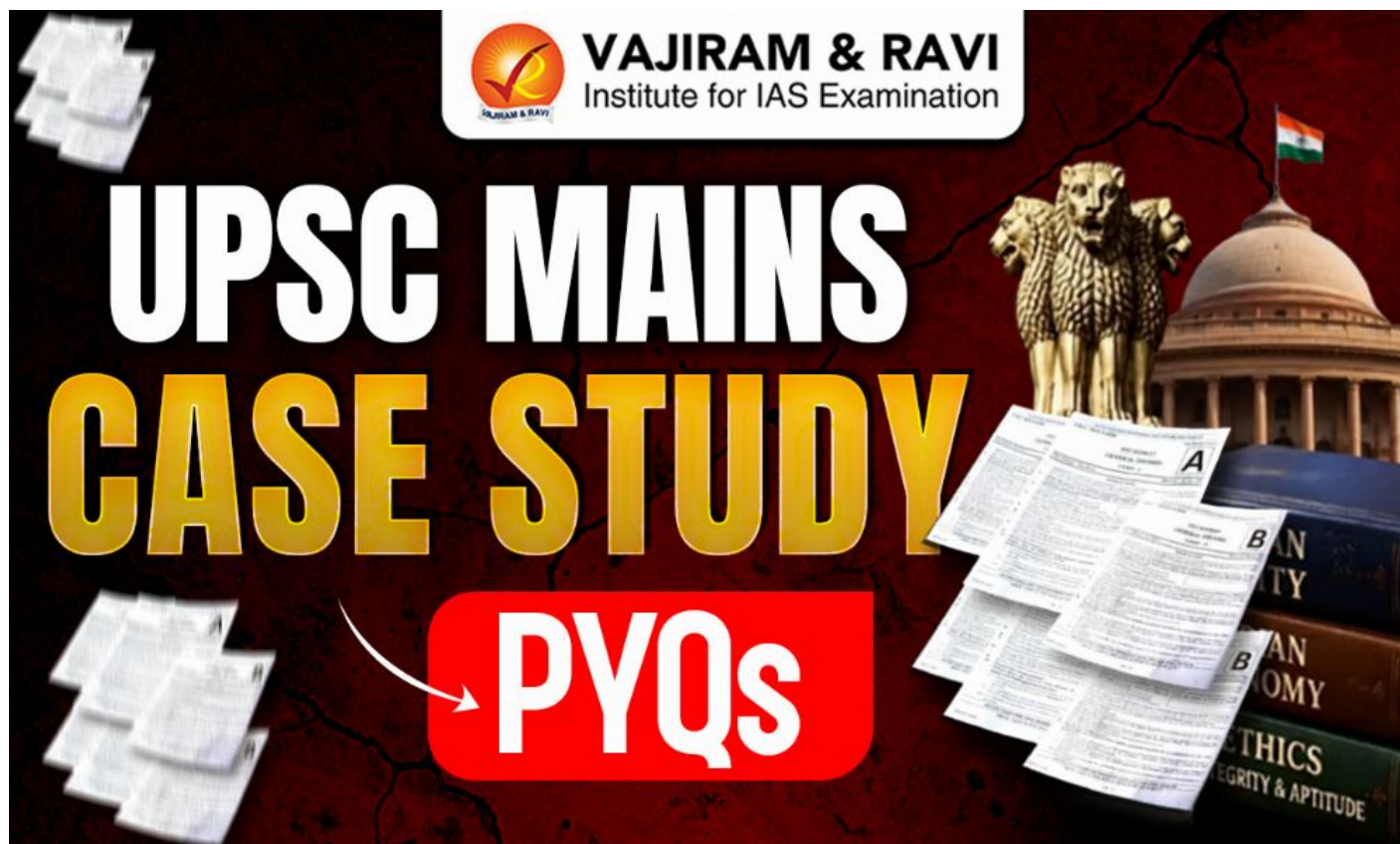


UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQs (2025-2013), Year-wise PYQs

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UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study Previous Year Questions (PYQs) from 2025 to 2013 are an essential resource for understanding the pattern and standard of questions asked in GS Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude). These case studies present real-life administrative and ethical dilemmas, helping aspirants develop analytical thinking, ethical reasoning, and effective decision-making skills. Regular practice of PYQs improves answer-writing, enhances problem-solving abilities, and builds confidence for the UPSC Mains Examination.

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQs (2025-2013)

Below we have shared UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQs from 2013 to 2025. These previous year questions will help you in understanding the level of Ethics Case Studies asked in UPSC Mains Examination.

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2025

1. Vijay was Deputy Commissioner of remote district of Hilly Northern State of the country for the last two years. In the month of August heavy rains lashed the complete state followed by cloud burst in the upper reaches of the said

district. The damage was very heavy in the complete state especially in the affected district. The complete road network and telecommunication were disrupted and the buildings were damaged extensively. People's houses have been destroyed and they were forced to stay in open. More than 200 people have been killed and about 5000 were badly injured. The Civil Administration under Vijay got activated and started conducting rescue and relief operations. Temporary shelter camps and hospitals were established to provide shelter and medical facilities to the homeless and injured people. Helicopter services were pressed in, for evacuating sick and old people from remote areas. Vijay got a message from his hometown in Kerala that his mother was seriously sick. After two days Vijay received the unfortunate message that his mother has expired. Vijay has no close relative except one elder sister who was US citizen and staying there for last several years. In the meantime, the situation in the affected district deteriorated further due to resumption of heavy rains after a gap of five days. At the same time, continuous messages were coming on his mobile from his hometown to reach at the earliest for performing last rites of his mother.

(a) What are the options available with Vijay?

(b) What are the ethical dilemma being faced by Vijay?

(c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Vijay.

(d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words) 20 (2025)

2. In line with the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the government has a constitutional obligation to ensure basic needs – “Roti, Kapda aur Makan (Food, Clothes and Shelter)” – for the under-privileged. Pursuing this mandate, the district administration proposed clearing a portion of forest land to develop housing for the homeless and economically weaker sections of the society. The proposed land, however, is an ecologically sensitive zone densely populated with age-old trees, medicinal plants and vital biodiversity. Besides, these forests help to regulate micro-climate and rainfalls; provide habitat for wildlife, support soil fertility and prevent land/soil erosion and sustain livelihoods of tribal and nomadic communities. In spite of the ecological and social costs, the administration argues in favour of the said proposal by highlighting that this very initiative would provide housing to human rights as a critical welfare priority. Besides it, it fulfils the government's duty to uplift and empower the poor through inclusive housing development. Further, these forest areas have become unsafe due to wild-animal threats and recurring human-wild life conflicts. Lastly, clearing forest-zones may help to curb anti-social elements allegedly using these areas as hideouts, thereby enhancing law and order.

(a) Can deforestation be ethically justified in the pursuit of social welfare objectives like, housing for the homeless?

(b) What are the socio-economic, administrative and ethical challenges in balancing environmental conservation with human development?

(c) What substantial alternatives or policy interventions can be proposed to ensure that both environmental integrity and human dignity are protected? (Answer in 250 words) 20 (2025)

3. Subash is Secretary, PWD in the State Government. He is a senior officer, known for his competence, integrity and dedication to work. He enjoys the trust and confidence of Minister Incharge of PWD and Programme Implementation. As a part of his job profile, he is responsible for policy formulation, execution of projects relating to

infrastructure initiatives in the State. Besides, he oversees the technical and administrative aspects relating to planning, designing and construction etc. Subash's Minister is an important Minister in the state and significant growth in urban infrastructure development and road network has been registered during his tenure. He is very keen for launching of ambitious road construction project in the near future. Subash is in regular touch with the Minister and is working various modalities of road construction project. Regular meetings, interactions and presentations are made by him to the Minister before a formal public announcement of the project is made by the Minister. Subash's only son Vikas is in real estate business. His son from his own sources is aware that a mega road project is on the anvil and announcement in this regard is expected anytime. He is very keen to know from his father the exact location of the upcoming project. He knows that there would be quantum jump in the prices of land at the proposed location. Buying land at this stage at cheaper prices would pay him rich dividends. He is pleading with him (his father) day in and day out to share him location of the proposed project. He assured him that he would handle the matter discreetly as it would not attract any adverse notice as he in the normal course, keeps on buying land as a part of his business. He feels pressurised because of constant pleadings by his son. Another significant aspect of the matter pertained to the extra/undue interest in the above project by the Minister PWD. His nephew was also having big infrastructure project company. In fact, the Minister has also introduced his nephew to him and indicated to him to take care of his nephew's business interest in the forthcoming project. The Minister encouraged him to act fast in the matter as early announcement and execution of mega road project would enhance his status in the party and public life. In the above backdrop, Subash is in a fix as to the future course of action.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case.

(b) Critically examine the options available to Subash in the above situation.

(c) Which of the above would be most appropriate and why? (Answer in 250 words) (2025)

4. Rajesh is a Group A officer with nine years of service. He is posted as Administrative Officer in an Oil Public Sector undertaking. As an Administrative Officer he is responsible for managing and coordinating various administrative tasks to ensure smooth functioning of office. He also manages office supplies, equipment etc. Rajesh is now sufficient senior and is expecting his next promotion in JAG (Junior Administrative Grade) in the next one or two years. He knows that promotion is based on examination of ACRs/Performance Appraisal of last few years (5 years or so) of an officer by a DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) and an officer lacking requisite grading of ACRs may not be found fit for promotion. Consequences of losing promotion may entail financial and reputational loss and set-back for career progression. Though he also puts his best efforts in official discharge of his duties, yet he is unsure of assessment by his superior officer. He is now putting extra efforts so that he gets thumping report at the end of financial year. As Administrative Officer, Rajesh is regularly interacting with his immediate boss, who is his reporting officer for writing his ACR. One day he calls Rajesh and wants him to buy computer-related stationery on priority from a particular vendor. Rajesh instructs his office to initiate action for procuring these items. During the day, the dealing Assistant brings an estimate of Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs covering all stationery items from the same vendor. It is noticed that as per delegated financial powers, as provided in the GFR (General Financial Rules) as applicable in that Organisation, expenditure for office items exceeding Rupees Thirty Lakhs requires sanction of the next higher authority (boss in the present case). Rajesh knows that immediate superior would expect all these purchases should be done at his level and may not appreciate such lack of initiative on his part. During discussions with office, he learns that common practice of splitting of expenditure (where large order is divided into a series of

smaller ones) is followed to avoid obtaining sanction from higher authority. This practice is against the rules and may come to the adverse notice of Audit. Rajesh is perturbed. He is unsure of taking decision in the matter.

