

# Identifying Grievance Handling Procedures in Indian Manufacturing and Service Organizations: A Comprehensive Study

*Priyanka R. Naagar\* and Shabnam Saxena\*\**

**Purpose:** The objective of this study is to investigate the actual implementation of grievance handling procedures in the manufacturing and service sectors of India.

**Methodology:** To collect primary data, a self-structured questionnaire was utilized. Descriptive and frequency analyses were performed using SPSS-21 on a refined sample of 524 responses from top and middle-level employees in both industrial and service sectors.

**Findings:** The descriptive analysis and frequency distribution results indicated a positive response regarding awareness of grievance handling procedures. However, it was also revealed that worker unions were not effectively functioning in the targeted organizations.

**Practical Implications:** Based on these findings, it can be inferred that while employees are generally aware of the overall grievance handling procedures, the absence of worker unions in the organizations hampers their practical implementation. Therefore, these results suggest the need for practical implications by enforcing unions within the organizations.

**Limitations:** The study has a couple of limitations. *Firstly*, data were collected from diverse respondents simultaneously. Conducting a different study design, such as a longitudinal study, would allow for testing the same relationship over time. *Secondly*, the study utilized a small sample size, which is another limitation to consider.

**Originality/Value:** This study contributes to a better understanding of industrial relations in general and specifically sheds light on the practical activation of grievance handling procedures within the Indian corporate sector.

**Keywords:** Grievance Handling Committee, Grievance Handling Procedure, Grievance Reporting, Worker Union.

## 1. Introduction

**I**N any organization, grievances are inevitable. Employees may encounter issues, concerns, or conflicts related to their work environment, job responsibilities,

compensation, or interactions with colleagues and supervisors (Aryee *et al.*, 2019). These grievances can have a significant impact on employee satisfaction, morale, and overall organizational productivity. Therefore, it becomes crucial for organizations to have a well-defined and effective grievance handling procedure in place (Chen and Spector, 2019). The identification of the grievance handling procedure aims to understand how organizations in a specific context, such as Indian

manufacturing and service sectors, address and resolve employee grievances (De Gieter *et al.*, 2019). This process involves exploring the awareness and understanding of employees regarding the existing procedures, as well as assessing the functionality of worker unions in the grievance resolution process (Salanova *et al.*, 2019).

By examining the grievance handling procedure, organizations can gain insights into the effectiveness of their systems and make informed decisions to

\* Research Scholar, Haryana School of Business, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana.

\*\*Professor, Haryana School of Business, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana.

improve employee relations, enhance organizational culture, and promote a harmonious work environment (Fuchs *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, understanding the role and functioning of worker unions provides valuable information about employee representation and collective bargaining within the organization (Oldham and Fried, 2021). Through the use of descriptive analysis and frequency distribution, the identification of the grievance handling procedure provides a comprehensive understanding of the awareness levels among employees and the efficacy of worker unions in addressing grievances (Kummel *et al.*, 2021). These findings can serve as a foundation for organizations to identify areas for improvement, implement necessary changes, and foster a culture of open communication and effective conflict resolution (Lee and Shin, 2020). Ultimately, the identification of the grievance handling procedure in Indian manufacturing and service organizations is crucial for promoting employee well-being, ensuring fair treatment, and maintaining a healthy work environment (Matsui *et al.*, 2020). By addressing grievances promptly and effectively, organizations can foster trust, enhance employee satisfaction, and contribute to long-term success and growth.

The objective of the above paragraph is to highlight the importance of identifying and understanding the grievance handling procedure in Indian

manufacturing and service organizations. It aims to emphasize the significance of having effective grievance resolution mechanisms and functional worker unions. The paragraph also aims to convey the potential benefits of conducting such identification, including improved employee relations, enhanced organizational culture, and the promotion of a harmonious work environment. The use of descriptive analysis and frequency distribution is mentioned as a means to gather insights and inform decision-making for organizational improvement. Overall, the objective is to emphasize the relevance and value of studying the grievance handling procedure to support employee well-being and organizational success.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Formulation

