prevailing: first is "Open-Door Method" and second is "Step-Ladder Procedure". In open door method upper management is easily approachable in case of any grievance but in step ladder method upper management is not directly approachable. One has to go through the steps of ladder, i.e. has to follow the hierarchy to reach the higher authority.

Grievance many times confused with conflict or dispute. It is the grievance that turns into conflict if not handled sensitively and on time. Conflict is the spoken form of grievance. Rahim (1983), A famous researcher has defined styles of handling interpersonal conflict. Rahim (1983) has suggested five different styles in handling conflict including integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding. Integration style concerns with collaboration between parties to reach an acceptable solution (Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style refers to the ability of manager to work with his or her employee to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. In integrating style, each party will learn and explore the grievance from his as well as other's insight. The grievance resolution via this style will meet both parties' objective. Obliging styles involves low concern for self. An obliging person attempts to emphasize commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party (Rahim & Magner, 1995). To Thomas and Kilmann (1974) individual performing obliging style neglects his or her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. In this style, managers might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's needs and prefer to yield another's point of view. In compromising, this style involves moderate concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict. It is associated with give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Compromising style also refers to splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position. Dominating style involves high concern for self and low concern for the other party involved in the conflict. It has been identified with a win-lose orientation or with forcing behavior to win position (Rahim & Magner, 1995).

The main point in studying the theories of grievances and conflict is to solve and handling the grievance at the initial stage and let it not be converted into a conflict. Because grievance can result in a big loss to the organisation it must be solved at the initial stage before it converts into dispute or conflict.

Like grievance handling procedures and conflict management styles, Motivation also has various theories, like:

Maslow's Need Hierarchy, McClelland's theory, Herzberg's Two Factor theory, Vroom's Valence- Expectancy theory etc.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research is to investigate the relation between grievances of employee and their motivation. Method of research is non- empirical. Non-empirical research is used when secondary resources are used to collect the data. Various cases filed have been taken under consideration. These cases are related to employees grievances in which the employees are grieved because of many factors related to their jobs.

IV. RESEARCH

There are certain cases regarding grievances of employees. The grievances were not handled on time and they became conflict. Many cases have been found in India regarding demotivation of employees because of non-handling of their grievances. Some are mentioned below:

1. R. K. Sharma vs M/S Bharat Litho on 19th, 2009

Workmen filed two separate petitions before the Industrial Tribunal alleging that they were in service with the Management M/s Bharat Litho for the last four years as skilled workmen with last drawn wages of Rs.4500/- p.m. The management was not providing statutory benefits and when a demand for the same was raised, the Management got annoyed. The workmen joined union and raised a general demand dispute. In order to put an end to the general demand dispute, the management without serving any charge sheet, terminated their services. The complaint was made to the labour department through union but despite intervention by the labour inspector, they were not given duty. The demand notice was sent to which no reply was given by the management. The management did not pay retrenchment compensation and the termination of their services was challenged as illegal. The Management did not appear during conciliation proceedings due to which conciliation proceedings failed and since then the workmen were unemployed and could not get any services despite their best efforts, they claimed that they were entitled to reinstatement with continuity of service and full back wages.

2. D.K. Khare vs The State Of Madhya Pradesh on 10 April, 2015

Petitioner was working as a daily wages Time Keeper and his case was considered for regularization. It seems that the Screening Committee which considered his case for regularization in accordance to the Circular dated 6.5.2007, found that his initial appointment in the department was not in accordance to the recruitment rules and is in violation of [Article 14](#) and [16](#) of the Constitution, his claim for regularization was not recommended. As the petitioner continues as a daily wages employee, grievance of the petitioner is that he is entitled to pay in accordance to the recommendations of the 6 Pay Commission and as benefit has been granted to the person similarly situated, he is also entitled to the said benefit. Learned Writ Court has taken note of the aforesaid grievance of the petitioner and has found that petitioner's claim for regularization was rejected by the Screening Committee, therefore, petitioner

continued to be in daily wages establishment, thus, the benefit claimed for was rejected.

3. Mr.Sanmati Kumar Jain vs Ministry Of Mines on 18 February, 2013

A number of second appeals and complaints against the GSI were heard. In most of the cases it is noticed by the court that the CPIOs rarely send the desired information within stipulated period, in many cases, not the complete information. Similarly, it has been also noticed that the majority of the information seekers are either serving or retired employees of the GSI. This clearly shows that there is discontent among the employees about the manner of human resource management within the origination. The RTI is not a solution to human resource management problems; the authorities must be sensitive to employees grievances and make all efforts to address such grievance right at the time when these are first articulated. A careful scrutiny of all such RTI applications would also give an indication to the authorities about where the problem lies and how to resolve it.