(a) What are the options available with Rajesh in the above situation?

(b) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?

(c) Which would be the most appropriate option for Rajesh and why? (Answer in 250 words) 20 (2025)

5. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, MGNREGA was earlier known as National Rural Employment Scheme, NREGA. It is an Indian Social Welfare Program that aimed at fulfilling the 'Right to Work' provisions made in the Constitution. MGNREGA was launched in 2006 under Rural Employment Sector by the Ministry of Rural Development. Main objective of the program is to give legal guarantee of wage employment to the adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour work subject to a maximum of 100 days per year for every household. Every rural household has the right to register under the scheme, job card is issued to the registered, Job Card holder can seek employment; State Government shall pay 25% of minimum wage for the first 30 days as compensatory daily unemployment allowance to the families and of wage for remaining period of the year. MGNREGA work was undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You have been appointed as an Administrator Incharge of the District. You have been given the responsibility of monitoring MGNREGA work undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You are also given the authority to give technical sanctions to all MGNREGA works. In one of the Panchayats in your jurisdiction, you notice that your predecessor has mismanaged the Program in terms of:

(i) Money not disbursed to actual job-seekers.

(ii) Muster Rolls of the Labourers not properly maintained.

(iii) Mismatch between the work done and payments made.

(iv) Payments made to fictitious persons.

(v) Job Cards were given without looking into the need of person.

(vi) Mismanagement of funds and to the extent of siphoning of funds.

(vii) Approved works that never existed.

a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how do you restore the proper functioning of MGNREGA Program in this regard?

b) What actions would you initiate, to solve the various issues listed above?

c) How would you deal with the above situation? (Answer in 250 words) 20 (2025)

6. Ashok is Divisional Commissioner of one of the border districts of the North East State. A few years back, Military has taken over the neighbouring country after overthrowing the elected civil government. Civil war situation is prevailing in the country especially in last two years. However, internal situation further deteriorated due to rebel groups taking over control of certain populated areas near own border. Due to intense fight between military and rebel groups, civilian casualties has increased manifold in recent past. In the meantime, in one night Ashok got

information from the local police guarding the border check post that there are about 200-250 people mainly women and children trying to cross over to our side of the border. There are also about 10 soldiers with their weapons in military uniform part of this group who wants to cross over. Women and Children are also crying and begging for help. A few of them are injured and bleeding profusely need immediate medical care. Ashok tried to contact Home Secretary of the State but failed to do so due to poor connectivity mainly due to inclement weather.

- (a) What are the options available with Ashok to cope with the situation?
- (b) What are the ethical and legal dilemmas being faced by Ashok?
- (c) Which of the options, do you think would be more appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?
- (d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the Border Guarding Police in dealing with soldiers in uniform? (2025)

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2024

1. There is a technological company named ABC Incorporated which is the second largest worldwide, situated in the Third World. You are the Chief Executive Officer and the majority shareholder of this company. The fast technological improvements have raised worries among environmental activists, regulatory authorities, and the general public over the sustainability of this scenario. You confront substantial issues about the business's environmental footprint. In 2023, your organization had a significant increase of 48% in greenhouse gas emissions compared to the levels recorded in 2019. The significant rise in energy consumption is mainly due to the surging energy requirements of your data centers, fuelled by the exponential expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI-powered services need much more computational resources and electrical energy compared to conventional online activities, notwithstanding their notable gains. The technology's proliferation has led to a growing concern over the environmental repercussions, resulting in an increase in warnings. AI models, especially those used in extensive machine learning and data processing, exhibit much greater energy consumption than conventional computer tasks, with an exponential increase. Although there is already a commitment and goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, the challenge of lowering emissions seems overwhelming as the integration of AI continues to increase. To achieve this goal, substantial investments in renewable energy use would be necessary. The difficulty is exacerbated by the competitive environment of the technology sector, where rapid innovation is essential for preserving market standing and shareholders' worth. To achieve a balance between innovation, profitability and sustainability, a strategic move is necessary that is in line with both, business objectives and ethical obligations.

- (a) What is your immediate response to the challenges posed in the above case?
- (b) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.
- (c) Your company has been identified to be penalized by technological giants. What logical and ethical arguments will you put forth to convincee about its necessity?
- (d) Being a conscience being, what measures would you adopt to maintain balance between AI innovation and environmental footprint? (Answer in 250 words) 20 (2024)

2. Raman is a senior IPS officer and has recently been posted as D.G. of a state. Among the various issues and problems/challenges which needed his immediate attention, the issue relating to recruitment of unemployed youth by an unknown terrorist group, was a matter of grave concern.

It was noted that unemployment was relatively high in the state. The problem of unemployment amongst graduates and those with higher education was much more grave. Thus they were vulnerable and soft targets.

In the review meeting taken by him with senior officers of DIG Range and above, it came to light that a new terrorist group has emerged at the global level. It has launched a massive drive to recruit young unemployed people. Special focus was to pick young people from a particular community. The said organisation seemed to have the clear objective of utilising/using them for carrying out militant activities. It was also gathered that the said (new) group is desperately trying to spread its tentacles in his state.

A definite/reliable intelligence tip was received by the State CID and Cyber Cell that a large number of such unemployed youth have already been contacted by the terrorist outfit/group through social media and local communal organisations and other contacts. The need of the hour was to act swiftly and to check these elements/designs before they assume serious proportions.

Discrete inquiries made by the police, through the Cyber Cell, revealed that good numbers of unemployed youth are very active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. On an average, many of them were spending 6-8 hours each day, using electronic devices/internet, etc. It also came to light that such unemployed youth were showing sympathy and endorsing the messages received from certain persons, allegedly the contact persons of that global terrorist group. Their social media accounts revealed their strong affinity to such groups inasmuch as many of them started forwarding anti-national tweets on their WhatsApp and Facebook, etc. It seemed that they succumbed to their ploy and started propagating secessionist ideology. Their posts were hyper-critical of the government's initiatives, policies and subscribing to extreme beliefs and promoting extremism.

(a) What are the options available to Raman to tackle the above situation?

(b) What measures would you suggest for strengthening the existing set-up to ensure that such groups do not succeed in penetrating 'and vitiating the atmosphere in the state?

(c) In the above scenario, what action plan would you advise for enhancing the intelligence gathering mechanism of the police force? (Answer in 250 words) 2024

3. With multipronged strategy of the Central and State Governments specially in the last few years, the naxalite problem has been resolved to a large extent in the affected states of the country. However, there are a few pockets in certain states where naxalite problem still persists, mainly due to involvement of foreign countries. Rohit is posted as SP (Special Operations) for the last one year, in one of the districts which is still affected by the naxalite problem. The district administration has taken a lot of developmental works in the recent past in the naxalite affected areas to win the hearts and minds of the people. Over a period of time, Rohit has established an excellent intelligence network to get the real time information regarding the movement of naxalite cadre. To instill confidence in the public and have moral ascendancy over the naxalites, a number of cordons and search operations are being conducted by the police. Rohit, who himself was leading one of the contingents got a message through his intelligence source that about ten hard core naxalites were hiding in a particular village with sophisticated weapons.

Without wasting any time, Rohit reached the target village with his team and laid out a foolproof cordon and started carrying out a systematic search. During the search, his team managed to overpower all the naxalites along with their automatic weapons. However, in the meantime, more than five hundred tribal women surrounded the village and started marching towards the target house. They were shouting and demanding the immediate release of insurgents since they are their protectors and saviours. The situation on the ground was becoming very critical as the tribal women were extremely agitated and aggressive. Rohit tried to contact his superior officer, IG (Special Operations) of the state on the radio set and on mobile phone, but failed to do so due to poor connectivity. Rohit was in great dilemma since out of the naxalites apprehended, two were not only hard core top insurgents with prize money of ten lakhs on their heads, but were also involved in a recent ambush on the security forces. However, if he did not release the naxalites, the situation could get out of control since the tribal women were aggressively charging towards them. In that case, to control the situation Rohit might have to resort to firing which may lead to valuable loss of lives of civilians and would further complicate the situation.

- (a) What are the options available with Rohit to cope with the situation?
- (b) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Rohit?
- (c) Which of the options, do you think, would be more appropriate for Rohit to adopt and why?
- (d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the police in dealing with women protesters? (Answer in 250 words) 2024

4. Sneha is a Senior Manager working for a big reputed hospital chain in a mid-sized city. She has been made in-charge of the new super speciality center that the hospital is building with state-of-the-art equipment and world class medical facilities. The building has been reconstructed and she is starting the process of procurement for various equipment and machines. As the head of the committee responsible for procurement, she has invited bids from all the interested reputed vendors dealing in medical equipment. She notices that her brother, who is a well-known supplier in this domain, has also sent his expression of interest. Since the hospital is privately owned, it is not mandatory for her to select only the lower bidder. Also, she is aware that her brother's company has been facing some financial difficulties and a big supply order will help him recover. At the same time, allocating the contract to her brother might bring charges of favouritism against her and tarnish her image. The hospital management trusts her fully and would support any decision of hers.

- (a) What should be Sneha's course of action?
- (b) How would she justify what she chooses to do?
- (c) In this case, how is medical ethics compromised with vested personal interest? (Answer in 250 words) 2024

5. With the summer heat being exceptionally severe this year, the district has been facing severe water shortage. The District Collector has been mobilizing his subordinate officials to conserve the remaining water reserves for preventing the district from plunging into acute drinking water crisis. Along with an awareness campaign for conserving water, strict measures have been taken for stopping the over-exploitation of ground-water. Vigilance teams have been deployed to tour the villages and find the farmers who are drawing water from deep borewells or from the river reservoir for irrigation. The farmers are agitated by such action. A delegation of farmers meets the District Collector with their issues and complains that while they are not being allowed to irrigate their crops, big

industries located near the river are drawing huge amounts of water through deep borewells for their industrial processes. The farmers allege that their administration is anti-farmer and corrupt, being bribed by the industry. The district needs to placate the farmers as they are threatening to go on a prolonged protest. At the same time, the District Collector has to deal with the water crisis. The industry cannot be closed as this would result in a large number of workers being unemployed.