Grievances are a common occurrence in the workplace and can have a significant impact on employee morale, productivity, and overall organizational performance (Zhang and Jiang, 2021). It is crucial for organizations to have effective mechanisms in place to address and resolve grievances in a timely and fair manner (Brown and Fox, 2021). Numerous studies have explored the topic of grievances and the availability of grievance handling procedures, shedding light on the importance of these procedures in maintaining a positive work environment (Duan and Pan, 2019). Existing literature has highlighted the detrimental effects of unaddressed grievances on

employee satisfaction, engagement, and commitment. Unresolved grievances can lead to increased stress, job dissatisfaction, and even turnover (Jain and Sharma, 2020). On the other hand, when employees perceive that their grievances are being taken seriously and addressed appropriately, it can foster a sense of trust, fairness, and organizational justice. Several studies have focused on the importance of having formal grievance handling procedures in place. These procedures outline the steps employees can take to report and resolve their grievances (Karakowsky and McBey, 2020). They provide a structured framework for handling complaints and ensure that grievances are treated consistently and fairly. Research has shown that organizations with well-defined grievance handling procedures tend to experience lower levels of employee grievances and higher levels of employee satisfaction. However, despite the abundance of research on grievances and the importance of grievance handling procedures, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning the identification of these procedures specifically in Indian manufacturing and service organizations (Lavelle and Smits, 2021). While studies have explored the general concept of grievance handling, few have delved into the specific procedures and practices followed in Indian contexts.

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive investigation into the identification of grievance handling procedures in Indian manufacturing and service organizations. By

employing a self-structured questionnaire and utilizing descriptive analysis and frequency distribution, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the awareness, effectiveness, and availability of grievance handling procedures in these organizations (Maynard and Luciano, 2019). The findings from this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by offering a deeper understanding of the specific grievance handling procedures implemented in Indian manufacturing and service organizations (Saeed *et al.*, 2019). This research will shed light on potential areas of improvement, identify best practices, and provide valuable recommendations for organizations to enhance their grievance handling mechanisms. In conclusion, while grievances are a common occurrence in the workplace, the availability and effectiveness of grievance handling procedures play a crucial role in managing and resolving these issues (Zhang and Miao, 2020). This literature review highlights the significance of studying the identification of grievance handling procedures in Indian manufacturing and service organizations. By conducting a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can contribute to the enhancement of organizational practices and promote a positive work environment for employees.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample and Characteristics of the Respondents

For this study, a total of 800 questionnaires were distributed

**TABLE 1**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Variables	Categories	Respondents	Percentage	Average
Age (in yrs.)	Upto 25	170	32.44	
	26 to 35	250	47.70	
	36 to 45	70	13.6	
	46 to 55	24	4.58	
	Above 55	10	1.92	
	Total	524	100	
Gender	Male	365	69.66	
	Female	159	30.34	
	Other	0	0.00	
	Total	524	100	
Marital Status	Married	180	34.35	
	Unmarried	344	65.65	
	Total	524	100	
Designation	Manager	135	25.76	
	Executive	120	22.90	
	Software Engineer	145	27.67	
	Supervisor	124	23.67	
	Total	524	100	
Employment status	Permanent	300	57.25	
	Temporary (Part-time, Contractual)	224	42.75	
	Total	524	100	
Income (in ₹)	Upto 25,000	108	20.61	
	25,001-50,000	140	26.72	
	50,001-75,000	155	29.58	
	75,001-1,00,000	68	12.98	
	Above 1,00,001	53	10.11	
	Total	524	100	
Experience (in yrs.)	In present organization			4.3
	Total Experience			5.3
Nature	Manufacturing Co.	203	38.74	
	Service Co.	321	61.26	
	Total	524	100	
Sector	Public	169	32.25	
	Private	355	67.75	
	Total	524	100	

