



## Human Resource Management

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# The opinion of the staff nurses on the grievance settling system in a medical college hospital

Sebastin. K.V

School of Social Work, Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore.

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### ABSTRACT

Grievances or conflicts are part of industrial/ corporate scenario. In the working lives, employees occasionally have reasons to be uncomfortable, disappointed or aggrieved either about certain managerial decisions and practices or service conditions. The question then is whether this particular symptom or feeling is given any attention or is ignored altogether. What are the pros and cons of each of the approaches? The conflicts or disappointments cannot be eliminated but their expressions will contribute towards their reduction. Such expressions lead to adjustments and further improved organizational effectiveness. To a large extent, the approach to the problem will be governed by several variables such as the style of management, size of the enterprise, level of education of the workforce, technology of the plant and the extent of unionization of the work force.

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### Introduction

The grievance procedure is one of the most important means available for employees to express their dissatisfaction. It is also a means available to management to keep a check on relevant diagnostic data on the state of the organization's health. The grievances of the employee can also be judged by some other factors such as absenteeism rates, accident data, requests for transfer, number of disciplinary cases and separation or quits. Nevertheless, rather than only wait for the grievances mechanism to indicate the state of Organizations health, the management could use the above indices in conjunction with the grievance procedure to anticipate problem areas and take corrective action, or introduce new policies as the situation may demand.

Hospitals are the service centers, which deal with the wellbeing and restoration of the total health of a person. Hospitals are the service providing vehicles need to be run effectively and smoothly least human life will be in danger. That's why we rarely see health care professionals (Doctors, nurses); go on for strikes and cessation of work. Hence the healthcare management needs to be extremely careful in keeping its employees satisfied and resolve their dissatisfactions while working. The staff nurses take a crucial place in taking care of the patients. They are like mothers who keep watch over the patients as children and help the patients to regain their health. Nursing care is highly impossible unless one is satisfied in the work and life and has a taste for service. As they work as a linkage between patients, doctors and family members of patients and provide service for them, there are ample occasions to be grievant, and be dissatisfied with work. A timely grievance redressal can heal the dissensions and dissatisfactions and can promote better enthusiasm and performance at work.

The grievance mechanism acts as a foundation for a harmonious and healthy relationship between employee and employer. The grievance mechanism ensures a fair and just treatment of employee's concerns and prompt resolution of grievances without discrimination, coercion, restraint or reprisal

against any employee who may submit or be involved in a grievance.

We eat the fruit of a tree but never think of the person who took care of that tree. In the same way we fall sick, get admitted and get best nursing care possible but never think of their difficulties and problems the nurses face in the course of their work. The aim of this study is to interrogate the various problems come across by the staff nurses at work and the aspects connected to the work and to find whether the grievance handling mechanism ensures that employee's problems are recognized and appropriately reviewed in a prompt and timely manner.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study:

The main aim and objectives of the study are as follows

1. To identify the various reasons for grievances of the employees under study.
2. To know the management's procedure of handling grievances
3. To know the employee's opinion about management's approach in handling the grievances
4. To offer suggestions for better grievance management

### Materials and Method:

The design selected for the study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. The geographical universe of the study covers the confirmed staff nurses working in the different departments of a reputed Medical College Hospital in Mangalore. There were 350 confirmed staff nurses working in the institution. The study sample consist 50 confirmed staff nurses, selected using simple random sampling method. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the required data from the respondents. The collected data was edited, coded and tabulated. The findings were explained in percentages.

### Results and Discussion:

The majority of the respondents (74%) belong to the age group of 21-30 years of age and the presence of senior nurses is very less and most of the respondents were from Mangalore and Udupi districts. Majority of the respondents stay in the hostel provided by the Management which saves travelling time and

travelling expenses. Many of the respondents (32%) come to the work place by traveling in public vehicles. The marital status of the respondents reveals that (54%) are unmarried. There were equal number of respondents who have done B.Sc (Nursing) and GNM (General Nursing and Midwifery).

Majority of the respondents (60%) have put in one to four years of service. Further 90% of the respondents out rightly agree that compassion and kindness are the virtues of prime importance to the nurses and most of the respondents opine that the nursing profession is challenging and stressful but satisfying.

The findings of the study reveal that the work satisfaction is high (86%) among the respondents and they feel that they have a secured job. Majority of them have problems with personal health and health of family members. Travelling to the work place is another aspect which they were bothered much.

**Reasons for Grievances**

*Richard. P.Caloon* has observed that:

“Grievances exist in the minds of individuals, are produced and dissipated by situations, are fostered or healed by group pressures, are adjusted or made worse by supervisors and are nourished or dissolved by the climate in the organization which is affected by the above factors and by the management” This statement shows that the grievances may emerge at any level of the organization and by any factor in the organization: wages and working conditions, supervisors, management policy and practices and the employee’s own maladjustment.

The above statement is affirmed by the findings of the study where a total (48%) of the respondents opined that the salary is not in proportion to the work done. According to 64 percent of the respondents work stress, shortage of staff and excessive work load creates major problem. Majority opine that the work schedule is either inconvenient or less convenient. Night shifts also create physiological and psychological difficulties for majority of the respondents. Quality of the food served in the Canteen also creates problem to 52% of the respondents.

Too much corrective supervision is done by the supervisors in the work place which creates grievances according to 65 percent of the respondents and also there exists Favoritism in the work place stated 72% of the respondents. The study finds that 48% respondents agree that the co-workers are supportive and helpful but 68% of respondents agree that they are sometimes biased and gossiping. The patients also create grievances by having demanding, impulsive and complaining attitude towards nurses.