(a) Discuss all options available to the District Collector as a District Magistrate.

(b) What suitable actions can be taken in view of mutually compatible interests of the stakeholders?

(c) What are the potential administrative and ethical dilemmas for the District Collector? (Answer in 250 words) 2024

6. Dr. Srinivasan is a senior scientist working for a reputed biotechnology company known for its cutting-edge research in pharmaceuticals. Dr. Srinivasan is heading a research team working on a new drug aimed at treating a rapidly spreading variant of a new viral infectious disease. The disease has been rapidly spreading across the world and the cases reported in the country are increasing. There is huge pressure on Dr. Srinivasan's team to expedite the trials for the drug as there is significant market for it, and the company wants to get the first-mover advantage in the market. During a team meeting, some senior team members suggest some shortcut for expediting the clinical trials for the drug and for getting the requisite approvals. These include manipulating data to exclude some negative outcomes and selectively reporting positive results, foregoing the process of informed consent and using compounds already patented by a rival company, rather than developing one's own component. Dr. Srinivasan is not comfortable taking such shortcuts, at the same time he realises meeting the targets is impossible without using these means.

(a) What would you do in such a situation?

(b) Examine your options and consequences in the light of the ethical questions involved.

(c) How can data ethics and drug ethics save humanity at large in such a scenario? (Answer in 250 words) 2024

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2023

1. You are working as an executive in a nationalised bank for several years. One day one of your close colleagues tells you that her father is suffering from heart disease and needs surgery immediately to survive. She also tells you that she has no insurance and the operation will cost about 10 lakh. You are also aware of the fact that her husband is no more and that she is from a lower middle class family. You are empathetic about her situation. However, apart from expressing your sympathy, you do not have the resources to fund her.

A few weeks later, you ask her about the well-being of her father and she informs you about his successful surgery and that he is recovering. She then confides in you that the bank manager was kind enough to facilitate the release of ₹ 10 lakh from a dormant account of someone to pay for the operation with a promise that it should be confidential and be repaid at the earliest. She has already started paying it back and will continue to do so until it is all returned.

(a) What are the ethical issues involved?

(b) Evaluate the behaviour of the bank manager from an ethical point of view.

(c) How would you react to the situation? (Answer in 250 words) 2023

2. A landslide occurred in the middle of the night on 20th July, 2023 in a remote mountain hamlet, approximately 60 kilometres from Uttarkashi. The landslide was caused by torrential rains and has resulted in large-scale destruction of property and life. You, as District Magistrate of that area, have rushed to the spot with a team of doctors, NGOs, media and police along with numerous support staff to oversee the rescue operations.

A man came running to you with a request for urgent medical help for his pregnant wife who is in labour and is losing blood. You directed your medical team to examine his wife. They return and convey to you that this woman needs blood transfusion immediately. Upon enquiry, you come to know that a few blood collection bags and blood group test kits are available in the ambulance accompanying your team. Few people of your team have already volunteered to donate blood.

Being a physician who has graduated from AIIMS, you know that blood for transfusion needs to be procured only through a recognized blood bank. Your team members are divided on this issue; some favour transfusion, while some others oppose it. The doctors in the team are ready to facilitate the delivery provided they are not penalized for transfusion. Now you are in a dilemma. Your professional training emphasizes on prioritising service to humanity and saving lives of individuals.

(a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?

(b) Evaluate the options available to you, being District Magistrate of the area. (Answer in 250 words) 2023

3. At 9 pm on Saturday evening, Rashika, a Joint Secretary, was still engrossed in her work in her office. Her husband, Vikram, is an executive in an MNC and frequently out of town in connection with his work. Their two children aged 5 and 3 are looked after by their domestic helper. At 9:30 pm her superior, Mr. Suresh calls her and asks her to prepare a detailed note on an important matter to be discussed in a meeting in the Ministry. She realises that she will have to work on Sunday to finish the additional task given by her superior.

She reflects on how she had looked forward to this posting and had worked long hours for months to achieve it. She had kept the welfare of people uppermost in discharging her duties. She feels that she has not done enough justice to her family and she has not fulfilled her duties in discharging essential social obligations. Even as recently as last month she had to leave her sick child in the nanny's care as she had to work in the office. Now, she feels that she must draw a line, beyond which her personal life should take precedence over her professional responsibilities. She thinks that there should be reasonable limits to the work ethics such as punctuality, hard work, dedication to duty and selfless service.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in this case.

(b) Briefly describe at least four laws that have been enacted by the Government with respect to providing a healthy, safe and equitable working environment for women.

(c) Imagine you are in a similar situation. What suggestions would you make to mitigate such working conditions? (Answer in 250 words) 202

4. Vinod is an honest and sincere IAS officer. Recently, he has taken over as Managing Director of the State Road Transport Corporation, his sixth transfer in the past three years. His peers acknowledge his vast knowledge, affability and uprightness.

The Chairman of the State Road Transport Corporation is a powerful politician and is very close to the Chief Minister. Vinod comes to know about many alleged irregularities of the Corporation and the high-handedness of the Chairman in financial matters.

A Board Member of the Corporation belonging to the Opposition Party meets Vinod and hands over a few documents along with a video recording in which the Chairman appears to be demanding bribe for placing a huge order for the supply of QMR tyres. Vinod recollects the Chairman expediting clearing of pending bills of QMR tyres.

Vinod confronts the Board Member as to why he is shying away from exposing the Chairman with the so-called solid proof he has with him. The member informs him that the Chairman refuses to yield to his threats. He adds that Vinod may earn recognition and public support if he himself exposes the Chairman. Further, he tells Vinod that once his party comes to power, Vinod's professional growth would be assured.

Vinod is aware that he may be penalized if he exposes the Chairman and may further be transferred to a distant place. He knows that the Opposition Party stands a better chance of coming to power in the forthcoming elections. However, he also realizes that the Board Member is trying to use him for his own political gains.

(a) As a conscientious civil servant, evaluate the options available to Vinod.

(b) In the light of the above case, comment upon the ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy. (Answer in 250 words) 2023

5. You have just been appointed as Additional Director General of Central Public Works Department. The Chief Architect of your division, who is to retire in six months, is passionately working on a very important project, the successful completion of which would earn him a lasting reputation for the rest of his life.

A new lady architect, Seema, trained at Manchester School of Architecture, UK joined as Senior Architect in your division. During the briefing about the project, Seema made some suggestions which would not only add value to the project, but would also reduce completion time. This has made the Chief Architect insecure and he is constantly worried that all the credit will go to her. Subsequently, he adopted a passive and aggressive behaviour towards her and has become disrespectful to her. Seema felt it embarrassing as the Chief Architect left no chance of humiliating her. He would very often correct her in front of other colleagues and raise his voice while speaking to her. This continuous harassment has resulted in her losing confidence and self-esteem. She felt perpetually tensed, anxious and stressed. She appeared to be in awe of him since he has had a long tenure in the office and has vast experience in the area of her work.

You are aware of her outstanding academic credentials and career record in her previous organisations. However, you fear that this harassment may result in compromising her much needed contribution in this important project and may adversely impact her emotional well-being. You have also come to know from her peers that she is contemplating tendering her resignation.

(a) What are the ethical issues involved in the above case?

(b) What are the options available to you in order to complete the project as well as to retain Seema in the organization?

(c) What would be your response to Seema's predicament? What measures would you institute to prevent such occurrences from happening in your organization? (Answer in 250 words) 2023

6. You hold a responsible position in a ministry in the government. One day in the morning you received a call from the school of your 11-year-old son that you are required to come and meet the Principal. You proceed to the school and find your son in the Principal's office. The Principal informs you that your son had been found wandering aimlessly in the grounds during the time classes were in progress. The class teacher further informs you that your son has lately become a loner and did not respond to questions in the class, he had also been unable to perform well in the football trials held recently. You bring your son back from the school and in the evening, you along with your wife try to find out the reasons for your son's changed behaviour. After repeated cajoling, your son shares that some children had been making fun of him in the class as well as in the WhatsApp group of the students by calling him stunted, duh and a frog. He tells you the names of a few children who are the main culprits but pleads with you to let the matter rest.

After a few days, during a sporting event, where you and your wife have gone to watch your son play, one of your colleague's son shows you a video in which students have caricatured your son. Further, he also points out to the perpetrators who were sitting in the stands. You purposefully walk past them with your son and go home. Next day, you find on social media, a video denigrating you, your son and even your wife, stating that you engaged in physical bullying of children on the sports field. The video became viral on social media. Your friends and colleagues began calling you to find out the details. One of your juniors advised you to make a counter video giving the background and explaining that nothing had happened on the field. You, in turn posted a video which you have captured during the sporting event, identifying the likely perpetrators who were responsible for your son's predicament. You have also narrated what has actually happened in the field and made attempts to bring out the adverse effects of the misuse of social media.

(a) Based on the above case study, discuss the ethical issues involved in the use of social media.

(b) Discuss the pros and cons of using social media by you to put across the facts to counter the fake propaganda against your family. (Answer in 250 words) 2023

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2022

1. Prabhat was working as Vice President (Marketing) at Sterling Electric Ltd., a reputed multinational company. But presently the company was passing through the difficult times as the sales were continuously showing downward trend in the last two quarters. His division, which hitherto had been a major revenue contributor to the company's financial health, was now desperately trying to procure some big government order for them. But their best efforts did not yield any positive success or breakthrough. His was a professional company and his local bosses were under pressure from their London-based HO to show some positive results. In the last performance review meeting taken by the Executive Director (India Head), he was reprimanded for his poor performance. He assured them that his division is working on a special contract from the Ministry of Defence for a secret installation near Gwalior and tender is being submitted shortly.