**Source:** Primary Data.

among employees in the manufacturing and service sectors of India. However, 189 questionnaires did not receive any response. Furthermore, 87 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis due to poor-quality responses characterized by vagueness, incomplete answers, repetition, and lack of clarity. Finally, a refined set of 524 responses was considered for the final analysis. Among the respondents, there were 365 men and 159 women (Table 1). When examining the age groups, 170 respondents were under the age of 25, 250 were between 26 and 35, 70 were between 36 and 45, 24 were between 46 and 55, and 10 were over the age of 55. Regarding marital status, 344 respondents were single, while 180 were married. The job designations of the respondents included 124 supervisors, 135 managers, 120 executives, and 145 software engineers. In terms of income, 108 respondents fell within the up to ₹25,000 incomes, 140 fell within the ₹25001-₹50,000 bracket, 155 fell within the ₹50,001-₹75,000, 68 fell within the ₹75,001 to ₹1,00,000, and the remaining 53 had an income above ₹1,00,000. Out of the total responses, 203 individuals worked in the manufacturing sector, while 321 worked in the service sector, with 169 in the public sector and 355 in the private sector. The average combined experience of all the respondents was 5.3, with an overall average of 4.3 in their current organization.

### 3.2 Research Design and Data Collection

The study employed a self-structured questionnaire

comprising thirteen statements, which were developed based on empirical studies by Gomathi S. (2014) and Mansi (2016). The questionnaire aimed to assess various aspects of the grievance handling procedure in the Indian corporate sector, including awareness, reporting, availability of unions, record-keeping, sources of grievance identification, time taken for resolution, and organizational policies. Each statement in the questionnaire was rated on a three-point scale, with one indicating "Yes," two indicating "No," and three indicating "Don't know." Responses indicating "Yes" reflected awareness of the procedure, "No" indicated non-existence, and "Don't know" represented uncertainty, where employees were unaware of the procedure but it could potentially exist in their respective organizations. Since data collection took place during the COVID-19 Pandemic, some random responses were also collected to provide insights into any amendments made by organizations to the grievance handling procedure during this challenging period.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS-23. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for each statement using the software. Additionally, the frequency of each statement was determined, along with the percentage for each factor assessed in the self-structured questionnaire. These analyses aimed to present a comprehensive understanding of the identification of grievance handling procedures in the Indian corporate sector. Detailed results

for each stage of the analysis are provided in the following section.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Grievance Handling Procedure with Statements and Codes

Table 2 displays the codes assigned to the statements used for identifying the grievance handling procedure implemented by organizations in India's manufacturing and service sectors. The codes assigned to the statements are as follows: Id\_G\_1, Id\_G\_2, Id\_G\_3, Id\_G\_4, Id\_G\_5, Id\_G\_6, Id\_G\_7, Id\_G\_8, Id\_G\_9, Id\_G\_10, Id\_G\_11, Id\_G-12, and Id\_G\_13. These codes represent the various aspects of the grievance handling procedure under investigation.

### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for the Identification of Grievance Handling Procedure

Table 3 provides the mean and standard deviation of the self-structured statements about the grievance handling procedure. Descriptive statistics were utilized to calculate the mean and standard deviation values. The first column of Table 3 represents the coding assigned to each statement, ranging from 1 to 13. The mean value and standard deviation for each statement are presented in the subsequent columns, while the fourth column indicates the total number of observations used for the descriptive statistics analysis.

Given that the grievance handling procedure was assessed using a three-point scale (1-3), the mean values range between 1 and 3. A value close to 3 suggests that

**TABLE 2**  
**STATEMENTS CODES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF**  
**GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURE**

Identifying Grievance Handling Procedure (GHP) Statements	Codes
Have you faced any grievance/problem in your organization?	Id_G_1
Do you know which reporting policy is used in your organization to handle grievances?	Id_G_2
Whether the employees are informed about the GHP?	Id_G_3
Do you have the option of reporting the grievances in your organization?	Id_G_4
Does your organization have a Grievance Handling Committee?	Id_G_5
Are you a member of Grievance Handling Committee?	Id_G_6
Whether Grievance handling committee plays any effective role in GHP?	Id_G_7
Whether your employer tries to identify grievance of employees?	Id_G_8
Whether your organization maintains the records of grievance?	Id_G_9
Whether your organization keeps the records of solutions of grievance?	Id_G_10
Does your organization have a standard time limit to handle grievances?	Id_G_11
Whether the GHP is covered under the policy of your organization?	Id_G_12
Whether your organization has employee/worker union?	Id_G_13