4. Mrs.Sunaina Singh vs Comptroller And Auditor General on 2 August, 2013

The employees of the Rajbhasha branch are being paid less than what their counterparts get in other similar establishments. All these and many more RTI requests seem to be originating because of this persistent grievance. This calls for the attention of the competent authority. The employee grievances should be addressed decisively so that some kind of closure is brought to the grievances. The CPIO is directed to place this order before the competent authority to look into the matter.

5. Mr. Rammilan Sahu vs Ministry of Information on 29 July, 2013

The Appellant has several grievances against the functioning of the local stations of All India Radio. It is also noticed that he has sought information about the administrative and establishment matters relating to specific employees of the All India Radio, presumably, having very little relation to any public interest or activity. While every citizen has a right to seek all kinds of information from the government authorities, on the face of it, the kinds of information the Appellant has sought about the employees of the All India Radio clearly shows as if some disgruntled employees of the local station have used the good offices of the Appellant to secure information. The Appellant should be very careful in seeking such information. As far as the All India Radio is concerned, they should find out if there is anything wrong in the Shahdol station and make efforts to remove any employee grievance that might be at the root of such relentless information seeking. Very often, the RTI applications give a good idea about the condition of working in any particular office and the authorities should use the RTI as a measure to assess and evaluate the quality of functioning in that particular office.

These are only handful cases. In India only there are around 42 thousand cases related to employees grievances are registered. If handled on time, satisfaction never turns into grievance and grievance into conflict or dispute.

V. ANALYSIS

Grievance Handling as Motivational Tool

There are many factors that can be used to motivate the employees to achieve organisational goals. Like different factors of Maslow's Need Hierarchy. One of the first behavioural scientists to make management aware of the complexity of human needs and their effect on motivation was Abraham Maslow, a famous US psychologist. Abraham has classified needs in a logical conventional way that has important implications for managers. In his theory, he has pointed out and explained how needs influence human behaviour. Maslow viewed human motivation as a hierarchy of five needs ranging from most basic physiological needs to the highest needs for self – actualization.

Various stages of Maslow's Need Hierarchy include various factors. These all factors are directly related to grievance. For an example, if an employee is going through the need of third stage, i.e. Social Needs, and he found his social circle not acceptable then he is also facing grievance regarding his social life at the same time which affects his performance on the job to great extent. Like this different factors stated in different theories affects the performance of employees to some extent.

As a result of inquiry about the attitudes of employees, Herzberg (1959) developed two distinct lists of factors. One set of factors caused happy feelings or a good attitude within the worker, and these factors, on the whole, were task-related. The other grouping was primarily present when feelings of unhappiness or bad attitude were evident, and these factors, Herzberg claimed, were not directly related to the job itself, but to the conditions that surrounded doing that job.

Grievance can be related to any factor mentioned in the Herzberg's theory. In the absence of any factor of hygiene grievance can be there. And it is necessary to understand and handle these grievances on time to motivate the employees. Employees directly feel motivated if their grievances handled on time i.e. a direct relationship has been found between grievance resolution and motivation. A grieved employee cannot work effectively in the organisation, and effectiveness is necessary for an organisation's success. If grievance is not resolved on time it converts into conflict and can harm the organisation adversely. There is a direct relationship found among the different factors of motivation and grievances related to them. If the grievance related to these factors or any other factor, which hinders the performance of the employees to any extent should be handled with care and solved as soon as possible. A grievance must be resolved before it turns into a dispute or conflict. However, a grievance is considered as a negative part in the organisations and never as a motivational tool. But if taken care of on time grievance handling can work as a motivational tool for the employees.

If Grievance would be handled and solved at earliest, it can be proven as a great tool of motivation. In today's scenario of increasing mental work and decreased physical work, grievance handling can be used as a great motivation tool to all the organisations reviewing their motivational methods to increase the performance of their employees.

Positive relationship between increase in grievance handling and performance of employees is found at the workplace. If an

employee has grievance regarding work methods, it can also be solved through training. Training and development has been proved a great method for resolving grievance of employees at workplace. Training and development helps the employees learn new methods and skills. Those skills and methods learnt in the training help employees to do their work efficiently and effectively. This efficiency helps the employees giving their best in their jobs and ultimately increasing organisational productivity.

Grievance mainly exists in the organisation because of dissatisfaction; dissatisfaction again arises because of non motivation of employees. An organisation should put efforts to keep its employee's motivation and increase its employee's morale. An organisation should follow various motivational theories to know its employees motivational level and then put efforts accordingly.

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