He was under extreme pressure and he was deeply perturbed. What aggravated the situation further was a warning from the top that if the deal is not clinched in favour of the company, his division might have to be closed and he may have to quit his lucrative job. There was another dimension which was causing him deep mental torture and agony. This pertained to his personal precarious financial health. He was a single earner in the family with two school-college going children and his old ailing mother. The heavy expenditure on education and medical was causing a big strain to his monthly pay packet. Regular EMI for housing loan taken from bank was unavoidable and any default would render him liable for severe legal action. In the above backdrop, he was hoping for some miracle to happen. There was sudden turn of events. His secretary informed that a gentleman-Subhash Verma wanted to see him as he was interested in the position of Manager which was to be filled in by him in the company. He further brought to his notice that his CV has been received through the office of the Minister of Defence. During interview of the candidate-Subhash Verma, he found him technically sound, resourceful and experienced marketeer. He seemed to be well-versed with tendering procedures and having knack of follow-up and liaising in this regard. Prabhat felt that he was better choice than the rest of the candidates who were recently interviewed by him in the last few days. Subhash Verma also indicated that he was in possession of the copies of the bid documents that the Unique Electronics Ltd. would be submitting the next day to the Defence Ministry for their tender. He offered to hand over those documents subject to his employment in the company on suitable terms and conditions. He made it clear that in the process, the Sterling Electric Ltd. could outbid their rival company and get the bid and hefty Defence Ministry order. He indicated that it will be win-win situation for both-him and the company. Prabhat was absolutely stunned. It was a mixed feeling of shock and thrill. He was uncomfortable and perspiring. If accepted, all his problems would vanish instantly and he may be rewarded for securing the much awaited tender and thereby boosting company's sales and financial health. He was in a fix as to the future course of action. He was wonder-struck at the guts of Subhash Verma in having surreptitiously removing his own company papers and offering to the rival company for a job. Being an experienced person, he was examining the pros and cons of the proposal/situation and he asked him to come the next day.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case.

(b) Critically examine the options available to Prabhat in the above situation.

(c) Which of the above would be the most appropriate for Prabhat and why? (Answer in 250 words) 2022

2. Ramesh is State Civil Services Officer who got the opportunity of getting posted to the capital of a border State after rendering 20 years of service. Ramesh's mother has recently been detected cancer and has been admitted in the leading cancer hospital of the city. His two adolescent children have also got admission in one of the best public schools of the town. After settling down in his appointment as Director in the Home Department of the State, Ramesh got confidential report through intelligence sources that illegal migrants are infiltrating in the State from the neighbouring country. He decided to personally carry out surprise check of the border posts along with his Home Department team. To his surprise, he caught red-handed two families of 12 members infiltrated with the connivance of the security personnel at the border posts. On further inquiry and investigation, it was found that after the migrants from neighbouring country infiltrate, their documentation like Aadhaar Card, Ration Card and Voter Card are also forged and they are made to settle down in a particular area of the State. Ramesh prepared the detailed and comprehensive report and submitted to the Additional Secretary of the State. However, he has summoned by the Additional Home Secretary after a week and was instructed to withdraw the report. The

Additional Home Secretary informed Ramesh that the report submitted by him has not been appreciated by the higher authorities. He further cautioned him that if he fails to withdraw the confidential report, he will not only be posted out from the prestigious appointment from the State capital but his further promotion which is due in near future will also get in jeopardy.

(a) What are the Department options available to Ramesh as the Director of the Home Department of the bordering State?

(b) What option should Ramesh adopt and why?

(c) Critically evaluate each of the options.

(d) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Ramesh?

(e) What policy measures would you suggest to combat the menace of infiltration of illegal migrants from the neighbouring country? (Answer in 250 words) 2022

3. The Supreme Court has banned mining in the Aravalli Hills to stop degradation of the forest cover and to maintain ecological balance. However, the stone mining was still prevalent in the border district of the affected State with connivance of certain corrupt forest officials and politicians. Young and dynamic SP who was recently posted in the affected district promised to himself to stop this menace. In one of his surprise checks with his team, he found loaded truck with stone trying to escape the mining area. He tried to stop the truck but the truck driver overran the police officer, killing him on the spot and thereafter managed to flee. Police filed FIR but no breakthrough was achieved in the case for almost three months. Ashok who was the Investigative Journalist working with leading TV channel, suo moto started investigating the case. Within one month, Ashok got breakthrough by interacting with local people, stone mining mafia and government officials. He prepared his investigative story and presented to the CMD of the TV channel. He exposed in his investigative report the complete nexus of stone mafia working with blessing of corrupt police and civil officials and politicians. The politician who was involved in the mafia was no one else but local MLA who was considered to be very close to the Chief Minister. After going through the investigative report, the CMD advised Ashok to drop the idea of making the story public through electronic media. He informed that the local MLA was not only the relative of the owner of the TV channel but also had unofficially 20 percent share in the channel. The CMD further informed Ashok that his further promotion and hike in pay will be taken care of in addition the soft loan of ` 10 lakhs which he has taken from the TV channel for his son's chronic disease will be suitably adjusted if he hands over the investigative report to him.

(a) What are the options available with Ashok to cope up with the situation?

(b) Critically evaluate/examine each of the options identified by Ashok.

(c) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Ashok?

(d) Which of the options, do you think, would be the most appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?

(e) In the above scenario, what type of training would you suggest for police officers posted to such districts where stone mining illegal activities are rampant? (Answer in 250 words) 2022

4. You have done MBA from a reputed institution three years back but could not get campus placement due to COVID-19 generated recession. However, after a lot of persuasion and series of competitive tests including written and interview, you managed to get a job in a leading shoe company. You have aged parents who are dependent and staying with you. You also recently got married after getting this decent job. You were allotted the Inspection Section which is responsible for clearing the final product. In first one year, you learnt your job well and was appreciated for your performance by the management. The company is doing good business for last five years in domestic market and this year it is decided even to export to Europe and Gulf countries. However, one large consignment to Europe was rejected by their Inspecting Team due to certain poor quality and was sent back. The top management ordered that ibid consignment to be cleared for the domestic market. As a part of Inspecting Team, you observed the glaring poor quality and brought to the knowledge of the Team Commander. However, the top management advised all the members of the team to overlook these defects as the management cannot bear such a huge loss. Rest of the team members except you promptly signed and cleared the consignment for domestic market, overlooking glaring defects. You again brought to the knowledge of the Team Commander that such consignment, if cleared even for domestic market, will tarnish the image and reputation of the company and will be counter-productive in the long run. However, you were further advised by the top management that if you do not clear the consignment, the company will not hesitate to terminate your services citing certain innocuous reasons.

- (a) Under the given conditions, what are the options available to you as a member of the Inspecting Team?
- (b) Critically evaluate each of the options listed by you.
- (c) What option would you adopt and why?
- (d) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by you?
- (e) What can be the consequences of overlooking the observations raised by the inspecting Team? (Answer in 250 words) 2022

5. Rakesh was working as Joint Commissioner in Transport Department of a city. As a Part of his Job profile, among others, he was entrusted with the task of overseeing the control and functioning of City Transport Department. A case of strike by the drivers' union of City Transport Department over the issue of Compensation to a driver who died on duty while driving the bus came up before him for decision in the matter.

He gathered that the driver (deceased) was plying Bus No. 528 which Passed through busy and congested roads of the city. It so happened that near an intersection on the way, there was an accident involving the bus and a car driver by a middle-aged man. It was found that there was altercation between the driver and the car driver. Heated arguments between them led to fight and the driver gave him a blow. Lot of passerbys had gathered and tried to intervene but without success. Eventually, both of them were badly injured and profusely bleeding and were taken to the nearby hospital. The driver succumbed to the injuries and could not be saved. The middle-aged driver's condition was also critical but after a day, he recovered and was discharged. Police had immediately come at the spot of accident and FIR was registered. Police investigation revealed that the quarrel in question was started by the bus driver and he had resorted to physical violence. There was exchange of blows between them.

The City Transport Department management is considering of not giving any extra compensation to the driver's (deceased) family. The family is very aggrieved, depressed and agitated against the discriminatory and non-

sympathetic approach of the City Transport Department management. The bus driver (deceased) was 52 years of age, was survived by his wife and two school-college going daughters. He was the sole earner of the family. The City Transport Department workers' union took up this case and when found no favorable response from the management, decided to go on strike. The union's demand was two-fold. First was full extra compensation as given to other drivers who died on duty and secondly employment to one family member. The strike has continued for 10 days and the deadlock remains.

- (a) What are the options available to Rakesh to meet the above situation?
- (b) Critically examine each of the options identified by Rakesh.
- (c) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by Rakesh?
- (d) What course of action would Rakesh adopt to diffuse the above situation (Answer in 250 words) 2022

6. You are appointed as an officer heading the section in Environment Pollution Control Board to ensure compliance and its follow-up. In that region, there were large number of small and medium industries which had been granted clearance you learnt that these industries provide employment to many migrant workers Most of the industrial units have got environmental clearance certificate in their possession. The environmental clearance seeks to curb industries and projects that supposedly hamper environment and living species in the region. But in practice most of these units remain to be polluting units in several ways like air, water and soil pollution. As such, local people encountered persistent health problems.

It was confirmed that majority of the industries were violating environmental compliance. You issued notice to all the industrial units to apply for fresh environmental clearance certificate from the competent authority. However, your action met with hostile response from a section of the industrial units, other vested interest persons and a section of the local politicians. The workers also became very hostile to you as they felt that your action would lead to the closure these of industrial units, and the resultant unemployment will lead to insecurity and uncertainty in their livelihood. Many owners of the industries approached you with the plea that you should not initiate harsh action as it would compel them their units, and cause huge Financial loss, shortage of their products in the market. These would obviously add to the sufferings of the labourers and the consumer alike. The labour union also sent you representation requesting against the closure of the units. You simultaneously started receiving threats from unknown corners. You however received supports from some of your colleagues, who advised you to act freely to ensure environmental compliance. Local NGOs also came to your support and they demanded the closure of the polluting units immediately (a) What are the options available to you under the given situation?