**Source:** Self-structured (Kumar and Kumar, 2018).

**TABLE 3**  
**MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF**  
**GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURE**

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	No of Observation
Id_G_1	1.29	0.556	524
Id_G_2	1.61	0.769	524
Id_G_3	1.67	0.795	524
Id_G_4	1.43	0.716	524
Id_G_5	1.614	0.829	524
Id_G_6	1.975	0.411	524
Id_G_7	1.681	0.774	524
Id_G_8	1.704	0.822	524
Id_G_9	1.868	0.905	524
Id_G_10	1.866	0.913	524
Id_G_11	1.912	0.889	524
Id_G_12	1.979	0.924	524
Id_G_13	2.008	0.710	524

employees are unaware of the procedure, a value close to 2 indicates that employees are certain that the procedure does not exist in the organization, and a value between 1 and 2 signifies the availability of the requested procedure in the organization.

The mean value for Id\_G\_1 is 1.29, with a standard deviation of 0.556. This suggests that the majority of employees do not have grievances in the organization, but some do, as indicated by the score falling between 1 and 2. For Id\_G\_2, which pertains to employee awareness of the organization's grievance reporting policy, the mean value is 1.61, and the standard deviation is 0.769. These values indicate that, on average, employees are aware of the policy, but since not all employees have experienced a grievance, their responses varied between 1 and 2.

The mean value for Id\_G\_3 is 1.67, with a standard deviation of 0.795. These values suggest that employees generally have an awareness of the organization's grievance handling procedure. In regards to Id\_G\_4, which examines the availability of reporting options, the mean value is 1.43, and the standard deviation is 0.716. This indicates that reporting options are reasonably available in the organization. For Id\_G\_5, the mean and standard deviation values are 1.614 and 0.829, respectively. These values suggest the presence of a grievance handling committee in Indian organizations. Regarding Id\_G\_6, which concerns membership in the grievance handling committee, the mean value is 1.975, and the standard deviation is 0.411. These

values indicate that the majority of targeted employees are not members of the committee. For Id\_G\_7, which assesses the role of the grievance handling committee, the mean value is 1.681, with a standard deviation of 0.774. The average response suggests that the committee does not play an effective role in the organization, although there may be some who believe it does, particularly among committee members. The mean value for Id\_G\_8 is 1.704, with a standard deviation of 0.822, indicating that employers and organizations, on average, attempt to identify employee grievances. Id\_G\_9, which examines the organization's record-keeping of previous grievances, has a mean value of 1.868 and a standard deviation of 0.905. These values indicate that employees perceive a lack of proper record-keeping for previous grievances. Similarly, for Id\_G\_10, which pertains to the records of grievance outcomes, the mean value is 1.866, and the standard deviation is 0.913. This suggests that, on average, there is inadequate record-keeping of grievance outcomes according to the observations of the targeted employees. The mean value for Id\_G\_11 is 1.912, with a standard deviation of 0.889, indicating an average response. This suggests that the organization does not impose a standard time limit for resolving grievances. For Id\_G\_12, the mean value is 1.979, and the standard deviation is 0.924. The average response from employees suggests that the organization's policy does not cover the grievance handling procedure, which is separately formulated and circulated by human resource

management. Lastly, for Id\_G\_13, which pertains to the availability of worker unions, the mean value is 2.008, and the standard deviation is 0.710. These values suggest a lack of availability, leaning towards negligence.

#### 4.3 Frequency Distribution of the Grievance Handling Procedure

The availability of grievance handling procedures in Indian organizations, including manufacturing and service sectors, is explained through a frequency distribution in Table 4. The table provides separate percentages and cumulative percentages for each statement, categorizing responses into Yes, No, and Don't Know. Table 4 illustrates the frequency distribution for Id\_G\_1, which aims to identify whether employees have encountered grievances and problems within the organization. According to the responses, 399 employees answered "Yes," 98 answered "No," and 27 responded with "Don't Know." The corresponding percentages are 76.1, 18.7, and 5.2 per cent respectively. Based on these statistical calculations, it can be concluded that 18.7 per cent of employees in manufacturing and service organizations did not experience workplace grievances, while 76.1 per cent reported facing grievances. A small percentage of respondents (5.2%) were unsure whether they had encountered grievances or not out of the total 524 participants.

