

CASE STUDY

You are a head of the local administration of an isolated tribal area. The tribe residing in the area is the most isolated tribe in the world. The government had made efforts to mainstream it but faced hostility. The tribe continues to resist all contact with outsiders, attacking anyone who comes near. Respecting the wish of the tribe to live in isolation and considering the adverse consequences of outside contact, the government decided to cutoff contact with the tribe and protected them through law.

Recently, a foreign journalist with the help local people illegally entered their area with the purpose of persuading them for mainstreaming. Unfortunately, he was killed and buried by the tribe members in that isolated area. The news spread across the world. After this, an international tribal right NGO is criticizing the government for not mainstreaming the tribe. Moreover, there is a pressure on government of India and the local administration under you to retrieve the body of that foreign national from that isolated tribal area. Given the situation-

- a) Analyse the ethical issues involved in the case?
- b) Give your opinion whether the tribe should be mainstreamed or kept in isolation and if mainstreamed how?
- c) What would be your strategy to retrieve the body from the area of that hostile tribe and handle the pressure on your administration?

Approach

- Introduce the case briefly
- Identify the stakeholders
- Identify the ethical dilemmas and issues involved in the case
- Give opinion regarding mainstreaming of the tribe
- Frame a strategy to retrieve the body

Answer:

The case involves challenges in retrieving the body, mainstreaming the tribe, and handling the pressure.

Stakeholders Involved

- Me, as a head of the local administration
- A foreign journalist and the locals who helped him
- The tribe
- The Government
- The international community

Ethical Dilemmas Involved

- The rights of the tribe Vs. pressure from international community.
- Foreign relations (Pressure for body retrieval) Vs. Sentiments of the tribals and safety of the individuals involved in retrieval efforts.

Ethical Issues Involved

- **Breach of law:** By illegally entering their area, the journalist and the locals who helped him have breached the law.
- **Violation of rights of tribals:** As the tribe chose to live in isolation, entering their area violates their right to choice, privacy and tranquility.

- **Violation of right to life:** By killing the journalist, the tribe members have violated his right to life.
- **Pressure for retrieval of body:** India's image is at stake and any further forceful actions for retrieval of body could lead to further violence and loss of life.

Opinion Regarding Mainstreaming Of The Tribe

- I would suggest setting up an expert committee, which can study about the tribe, their socio-economic structure, culture, consequences of mainstreaming them, biological and other factors.
- Based on their recommendations, the decision should be taken.
- If they suggest that mainstreaming is in their interest the efforts for mainstreaming should be taken but that should be friendly and participative. Example- dropping gifts and persuading through closest tribes etc.
- No forceful actions should be taken.
- If they suggest maintaining the isolation, their protection should be enhanced.

Strategy To Retrieve The Body

- The case should be handled with utmost sensitivity and only with the advice of anthropologists.
- There should be no terror and confrontation but just friendly gestures.
- A message with the help of signs and symbols can be given conveying apologies along with some gifts.
- A secret plan without disturbing the tribe, for locating and retrieving the body should be made with the help of science and technological advancements.
- Meanwhile, the international community should be updated with every efforts taken and should be requested to cooperate.

In any case the rights and the desires of the tribe should be the first priority and needs to be respected.