- (b) Critically examine the options listed by you.
- (c) What type of mechanism would you suggest to ensure environmental compliance?
- (d) What are the ethical dilemmas you faced in exercising your option? (Answer in 250 words) 2022

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2021

1. Sunil is a young civil servant and has a reputation for his competence, integrity, dedication and relentness pursuit of difficult and onerous jobs. Considering his profile, he was picked up by his bosses to handle a very

challenging and sensitive assignment. He was posted in a tribal dominated district notorious for illegal sand mining. Excavating sand from river belt and transporting through trucks and selling them in black market was rampant. This illegal sand mining mafia was operating with the support of local functionaries and tribal musclemen who in turn were bribing selected poor tribals and had kept the tribals under fear and intimidation.

Sunil being a sharp and energetic officer immediately grasped the ground realities and the modus operandi followed by the mafia through their devious and dubious mechanism. On making inquiries, he gathered that some of their own office employees are in hand and glove with them and have developed close unholy nexus. Sunil initiated stringent action against them and started conducting raids on their illegal operations of movement of trucks filled with sand. The mafia got rattled as not many officers in the past had taken such strong steps against the mafia. Some of the office employees who were allegedly close to mafia informed them that the officer is determined to clean up the mafia's illegal sand mining operations in that district and may cause them irreparable damage.

The mafia turned hostile and launched counter-offensive. The tribal musclemen and mafia started threatening him with dire consequences. His family (wife and old mother) were stalked and were under virtual surveillance and thus causing mental torture, agony and stress to all of them. The matter assumed serious proportions when a musclemen came to his office and threatened him to stop raids, etc., otherwise, his fate will not be different than some of his predecessors (ten years back one officer was killed by the mafia).

(a) Identify the different options available to Sunil in attending to this situation.

(b) Critically evaluate each of the options listed by you.

(c) Which of the above, do you think, would be the most appropriate for Sunil to adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words) 2021

2. You are Vice Principal of a degree college in one of the middle-class towns. Principal has recently retired and management is looking for his replacement. There are also feelers that the management may promote you as Principal. In the meantime, during annual examination the flying squad which came from the university caught two students red-handed involving in unfair means. A senior lecturer of the college was personally helping these students in this act. This senior lecturer also happens to be close to the management. One of the students was son of a local politician who was responsible in getting college affiliated to the present reputed university. The second student was son of a local businessman who has donated maximum funds for running of the college. You immediately informed the management regarding this unfortunate incident. The management told you to resolve the issue with flying squad at any cost. They further said that such incident will not only tarnish the image of the college but also the politician and businessman are very important personalities for the functioning of the college. You were also given hint that your further promotion to Principal depends on your capability in resolving this issue with flying squad. In the meantime, you were intimidated by your administrative officer that certain members of the student union are protesting outside the college gate against the senior lecturer and the students involved in this incident and demanding strict action against defaulters.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case.

(b) Critically examine the options available with you as Vice Principal. What option will you adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words) 2021

3. An elevated corridor is being constructed to reduce traffic congestion in the capital of a particular state. You have been selected as project manager of this prestigious project on your professional competence and experience. The deadline is to complete the project in next two years by 30 June, 2021, since this project is to be inaugurated by the Chief Minister before the elections are announced in the second week of July 2021. While carrying out the surprise inspection by inspecting team, a minor crack was noticed in one of the piers of the elevated corridor possibly due to poor material used. You immediately informed the chief engineer and stopped further work. It was assessed by you that minimum three piers of the elevated corridor have to be demolished and reconstructed. But this process will delay the project minimum by four to six months. But the chief engineer overruled the observation of inspecting team on the ground that it was a minor crack which will not in any way impact the strength and durability of the bridge. He ordered you to overlook the observation of inspecting team and continue working with same speed and tempo. He informed you that the minister does not want any delay as he wants the Chief Minister to inaugurate the elevated corridor before the elections are declared. Also informed you that the contractor is far relative of the minister and he wants him to finish the project. He also gave you hint that your further promotion as additional chief engineer is under consideration with the ministry. However, you strongly felt that the minor crack in the pier of the elevated corridor will adversely affect the health and life of the bridge and therefore it will be very dangerous not to repair the elevated corridor.

(a) Under the given conditions, what are the options available to you as a project manager?

(b) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by the project manager?

(c) What are the professional challenges likely to be faced by the project manager and his response to overcome such challenges?

(d) What can be the consequences of overlooking the observation raised by the inspecting team? (Answer in 250 words) 2021

4. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has quickly spread to various countries. As on May 8th, 2020, in India 56342 positive cases of corona had been reported. India with a population of more than 1.35 billion had difficulty in controlling the transmission of coronavirus among its population. Multiple strategies became necessary to handle this outbreak. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India raised awareness about this outbreak and to take all necessary actions to control the spread of COVID-19. Indian Government implemented a 55-day lockdown throughout the country to reduce the transmission of the virus. Schools and colleges had shifted to alternative mode of teaching/learning-evaluation and certification. Online mode became popular during these days.

India was not prepared for a sudden onslaught of such a crisis due to limited infrastructure in terms of human resource, money and other facilities needed for taking care of this situation. This disease did not spare anybody irrespective of caste, creed, religion on the one hand and 'have and have not' on the other. Deficiencies in hospital beds, oxygen cylinders, ambulances, hospital staff and crematorium were the most crucial aspects.

You are a hospital administrator in a public hospital at the time when coronavirus had attacked large number of people and patients were pouring into hospital day in and day out. (a) What are your criteria and justification for

putting your clinical and non-clinical staff to attend to the patients knowing fully well that it is highly infectious disease and resources and infrastructure are limited?

(b) If yours is a private hospital, whether your justification and decision would remain same as that of a public hospital? (Answer in 250 words) 2021

5. A reputed food product company based in India developed a food product for the international market and started exporting the same after getting necessary approvals. The company announced this achievement and also indicated that soon the product will be made available for the domestic consumers with almost same quality and health benefits. Accordingly, the company got its product approved by the domestic competent authority and launched the product in Indian market. The company could increase its market share over a period of time and earned substantial profit both domestically and internationally. However, the random sample test conducted by inspecting team found the product being sold domestically in variance with the approval obtained from the competent authority. On further investigation, it was also discovered that the food company was not only selling products which were not meeting the health standard of the country but also selling the rejected export products in the domestic market. This episode adversely affected the reputation and profitability of the food company.

(a) What action do you visualize should be taken by the competent authority against the food company for violating the laid down domestic food standard and selling rejected export products in domestic market?

(b) What course of action is available with the food company to resolve the crisis and bring back its lost reputation?

(c) Examine the ethical dilemma involved in the case. (Answer in 250 words) 2021

6. Pawan is working as an officer in the State Government for the last ten years. As a part of routine transfer, he was posted to another department. He joined in a new office along with five other colleagues. The head of the office was a senior officer conversant with the functioning of the office. As a part of general inquiry, Pawan gathered that his senior officer carries the reputation of being difficult and insensitive person having his own disturbed family life. Initially, all seem to go well. However, after some time Pawan felt that the senior officer was belittling him and at times unreasonable. Whatever suggestions given or views expressed by Pawan in the meetings were summarily rejected and the senior officer would express displeasure in the presence of others. It became a pattern of boss's style of functioning to show him in bad light highlighting his shortcomings and humiliating publically. It became apparent that though there are no serious work-related problems/shortcomings, the senior officer was always on one pretext or the other and would scold and shout at him. The continuous harassment and public criticism of Pawan resulted in loss of confidence, self-esteem and equanimity. Pawan realized that his relations with his senior officer are becoming more toxic and due to this, he felt perpetually tensed, anxious and stressed. His mind was occupied with negativity and caused him mental torture, anguish and agony. Eventually, it badly affected his personal and family life. He was no longer joyous, happy and contented even at home. Rather without any reason he would loose his temper with his wife and other family members. The family environment was no longer pleasant and congenial. His wife who was always supportive to him also became a victim of his negativity and hostile behaviour. Due to harassment and humiliation suffering by him in the office, comfort and happiness virtually vanished from his life. Thus it damaged his physical and mental health. (a) What are the options available with Pawan to cope up with the situation?

(b) What approach Pawan should adopt for bringing peace, tranquillity and congenial environment in the office and home?

(c) As an outsider, what are your suggestions for both boss and subordinate to overcome this situation and for improving the work performance, mental and emotional hygiene?

(d) In the above scenario, what type of training would you suggest for officers at various levels in the government offices? (Answer in 250 words) 2021

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2020

1. Rajesh Kumar is a senior public servant, with a reputation of honesty and forthrightness, currently posted in the Finance Ministry as Head of the Budget Division. His department is presently busy in organising the budgetary support to the states, four of which are due to go to the polls within the financial year.

This year's annual budget had allotted Rs. 8300 crores for National Housing Scheme (NHS), a centrally sponsored social housing scheme for the weaker sections of society. Rs. 775 crores have been drawn for NHS till June.

The Ministry of Commerce had long been pursuing a case for setting up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in a southern state to boost exports. After two years of detailed discussions between the centre and state, the Union Cabinet approved the project in August. Process was initiated to acquire the necessary land.

Eighteen months ago a leading Public Sector Unit (PSU) had projected the need for setting up a large natural gas processing plant in a northern state for the regional gas grid. The required land is already in possession of the PSU. The gas grid is an essential component of the national energy security strategy. After three rounds of global bidding the project was allotted to an MNC, M/s XYZ Hydrocarbons. The first tranche of payment to the MNC is scheduled to be made in December.

Finance Ministry was asked for a timely allocation of an additional Rs. 6000 crores for these two developmental projects. It was decided to recommend re-appropriation of this entire amount from the NHS allocation. The file was forwarded to Budget Department for their comments and further processing. On studying the case file, Rajesh Kumar realized that this re-appropriation may cause inordinate delay in the execution of NHS, a project much publicized in the rallies of senior politicians. Correspondingly, non-availability of finances would cause financial loss in the SEZ and national embarrassment due to delayed payment in an international project.

Rajesh Kumar discussed the matter with his seniors. He was conveyed that this politically sensitive situation needs to be processed immediately. Rajesh Kumar realized that diversion of funds from NHS could raise difficult questions for the government in the Parliament.