Moving on to the statement "Do you know which reporting policy is used in your organization to handle grievances?" in the fourth

row of Table 4, the percentage and frequency distribution are presented. Out of the respondents, 294 individuals (56%) confirmed that they are aware of their organization's grievance reporting policy, indicating the highest percentage among the three categories. On the other hand, 137 respondents (26.1%) stated that no reporting policy is used in their organization for reporting grievances. Furthermore, 93 respondents (17.7%) expressed uncertainty about the availability of a reporting policy.

Based on the results of Id\_G\_3, the majority of respondents (52.9%) believe that employees are well informed about the organization's grievance handling procedure. However, 139 respondents (26.5%) stated that no information about the procedure was provided, and 20.6 per cent of the total respondents were unsure due to lack of recollection. The frequency distribution indicates a favourable response to the question posed in Id\_G\_3. Regarding Id\_G\_4, the frequency results show that 369 respondents (70.4%) state that a grievance reporting option is available in the organization, while only 85 (16.2%) respondents said no. 13.4 per cent of respondents were unaware of the availability of the reporting option. These results suggest that the organization does offer a grievance reporting option. For Id\_G\_5, 61.1 per cent of total respondents indicated the presence of a grievance handling committee in the organization, while 86 respondents stated otherwise. 22.5 per cent of respondents were unsure about the existence of a grievance handling committee. The

majority of responses support the presence of a grievance handling committee. About Id\_G\_6, more than half of the respondents (83%) stated that they are not members of a grievance handling committee, with only 51 individuals (9.7%) confirming their membership. The remaining 7.3 per cent of respondents were uncertain about their status in the committee. The results indicate that the vast majority of employees are not part of the grievance handling committee. As for Id\_G\_7, 51 per cent of total respondents, a significantly higher percentage, believe that the grievance handling committee plays an effective role in the organization. However, 30 per cent of respondents stated that the committee does not play an effective role, and 19.1 per cent were unaware of its effectiveness. The majority of responses suggest that

the grievance handling committee is effective in resolving employee grievances.

Moving to Id\_G\_8, more than half of the respondents (52.9%) stated that employers make an effort to identify employee grievances, while 23.9 per cent stated otherwise. 23.3 per cent of respondents were unsure whether their grievances were detected by the employer. The frequency results indicate that the majority of employers make efforts to identify employee grievances. Regarding Id\_G\_9, 48.3 per cent of total respondents stated that organizations keep records of grievances. 16.6 per cent of respondents stated that no records are kept, and 35.1 per cent were unsure about the record-keeping practices. The responsibility of maintaining records seems to be uncertain for a significant portion of respondents. For Id\_G\_10, 49.2

per cent of total respondents stated that the resolution of grievances is also documented in the organization, while 35.9 per cent were unsure about the availability of grievance resolution outcome records. 14.9 per cent of respondents stated that no grievance resolution was documented. The frequency distribution suggests that a substantial portion of respondents believe that grievance resolutions are recorded. Id\_G\_11 indicates that 44.3 per cent of total respondents are aware of a standard time limit for handling employee grievances, while 20.2 per cent stated that there is no standard time limit. 35.5 per cent of respondents were unsure about the time limit set by the organization. The results show a mixed response regarding the presence of a standard time limit for handling grievances.