The principles and procedures of management functioning is also responsible for grievances. The respondents (54 percent) opined that the management’s expectations are too high and too much perfectionist in attitude. Though the Management listens to the grievances sometimes 52 percent of the respondents opined that the management also looks at suspicion towards those who complain.

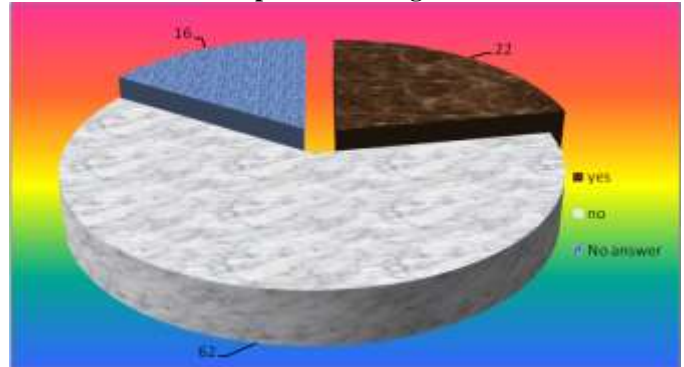
The above diagram represents the respondent’s awareness with regard to the existence of a grievance cell which says that 62% of them were not aware of the presence of a grievance cell, 22% of them were aware of the grievance cell and 16% have not answered the question. From the above description, it is clear that majority of the subjects under study were not aware of the presence of grievance cell, a good number of respondents have not answered the question and only a few are aware of such system. This shows that there may be grievance cell present in the institution but majority are not aware of it. Majority (56%) have expressed that they are not aware of such system. The 38%

have expressed their satisfaction of the settlement of grievances, but this does not mean that the grievances are settled through grievance handling cell. As a whole the grievance handling system in the institution is inadequate.

As per the rate of settlement of the grievances, the majority (50%) of the respondents have not taken any grievances to the management. Those who have approached with grievances to the management were not satisfied fully and only 6% have satisfied with the method in which their grievance had been handled.

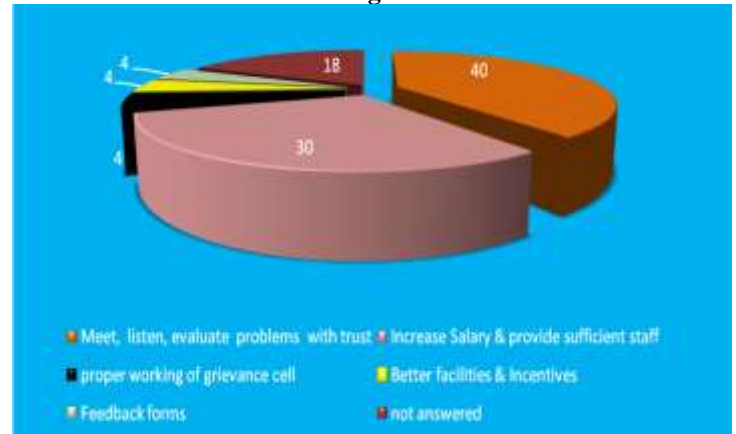
**Diagram No.1**

**Distribution of respondents according to their awareness level of the presence of a grievance cell**



**Diagram No: 2**

**Suggestions given to the Management by the respondents to reduce the grievance**



The Observations and suggestions made by the respondents can throw light upon the management to alter a management policy or to adopt a new management policy towards workers. Suggestions from the employees forms one of the important aspect of management functioning. The above pie chart presents the various suggestions given by the nurses to reduce their grievances. To meet, listen, and evaluate problems of the nurses was the opinion of 40% nurses where as 30% asked to increase the salary and provide sufficient staff in the wards. Further 4% say that better working facilities to be provided and proper functioning of the grievance cell to be initiated.

**Suggestions And Implications**

- Effective functioning of the grievance cell could be initiated. The institution should perceive that grievances are part and parcel of organizational functioning. Hence formation of grievance cell would benefit both to the institution as well as to the employees.
- It is suggested that the management should create a work environment which fosters free and frank expression of dissatisfactions and grievances.

- Awareness of the presence of grievance handling system can be given to the employees in order to reduce the furthering of grievances.
- Nurses who come to the work by travel could be provided transport facilities.
- Many of the nurses have small kids and hence Management can create crèche facilities in the institution.
- Up gradation of the canteen facilities and quality food need to be served in the canteen.
- Not to have too many supervisors. The nurses should be made to report to their immediate supervisor.
- The supervisors to be instructed to be kind and loving in their guidance and to be told not to be partial as far as possible.
- A separate suggestion box may be kept for nurses to express their grievances
- The management should try to be cordial and kind towards nurses.
- The most important suggestion is that there should be professional counselors available round the clock in the premise and it has to be in proportion to the existing number of staffs.

### Conclusion

Nursing profession forms an important part of a health care institution. In fact a health care institution is impossible without the presence of nursing care. They are the people who help the patients to regain their health and vitality and fill them with confidence and courage when they are sick by not losing hope. Nurses take care of the patients' inspite of their own personal as well as work related problems. They not only help the patients, but also help the doctors while treating patients. They also support the management with their tireless service.

The study has focused upon their personal and work life and the problems and personal difficulties. Personal problems, family problems and problems at work which cause them hardships. The profession of nursing is itself is demanding and challenging. The demands are not able to be met when these demands are undue and unrealistic. The nurses cannot meet the management's demands and patient's expectations.

Grievance handling is an important factor in the management. Effective functioning of the grievance system contributes to the settlement and reduction of grievances. The institution under study does not have an effective grievance handling system but the grievances are settled informally. A

formal mechanism can be helpful both to the management and to the employees in the institution. Nurses being performers of key function need to be kept happy at work.

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