Discuss the following with reference to this case:

(a) Ethical issues involved in re-appropriation of funds from a welfare project to the developmental projects.

(b) Given the need for proper utilization of public funds, discuss the options available to Rajesh Kumar. Is resigning a worthy option? (250 words) 2020

2. The Chairman of Bharat Missiles Ltd (BML) was watching a program on TV wherein the Prime Minister was addressing the nation on the necessity of developing a self-reliant India. He subconsciously nodded in agreement and smiled to himself as he mentally reviewed BML's journey in the past two decades. BML had admirably progressed from producing first generation anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) to designing and producing state of the art ATGM weapon systems that would be the envy of any army. He sighed in reconciliation with his assumptions that the government would probably not alter the status quo of a ban on exports of military weaponry. To his surprise, the very next day he got a telephone call from the Director General, Ministry of Defence, asking him to discuss the modalities of increasing BML production of ATGMs as there is a possibility of exporting the same to a friendly foreign country. The Director General wanted the Chairman to discuss the details with his staff at Delhi next week. Two days later, at a press conference, the Defence Minister stated that he aims to double the current weapons export levels within five years. This would give an impetus to financing the development and manufacture of indigenous weapons in the country. He also stated that all indigenous arms manufacturing nations have a very good record in international arms trade.

(a) As Chairman of BML, what are your views on the following points?

(b) As an arms exporter of a responsible nation like India, what are the ethical issues involved in arms trade? (250 words) 2020

3. Rampura, a remote district inhabited by a tribal population, is marked by extreme backwardness and abject poverty. Agriculture is the mainstay of the local population, though it is primarily subsistence due to the very small landholdings. There is insignificant industrial or mining activity. Even the targeted welfare programs have inadequately benefited the tribal population. In this restrictive scenario, the youth has begun to migrate to other states to supplement the family income. Plight of minor girls is that their parents are persuaded by labor contractors to send them to work in the Bt Cotton farms of a nearby state. The soft fingers of the minor girls are well suited for plucking the cotton. The inadequate living and working conditions in these farms have caused serious health issues for the minor girls. NGOs in the districts of domicile and the cotton farms appear to be compromised and have not effectively espoused the twin issues of child labour and development of the area. You are appointed as the District Collector of Rampura. Identify the ethical issues involved. Which specific steps will you initiate to ameliorate the conditions of minor girls of your district and to improve the overall economic scenario in the district. (250 words) 2020

4. You are a municipal commissioner of a large city, having the reputation of a very honest and upright officer. A huge multipurpose mall is under construction in your city in which a large number of daily wage earners are employed. One night, during monsoons, a big chunk of the roof collapsed causing instant death of four laborers including two minors. Many more were seriously injured requiring immediate medical attention. The mishap resulted in a big hue and cry, forcing the government to institute an inquiry. Your preliminary enquiry has revealed a series of anomalies. The material used for the construction was of poor quality. Despite the approved building plans permitting only one basement, an additional basement has been constructed. This was overlooked during the periodic inspections by the building inspector of the municipal corporation. In your enquiry, you noticed that the construction of the mall was given the green signal despite encroaching on areas earmarked for a green belt and a slip road in the Zonal Master Plan of the city. The permission to construct the mall was accorded by the previous Municipal Commissioner who is not only your senior and well known to you professionally, but also a good friend.

Prima facie, the case appears to be of a widespread nexus between officials of the Municipal Corporation and the builders. Your colleagues are putting pressure on you to go slow in the enquiry. The builder, who is rich and influential, happens to be a close relative of a powerful minister in the state cabinet. The builder is persuading you to hush up the matter, promising you a fortune to do so. He also hinted that if this matter is not resolved at the earliest in his favor; there is somebody in his office who is waiting to file a case against you under the POSH Act.

Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case. What are the options available to you in this situation? Explain your selected course of action. (250 words) 2020

5. Parmal is a small but underdeveloped district. It has rocky terrain that is not suitable for agriculture, though some subsistence agriculture is being done on small plots of land. The area receives adequate rainfall and has an irrigation canal flowing through it. Amria, its administrative center, is a medium-sized town. It houses a large district hospital, an Industrial Training Institute and some privately owned skill training centers. It has all the facilities of a district headquarters. A trunk railway line passes approximately 50 kilometers from Amria. Its poor connectivity is a major reason for the absence of any major industry therein. The state government offers a 10 year tax holiday as an incentive to new industry.

In 2010 Anil, an industrialist, decided to take benefits to set up Amria Plastic Works (APW) in Noora village, about 20 km from Amria. While the factory was being built, Anil hired the required key labor and got them trained at the skill training centers at Amria. This act of his made the key personnel very loyal to APW. APW started production in 2011 with the labor drawn fully from Noora village. The villagers were very happy to get employment near their homes and were motivated by the key personnel to meet the production targets with high quality.

APW started making large profits, a sizable portion of which was used to improve the quality of life in Noora. By 2016, Noora could boast of a greener village and a renovated village temple. Anil liaised with the local MLA to increase the frequency of the bus services to Amria. The government also opened a primary health care center and primary school at Noora in buildings constructed by APW. APW used its CSR funds to set up women's self-help groups, subsidize primary education to the village children and procure an ambulance for use by its employees and the needy.

In 2019, there was a minor fire in APW. It was quickly extinguished as fire safety protocols were in place in the factory. Investigations revealed that the factory had been using electricity in excess of its authorized capacity. This was soon rectified. The next year, due to a nationwide lockdown, the requirement of production fell for four months. Anil decided that all employees would be paid regularly. He employed them to plant trees and improve the village habitat. APW had developed a reputation of high-quality production and a motivated workforce.

Critically analyze the story of APW and state the ethical issues involved. Do you consider APW as a role model for development of backward areas? Give reasons. (250 words) 2020

6. Migrant workers have always remained at the socio-economic margins of our society, silently serving as the instrumental labour force of urban economics. The pandemic has brought them into national focus. On announcement of a countrywide lockdown, a very large number of migrant workers decided to move back from their places of employment to their native villages. The nonavailability of transport created its own problems. Added to this was the fear of starvation and inconvenience to their families. This caused the migrant workers to demand wages and transport facilities for returning to their villages. Their mental agony was accentuated by multiple factors

such as a sudden loss of livelihood, possibility of lack of food and inability to assist in harvesting their rabi crop due to not being able to reach home in time. Reports of inadequate response of some districts in providing the essential boarding and lodging arrangements along the way multiplied their fears. You have learnt many lessons from this situation when you were tasked to oversee the functioning of the District Disaster Relief Force in your district.

In your opinion what ethical issues arose in the current migrant crisis?

What do you understand by an ethical care giving state?

What assistance can the civil society render to mitigate the sufferings of migrants in similar situations?

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2019

1. You are heading the rescue operations in an area affected by severe natural calamity. Thousands of people are rendered homeless and deprived of food, drinking water and other basic amenities. Rescue work has been disrupted by heavy rainfall and damage to supply routes. The local people are seething with anger against the delayed limited rescue operations. When your team reaches the affected area, the people there heckle and even assault some of the team members. One of your team members is even severely injured. Faced with this crisis, some team members plead with you to call off the operations fearing threats to their life.

In such trying circumstances, what will be your response? Examine the qualities of a public servant which will be required to manage the situation.

2. Honesty and uprightness are the hallmarks of a civil servant. Civil servants possessing these qualities are considered as the backbone of any strong organization. In line of duty, they take various decisions, at times some become bonafide mistakes. As long as such decisions are not taken intentionally and do not benefit personally, the officer cannot be said to be guilty. Though such decisions may, at times, lead to unforeseen adverse consequences in the long-term.

In the recent past, a few instances have surfaced wherein civil servants have been implicated for bonafide mistakes. They have often been prosecuted and even imprisoned. These instances have greatly rattled the moral fiber of the civil servants. How does this trend affect the functioning of the civil services? What measures can be taken to ensure that honest civil servants are not implicated for bonafide mistakes on their part? Justify your answer.

3. An apparel manufacturing company having a large number of women employees was losing sales due to various factors. The company hired a reputed marketing executive, who increased the volume of sales within a short span of time. However, some unconfirmed reports came up regarding his indulgence in sexual harassment at the work place.

After sometime, a woman employee lodged a formal complaint to the management against the marketing executive about sexually harassing her. Faced with the company's indifference in not taking cognizance of her grievance, she lodged an FIR with the Police. Realizing the sensitivity and gravity of the situation, the company called the woman employee to negotiate. In that she was offered a hefty sum of money to withdraw the complaint and the FIR and also give in writing that the marketing executive is not involved in this case.

Identify the ethical issues involved in this case: what options are available to the women employee?

4. In a modern democratic polity, there is the concept of political executive and permanent executive. Elected people's representatives from the political executive and bureaucracy form the permanent executive. Ministers frame policy decisions and bureaucrats execute these.

In the initial decades after independence, relationships between the permanent executive and the political executive were characterized by mutual understanding, respect and cooperation, without encroaching upon each other's domain.

However, in the subsequent decades, the situation has changed. There are instances of the political executive insisting upon the permanent executive to follow its agenda. Respect for and appreciation of upright bureaucrats has declined. There is an increasing tendency among the political executive to get involved in routine administrative matters such as transfers, postings etc. Under this scenario, there is a definitive trend towards 'politicization of bureaucracy'. The rising materialism and acquisitiveness in social life has also adversely impacted upon the ethical values of both the permanent executive and the political executive.

What are the consequences of this 'politicization of bureaucracy'? Discuss.

5. In one of the districts of a frontier state, narcotics menace has been rampant. This has resulted in money laundering, mushrooming of poppy farming, arms smuggling and near stalling of education. The system is on the verge of collapse. The situation has been further worsened by unconfirmed reports that local politicians, as well as some senior police officers, are providing surreptitious patronage to the drug mafia. At that point of time a woman police officer, known for her skills in handling such situations is appointed as Superintendent of Police to bring the situation to normalcy.

If you are the same police officer, identify the various dimensions of the crisis. Based on your understanding, suggest measures to deal with the crisis.