TABLE 4

## FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURE

Statement Code	Frequency				Per cent			Valid Percent			Cumulative Per cent		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't Know
Id_G_1	399	98	27	524	76.1	18.7	5.2	76.1	18.7	5.2	76.1	94.8	100.0
Id_G_2	294	137	93	524	56.1	26.1	17.7	56.1	26.1	17.7	56.1	82.3	100.0
Id_G_3	277	139	108	524	52.9	26.5	20.6	52.9	26.5	20.6	52.9	79.4	100.0
Id_G_4	369	85	70	524	70.4	16.2	13.4	70.4	16.2	13.4	70.4	86.6	100.0
Id_G_5	320	86	118	524	61.1	16.4	22.5	61.1	16.4	22.5	61.1	77.5	100.0
Id_G_6	51	435	38	524	9.7	83.0	7.3	9.7	83.0	7.3	9.7	92.7	100.0
Id_G_7	267	157	100	524	51.0	30.0	19.1	51.0	30.0	19.1	51.0	80.9	100.0
Id_G_8	277	125	122	524	52.9	23.9	23.3	52.9	23.9	23.3	52.9	76.7	100.0
Id_G_9	253	87	184	524	48.3	16.6	35.1	48.3	16.6	35.1	48.3	64.9	100.0
Id_G_10	258	78	188	524	49.2	14.9	35.9	49.2	14.9	35.9	49.2	64.1	100.0
Id_G_11	232	106	186	524	44.3	20.2	35.5	44.3	20.2	35.5	44.3	64.5	100.0
Id_G_12	229	77	218	524	43.7	14.7	41.6	43.7	14.7	41.6	43.7	58.4	100.0
Id_G_13	130	260	134	524	24.8	49.6	25.6	24.8	49.6	25.6	24.8	74.4	100.0

Based on the results of Id\_G\_12, a total of 77 respondents (14.7%) indicated that the organization's policy does not cover grievance handling procedures. On the other hand, 229 respondents (43.7%) confirmed that there is a grievance handling policy included in the organization's policy. For 218 respondents (41.6%), they were unsure whether the policy covers grievance handling or not. Considering that the frequency of "Yes" and "Don't Know" responses was nearly equal, there is a possibility that the organization's grievance handling policy is indeed covered. Moving to the last statement, Id\_G\_13, the results explicitly state that there is no employee union or worker union available in the organization, as indicated by 260 respondents (49.6%). Only 130 respondents (24.8%) stated that there is a union available in the organization. Additionally, 134 respondents (25.6%) mentioned that they were unaware of the union's availability. Therefore, based on the overall results of the respondents, it can be concluded that there is no union present in India's manufacturing and service sectors.

#### 4.4 Key Findings

- 38.74 per cent of the participants are affiliated with the manufacturing sector, while the remaining 61.26 per cent belong to the service sector.
- Among the respondents, 32.25 per cent represent the public sector, whereas 67.75 per cent are from the private sector.
- In terms of gender distribution, 69.66 per cent of the respondents identify as men, while 30.34 per cent identify as women.
- On average, the respondents have 4.3 years of experience within their current organization and 5.3 years of overall experience in the corporate sector.
- Out of the total respondents, 25.76 per cent hold managerial positions, 22.90 per cent are executives, 27.67 per cent work as software engineers, and 23.67 per cent are responsible for supervision.
- Within the organization, 76.1 per cent of the respondents have filed complaints, while 5.2 per cent cannot recall any previous complaints.
- 56.1 per cent of the respondents are aware of the organization's reporting policy for handling complaints, but only 26.1 per cent are aware of the policy specifically for reporting grievances.
- According to 70.4 per cent of the respondents, their organization provides the option to report grievances.
- Approximately 52.9 per cent of all respondents believe that employees are well-informed about the grievance handling procedure, while 20.6 per cent express skepticism.
- As reported by 61.1 per cent of the respondents, the organization has a grievance handling committee, while 16.4 per cent assert that no such committee exists. The remaining respondents are uncertain.
- Only 9.7 per cent of the participants are members of the grievance handling committee.
- According to 51 per cent of the respondents, the grievance handling committee is effective in addressing grievances.
- Based on the responses, 52.9 per cent of the respondents believe that the employer is aware of employee complaints and utilizes sources to identify grievances.
- Only 48.3 per cent of all respondents indicate that the organization maintains records of past grievances, while 35 per cent express doubts about this assertion.
- Regarding the documentation of solutions to previous complaints, 35.9 per cent of the respondents remain uncertain, while 49.2 per cent affirm that such records are indeed kept.
- According to 44.3 per cent of the respondents, the organization has a standard time limit for handling complaints, although 35.5 per cent are unsure about the organization's specific timeframe.
- As reported by 43.7 per cent of the respondents, the organization's policies cover the handling of complaints. However, 41.6 per cent of all respondents question the extent of this coverage.
- Only 24.8 per cent of the employees confirm the presence of a worker union within the company, contrary to the belief of 49.6 per cent of the respondents.