6. In recent times, there has been an increasing concern in India to develop effective civil service ethics, code of conduct, transparency measures, ethics and integrity systems and anti-corruption agencies. In view of this, there is a need to focus on three specific areas, which are directly relevant to the problems of internalizing integrity and ethics in the civil services. These are as follows:

Anticipating specific threats to ethical standards and integrity in the civil services, Strengthening the ethical competence of civil servants and Developing administrative processes and practices which promote ethical values and integrity in civil services. Suggest institutional measures to address the above three issues.

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2018

1. Rakesh is a responsible district level officer, who enjoys the trust of his higher officials. Knowing his honesty, the government entrusted him with the responsibility of identifying the beneficiaries under a health care scheme meant for senior citizens. The criteria to be a beneficiary are the following:

(a) 60 years of age or above.

(b) Belonging to a reserved community.

(c) Family income of less than 1 Lakh rupees per annum.

(d) Post-treatment prognosis is likely to be high to make a positive difference to the quality of life of the beneficiary.

One day, an old couple visited Rakesh's office with their application. They have been the residents of a village in his district since their birth. The old man is diagnosed with a rare condition that causes obstruction in the large intestine. As a consequence, he has severe abdominal pain frequently that prevents him from doing any physical labor. The couple has no children to support them. The expert surgeon whom they contacted is willing to do the surgery without charging any fee. However, the couple will have to bear the cost of incidental charges, such as medicines, hospitalization, etc., to the tune of rupees one lakh. The couple fulfills all the criteria except criterion 'b'. However, any financial aid would certainly make a significant difference in their quality of life.

How should Rakesh respond to the situation?

2. As a senior officer in the Ministry, you have access to important policy decisions and upcoming big announcements such as road construction projects before they are notified in the public domain. The Ministry is about to announce a mega road project for which the drawings are already in place. Sufficient care was taken by the planners to make use of the government land with the minimum land acquisition from private parties. Compensation rate for private parties was also finalized as per government rules. Care was also taken to minimize deforestation. Once the project is announced, it is expected that there will be a huge spurt in real estate prices in and around that area. Meanwhile, the Minister concerned insists that you realign the road in such a way that it comes closer to his 20 acres farmhouse. He also suggests that he would facilitate the purchase of a big plot of land in your wife name at the prevailing rate which is very nominal, in and around the proposed mega road project. He also tries to convince you by saying that there is no harm in it as he is buying the land legally. He even promises to supplement your savings in case you do not have sufficient funds to buy the land. However, by the act of realignment, a lot of agricultural lands has to be acquired, thereby causing a considerable financial burden on the government, and also the displacement of the farmers. As if this is not enough, it will involve cutting down of a large number of trees denuding the area of its green cover. Faced with this situation, what will you do? Critically examine various conflicts of interest and explain what your responsibilities are as a public servant?.

3. It is a State where prohibition is in force. You were recently appointed as the Superintendent of Police of a district notorious for illicit distillation of liquor. The illicit liquor leads to many deaths, reported and unreported, and causes a major problem for the district authorities.

The approach till now had been to view it as a law and order problem and tackle it accordingly. Raids, arrest, police cases, and criminal trials – all these had only limited impact. The problem remains as serious as ever.

Your inspections show that the parts of the district where the distillation flourishes are economically, industrially and educationally backward. Agriculture is badly affected by poor irrigation facilities. Frequent clashes among communities gave a boost to illicit distillation. No major initiatives had taken place in the past either from the government's side or from social organizations to improve the lot of the people. Which new approach will you adopt to bring the problem under control?

4. A big corporate house is engaged in manufacturing industrial chemicals on a large scale. It proposes to set up an additional unit. Many states rejected its proposal due to the detrimental effect on the environment. But one state government acceded to the request and permitted the unit close to a city, brushing aside all opposition. The unit was set up 10 years ago and was in full swing till recently. The pollution caused by the industrial effluents was affecting the land, water and crops in the area. It was also causing serious health problems to human beings and animals. This gave rise to a series of agitations demanding the closure of the plant. In a recent agitation thousands of people took part, creating a law and order problem necessitating stern police action. Following the public outcry, the State government ordered the closure of the factory. The closure of the factory resulted in the unemployment of not only those workers who were engaged in the factory but also those who were working in the ancillary units. It also very badly affected those industries which depended on the chemicals manufactured by it.

As a senior officer entrusted with the responsibility of handling these issues, how are you going to address it?

5. Dr X is a leading medical practitioner in a city. He has set up a charitable trust through which he plans to establish a super-speciality hospital in the city to cater to the medical needs of all sections of the society. Incidentally, that part of the State had been neglected over the years. The proposed hospital would be a boon for the region.

You are heading the tax investigation agency of that region. During an inspection of the doctor's clinic, your officers have found some major irregularities. A few of them are substantial which had resulted in considerable withholding of tax that should be paid by him now. The doctor is cooperative. He undertakes to pay the tax immediately.

However, there are certain other deficiencies in his tax compliance which are purely technical in nature. If these technical defaults are pursued by the agency, considerable time and energy of the doctor will be diverted to issues which are not so serious, urgent or even helpful to the tax collection process. Further, in all probability, it will hamper the prospects of the hospital coming up.

There are two options before you:

(1) Taking a broader view, ensure substantial tax compliance and ignore defaults that are merely technical in nature.

(2) Pursue the matter strictly and proceed on all fronts, whether substantial or merely technical. As the head of the tax agency, which course of action will you opt and why?

6. Edward Snowden, a computer expert and former CIA administrator, released confidential Government documents to the press about the existence of Government surveillance programmes.

According to many legal experts and the US Government, his action violated the Espionage act of 1971, which identified the leak of State secrets as an act of treason. Yet, despite the fact that he broke the law, Snowden argued that he had a moral obligation to act. He gave a justification for his "whistle blowing" by stating that he had a duty "to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them." According to Snowden, the Government's violation of privacy had to be exposed regardless of legality since more substantive issues of social action and public morality were involved here. Many agreed with Snowden. Few argued that he broke the law and compromised national security, for which he should be held accountable.

Do you agree that Snowden's actions were ethically justified even if legally prohibited? Why or why not? Make an argument by weighing the competing values in this case.

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2017

1. You are an honest and responsible civil servant. You often observe the following:

(a) There is a general perception that by adhering to ethical conduct one may face difficulties to oneself and cause problems for the family, whereas unfair practices may help to reach the career goals.

(b) When the number of people adopting unfair means is large, a small minority having a penchant towards ethical means makes no difference.

(c) Sticking to ethical means is detrimental to the larger developmental goals

(d) While one may not involve oneself in large unethical practices, giving and accepting small gifts makes the system more efficient.

Examine the above statements with their merits and demerits.

2. You are aspiring to become an IAS officer and you have cleared various stages and now you have been selected for the personal interview. On the day of the interview, on the way to the venue you saw an accident where a mother and child who happen to be your relatives were badly injured. They needed immediate help.

What would you have done in such a situation? Justify your action.

3. You are the head of the Human Resources department of an organization. One day one of the workers died on duty. His family was demanding compensation. However, the company denied compensation because it was revealed in investigation that he was drunk at the time of the accident. The workers of the company went on to strike demanding compensation for the family of the deceased. The Chairman of the management board has asked for your recommendation.

What recommendation would you provide to the management?

Discuss the merits and demerits of each of the recommendations.

4. You are the manager of a spare parts company A and you have to negotiate a deal with the manager of a large manufacturing company B. The deal is highly competitive and sealing the deal is critical for your company. The deal is being worked out over dinner. After dinner the manager of manufacturing company B offered to drop you to the hotel in his car. On the way to the hotel he happens to hit a motorcycle injuring the motorcyclist badly. You know the manager was driving fast and thus lost control. The law enforcement officer comes to investigate the issue and you are the sole eyewitness to it. Knowing the strict laws pertaining to road accidents you are aware that your honest account of the incident would lead to the prosecution of the manager and as a consequence the deal is likely to be jeopardized, which is of immense importance to your company.

What are the dilemmas you face? What will be your response to the situation?

5. A building permitted for three floors, while being extended illegally to 6 floors by a builder, collapses. As a consequence, a number of innocent laborers including women and children died. These laborers are migrants from different places. The government immediately announced cash relief to the aggrieved families and arrested the builder. Give reasons for such incidents taking place across the country. Suggest measures to prevent their occurrence.

6. You are a Public Information Officer (PIO) in a government department. You are aware that the RTI Act 2005 envisages transparency and accountability in administration. The act has functioned as a check on the supposedly arbitrarily administrative behavior and actions. However, as a PIO you have observed that there are citizens who filed RTI applications not for themselves but on behalf of such stakeholders who purportedly want to have access to information to further their own interests. At the same time there are these RTI activists who routinely file RTI applications and attempt to extort money from the decision makers. This type of RTI activism has affected the functioning of the administration adversely and also possibly jeopardizes the genuineness of the applications which are essentially aimed at getting justice.

What measures would you suggest to separate genuine and non-genuine applications? Give the merits and demerits of your suggestions.

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2016

1. A fresh engineering graduate gets a job in a prestigious chemical industry. She likes the work. The salary is also good. However, after a few months she accidentally discovers that a highly toxic waste is being secretly discharged into a river nearby. This is causing health problems to the villagers downstream who depend on the river for their water needs. She is perturbed and mentions her concern to her colleagues who have been with the company for longer periods. They advise her to keep quiet as anyone who mentions the topic is summarily dismissed. She cannot risk losing her job as she is the sole breadwinner for her family and has to support her ailing parents and siblings. At first, she thinks that if her seniors are keeping quiet, why should she stick out her neck. But her conscience pricks her to do something to save the river and the people who depend upon it. At heart she feels that the advice of silence given by her friends is not correct though she cannot give reasons for it. She thinks you are a wise person and seeks your advice. (2016)

(a) What arguments can you advance to show her that keeping quiet is not morally right?

(b) What course of action would you advise her to adopt and why?

2. Land needed for mining, dams and other large-scale projects is acquired mostly from Adivasis, hill dwellers and rural communities. The displaced persons are paid monetary compensation as per the legal provisions. However, the payment is often tardy. In any case, it cannot sustain the displaced families for long. These people do not possess marketable skills to engage in some other occupation. They end up as low paid migrant laborers. Moreover, the development goes to industries, industrialists and urban communities whereas the costs are passed on to these poor helpless people. This unjust distribution of costs and benefits is unethical.