#### 4.5 Changes in Grievance Handling Procedure Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

The objective of this study is to examine the grievance handling procedure in the Indian corporate sector, particularly in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is expected that the pandemic has had a minor impact on the grievance handling process. To explore this further, a random open-ended question was included at the end of the self-structured questionnaire: "Has the grievance handling procedure changed as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic?" Respondents were not obligated to respond to this section, but many chose to provide feedback. The responses to this question are as follows:

- Among the respondents, 224 stated that there have been no changes in the grievance handling procedure due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Another 73 respondents expressed uncertainty about whether their organization had implemented any changes in the grievance handling procedure during the pandemic.
- 21 respondents confirmed that changes had been made, but they were unaware of the specifics.
- 3 respondents mentioned that remote work arrangements have reduced the frequency of workplace grievances as employees handle their work independently.
- 4 respondents reported that wearing masks during grievance settlement committee meetings had become mandatory as a COVID-19 precaution.
- 2 respondents noted that due to the COVID-19 situation, time management in the organization had become challenging, resulting in difficulties for employees to adjust and stabilize.
- Some companies allocated funds to support employees affected by COVID-19 and facing financial difficulties.
- Additional allowances were provided to employees, leading to a decrease in the number of grievances raised.
- Changes were implemented in the manufacturing sector, particularly in the production department, where outsiders or visitors were restricted during ongoing processes.
- The grievance handling procedure involved a limited number of individuals in the Grievance Handling Panel (GHP) or committee responsible for resolving grievances.
- Most activities were shifted online, with forms and emails being used for grievance handling.
- A team committee was established to provide close assistance to employees affected by COVID-19 and keep them informed.
- Although there were no significant changes in the grievance handling procedure, the frequency of company emails inquiring about the status of any difficulties increased.
- Face-to-face conversations were replaced by video calls, but overall, the grievance handling process remained unchanged.
- The company provided support during the pandemic by offering beds and oxygen cylinders in case of emergencies at the workplace.
- Work pressure and stress increased, with no specific resolutions implemented to address these challenges.
- Due to remote work, employees felt limitations in sharing problems as the virtual platform was not readily available.
- Insurance coverage was increased during the pandemic, and the organization introduced additional benefits.
- All complaints were addressed through online questionnaires, and the entire process was conducted online.
- Some facilities during grievance handling were reduced during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Company funds were allocated to assist employees affected by COVID-19 and experiencing financial difficulties.
- Additional allowances were explored to address salary-related grievances within the organization.

#### 5. Discussion

The identification of the grievance handling procedure in Indian manufacturing and service organizations yielded interesting results. The descriptive analysis and frequency distribution of the data indicated a positive response in terms of employees' awareness of the grievance handling procedures. This suggests that employees generally have

knowledge about how to address and report grievances within their respective organizations. The findings highlight the importance of creating awareness among employees regarding the grievance handling process. It indicates that organizations have made efforts to communicate and educate their employees about the procedures in place. This awareness can contribute to a more transparent and effective grievance resolution system, allowing employees to feel empowered and confident in voicing their concerns.

However, the study also revealed a concerning aspect regarding the functioning of worker unions in the targeted organizations. The results indicated that worker unions were not effectively operating or playing a significant role in resolving employee grievances. This finding raises questions about the effectiveness and influence of unions within these organizations. The limited functioning of worker unions may have implications for the collective representation and protection of employees' rights and interests. Unions are traditionally seen as a platform for employees to voice their concerns collectively and negotiate for better working conditions. The lack of effective unions may suggest a potential gap in the overall grievance handling and employee representation mechanisms within these organizations. These findings suggest a need for further exploration and analysis of the reasons behind the ineffective functioning of worker unions in the targeted organizations. It is important to investigate the

underlying factors that hinder the establishment and operation of unions, such as management attitudes, legal constraints, or organizational culture. Understanding these factors can provide insights into potential strategies to strengthen union presence and effectiveness in the grievance handling process. Additionally, organizations should consider reviewing their approaches to worker union engagement and collaborate more closely with unions to ensure employee rights are adequately protected. This may involve fostering a supportive environment for union activities, providing resources for union training and development, and promoting effective communication channels between management and union representatives.

Overall, while the study reveals positive employee awareness of grievance handling procedures in Indian manufacturing and service organizations, the limited functioning of worker unions raises concerns. Future research should delve deeper into the dynamics between organizations and unions to address the gaps in the grievance handling process and enhance employee representation and protection within the workplace.

### **5.1 Practical Implications and Future Research Direction**

The selection process for middle management personnel involves interviews and emphasizes their educational qualifications. However, the findings reveal a concerning lack of

awareness among these managers regarding organizational policies, the existence of a union, the maintenance of grievance records, and the resolution of previous grievances. To address these issues, the following recommendations are suggested for the corporate: Provide employees with comprehensive information about the organization's policies and grievance handling procedures to ensure better understanding and awareness. Organize training programmes and seminars specifically designed for managers to enhance their skills in effectively managing conflicts and handling grievances. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for managers, promote occupational safety training, and encourage greater employee involvement in the Grievance Handling Committee (GHC). Implement periodic counseling sessions for employees within the organization to provide support and address any concerns they may have. Strengthen communication channels between management and employees to foster better collaboration and understanding. In terms of practical implications derived from the study, the organization should take the following actions: Inform employees about the existence of the union and its role within the organization. Ensure that employees are aware of the standard time limit for the grievance handling procedure as part of the overall process. Provide clear guidelines to employees regarding their roles and responsibilities to improve performance and minimize the occurrence of grievances. Promote awareness among both employers and

employees about the sources of grievances, including the introduction of tools such as suggestion boxes and exit interviews. Conduct regular performance reviews to gain a deeper understanding of employees' actual situations and address any issues accordingly.

## 5.2 Future Research Direction

Based on the current findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations for future research, which may be valuable for other researchers:

*Expansion to Uncovered Sectors:* Replicate the same study in sectors of India or other international contexts that have not been previously explored to gain a broader perspective.

*Exploration of Different Study Types:* Consider conducting a longitudinal study instead of a cross-sectional study to examine the relationship over time and provide deeper insights.

*Investigation of Additional Characteristics:* Include further aspects of the grievance handling procedure in future research to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

*Consideration of Demographic Factors:* Explore the influence of demographic factors on decision-making regarding the grievance handling procedure in the Indian corporate sector.

*Focus on Specific Employee Levels or Projects:* Conduct future research targeting specific employee levels or project-based studies to gain insights specific to particular contexts.

*Diversify Sample Selection:* Select samples from various industries to enable industry comparisons and explore industry-specific differences.

*Sector-Specific Studies:* Conduct research that specifically focuses on particular sectors to delve deeper into their unique grievance handling dynamics.

*International Generalization:* Replicate the study outside of India to validate and generalize the findings in an international context.

*Comparative Framework Development:* Create a framework incorporating comparative variables for future researchers to analyze and compare grievance handling practices.

By considering these recommendations, future researchers can expand on the current study, explore different contexts, and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of grievance handling procedures.

## 6. Conclusion

The study employed a self-structured questionnaire to investigate the grievance handling procedure in the Indian corporate structure. Findings indicate that employees are generally aware of the procedure, reporting policies, and how to report grievances based on their prior experiences. However, there is a lack of clarity regarding the organization's standard time limit for addressing grievances. Most respondents acknowledge the presence of a grievance handling committee, although not all employees are members, and its effectiveness is

rated positively. Employers demonstrate efforts to detect grievances through various sources, and while some employees mention the maintenance of grievance records, there is uncertainty regarding the recording of grievance solutions. The study reveals the absence of unions, and although theoretical explanations exist, there is no concrete evidence to support employees' awareness of a union, leading to a lack of their involvement in resolving employee issues. These findings highlight the need to improve time limit awareness, record-keeping practices, and consider the role of unions for effective grievance handling within the organization.

### Conflict of Interest

The author declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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