Suppose you have been entrusted with the task of drafting a better compensation-cumrehabilitation policy for such displaced persons, how would you approach the problem and what would be the main elements of your suggested policy?

3. Suppose you are an officer in charge of implementing a social service scheme to provide support to old and destitute women. An old and illiterate woman comes to you to avail the benefits of the scheme. However, she has no documents to show that she fulfills the eligibility criteria. But after meeting her and listening to her you feel that she certainly needs support. Your enquiries also show that she is really destitute and living in a pitiable condition. You are in a dilemma as to what to do. Putting her under the scheme without necessary documents would clearly be a violation of rules. But denying her the support would be cruel and inhuman.

(a) Can you think of a rational way to resolve this dilemma?

(b) Give your reasons for it.

4. You are a young, aspiring and sincere employee in a Government office working as an assistant to the director of your department. Since you have joined recently, you need to learn and progress. Luckily your superior is very kind and ready to train you for your job. He is a very intelligent and well-informed person having knowledge of various departments. In short, you respect your boss and are looking forward to learning a lot from him.

Since you have good tuning with the boss, he started depending on you. One day due to ill health he invited you to his place to finish some urgent work.

You reached his house and before you could ring the bell you heard shouting noises. You waited for a while. After entering the house the boss greeted you and explained the work. But you were constantly disturbed by the crying of a woman. At last, you inquired with the boss but his answer did not satisfy you.

Next day, you were compelled to inquire further in the office and found out that his behavior is very bad at home with his wife. He also beats up his wife. His wife is not well educated and is a simple woman in comparison to her husband. You see that though your boss is a nice person in the office, he is engaged in domestic violence at home. In such a situation, you are left with the following options. Analyze each option with its consequences.

(a) Just ignore thinking about it because it is their personal matter.

(b) Repost the case to the appropriate authority.

(c) Your own innovative approach towards the situation.

5. ABC Ltd. is a large transnational company having diversified business activities with a huge shareholder base. The company is continuously expanding and generating employment. The company, in its expansion and diversification programme, decides to establish a new plant at Vikaspuri, an area which is underdeveloped. The new plant is designed to use energy efficient technology that will help the company to save production cost by 20%. The company's decision goes well with the Government policy of attracting investment to develop such underdeveloped regions. The government has also announced a tax holiday for five years for the companies that invest in underdeveloped areas. However, the new plant may bring chaos for the inhabitants of Vikaspuri region, which is otherwise tranquil. The new plant may result in increased cost of living, aliens migrating to the region, disturbing the social and economic order. The company sensing the possible protest tried to educate the people of Vikaspuri region and public in general that how its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy would help overcome the likely difficulties of the residents of Vikaspuri region. In spite of this the protests began and some of the residents decided to approach the judiciary as their plea before the Government did not yield any result. (2016) (a) Identify the issues

involved in the case.

(b) What can be suggested to satisfy the company's goal and to address the residents' concern?

6. Saraswati was a successful IT professional in the USA. Moved by patriotic sense of doing something for the country she returned to India. Together with some other like-minded friends, she formed an NGO to build a school for a poor rural community. The objective of the school was to provide the best quality modern education at a nominal cost. She soon discovered that she has to seek permission from a number of Government agencies. The rules and procedures were quite confusing and cumbersome. What frustrated her most were delays, callous attitude of officials and constant demand for bribes. Her experience and the experience of many others like her have deterred people from taking up social service projects.

A measure of Government control over voluntary social work is necessary. But it should not be exercised in a coercive and corrupt manner. What measures can you suggest to ensure that due control is exercised but well meaning, honest NGO efforts are not thwarted?

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2015

1. A private company is known for its efficiency, transparency and employee welfare. The company, though owned by a private individual, has a cooperative character where employees feel a sense of ownership. The company employs nearly 700 personnel and they have voluntarily decided not to form a union. One day suddenly in the morning, about 40 men belonging to political parties gatecrashed into the factory demanding jobs in the factory. They threatened the management and employees, and also used foul language. The employees feel demoralized. It was clear that those people who crashed wanted to be on the payroll of the company as well as continue as the volunteers/members of the party.

The company maintains high standards in integrity and does not extend favors to civil administration that also includes law enforcement agencies. Such incidents occur in the public sector also.

(a) Assume you are the CEO of the company. What would you do to diffuse the volatile situation on the date of gate crashing with the violent mob sitting inside the company premises?

(b) What can be the long term solution to the issue discussed in the case?

(c) Every solution/action that you suggest will have a negative and a positive impact on you as (CEO), the employees and the performance of the employees. Analyze the consequences of each of your suggested actions.

2. You are the Sarpanch of a Panchayat. There is a primary school run by the government in your area. Midday meals are provided to children attending the school. The headmaster has now appointed a new cook in the school to prepare the meals. However, when it is found that cooks are from Dalit community, almost half of the children belonging to higher castes are not allowed to take meals by their parents. Consequently the attendance in the schools falls sharply. This could result in the possibility of discontinuation of midday meal scheme, thereafter of teaching staff and subsequent closing down the school.

(a) Discuss some possible strategies to overcome the conflict and to create the right ambiance.

(b) What should be the responsibilities of different social segments and agencies to create positive social ambiance for accepting such changes?

3. One of the scientists working in the R&D laboratory of a major pharmaceutical company discovers that one of the company's best selling veterinary drugs has the potential to cure a currently incurable liver disease which is prevalent in tribal areas. However, developing a variant of the drug suitable for human beings entailed a lot of research and development having a huge expenditure to the extent of Rs. 50 crores. It was unlikely that the company would recover the cost as the disease was rampant only in poverty stricken areas having very little market otherwise. If you were the CEO, then

(a) Identify the various actions that you could take

(b) Evaluate the pros and cons of each of your actions.

4. There is a disaster prone state having frequent landslides, forest fires, cloudbursts, flash floods and earthquakes, etc. Some of these are seasonal and often unpredictable. The magnitude of the disaster is always unanticipated. During one of the seasons a cloudburst caused devastating floods and landslides leading to high casualties. There was major damage to infrastructure like roads, bridges and power generating units. This led to more than 100000 pilgrims, tourists and other locals trapped across different routes and locations. The people trapped in your area of responsibility include senior citizens, patients in hospitals, women and children, hikers, tourists, ruling parties, regional presidents along with his family, additional chief secretary of the neighboring state and prisoners in jail.

As a civil services officer of the state, what would be the order in which you would rescue these people and why? Give Justifications.

5. You are heading a district administration in a particular department. Your senior officer calls you from the State Headquarters and tells you that a plot in Rampur village is to have a building constructed on it for a school. A visit is scheduled during which he will visit the site along with the chief engineer and the senior architect. He wants you to check out all the papers relating to it and ensure that the visit is properly arranged. You examine the file which relates to the period before you joined the department. The land was acquired for the local panchayat at a nominal cost and the papers showed that clearance certificates are available for the two of the three authorities who have to certify the site's suitability. There is no certification by the architect available on file. You decide to visit Rampur to ensure that all is in the order as stated on file. When you visit Rampur, you find that the plot under reference is a part of Thakurgarh fort and that the walls, ramparts, etc., are running across it. The fort is well away from the main village, therefore a school here will be a serious inconvenience for the children. However, the area near the village has potential to expand into a larger residential area. The development charges on the existing plot, at the fort, will be very high and the question of heritage site has not been addressed. Moreover, the Sarpanch, at the time of acquisition of the land, was a relative of your predecessor. The whole transaction appears to have been done with some vested interest.

(a) List the likely vested interest of the concerned parties.

(b) Some of the options for action available to you are listed below. Discuss the merits and demerits of each of the options:

(i) You can await the visit of the superior officer and let him make a decision.

(ii) You can seek his advice in writing or on the phone.

(iii) You can consult your predecessor/ colleagues, etc, and then decide what to do.

(iv) You can find out if any alternate plot can be got in exchange and then send a comprehensive written report.

Can you suggest any other option with proper justifications?

6. You were recently posted as district development officer of a district. Shortly thereafter you found that there is considerable tension in the rural areas of your district on the issue of sending girls to schools. The elders of the village feel that many problems have come up because girls are being educated and they are stepping out of the safe environment of the household. They are of the view that the girls should be quickly married off with minimum education. The girls are also competing for jobs after education, which have traditionally remained in boys' exclusive domain, adding to unemployment amongst male population. The younger generation feels that in the present era, girls should have equal opportunities for education and employment, and other means of livelihood. The entire locality is divided between sexes in both generations. You come to know that in Panchayat or in other local bodies or even in busy crossroads, the issue is being acrimoniously debated.

One day you are informed that an unpleasant incident has taken place. Some girls were molested, when they were en route to schools. The incident led to clashes between several groups and a law and order problem has arisen. The elders after heated discussion have taken a joint decision not to allow girls to go to school and to socially boycott all such families, which do not follow their dictate.

(a) What steps would you take to ensure girls' safety without disrupting their education?

(b) How would you manage and mold the patriarchal attitude of the village elders to ensure harmony in the inter-generational relations?

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2014

1. Now-a-days, there is an increasing thrust on economic development all around the globe. At the same time, there is also an increasing concern about environmental degradation caused by development. Many a time, we face a direct conflict between development activity and environmental quality. It is neither feasible to stop or curtail the developmental process, nor is it advisable to keep degrading the environment, as it threatens our very survival. Discuss some possible strategies which could be adopted to eliminate this conflict and which could lead to sustainable development.

2. Suppose one of your close friends, who is also aspiring for civil services, comes to you to discuss some of the issues related to ethical conduct in public service. He raises the following points:-

(i) In the present times, when an unethical environment is quite prevalent, individual attempts to stick to ethical principles may cause a lot of problems in one's career. It may cause hardship to the family members as well as risk to one's life. Why should we not be pragmatic and follow the path of least resistance, and be happy with doing whatever good we can?

(ii) When so many people are adopting wrong means and are grossly harming the system, what difference would it make if only a small minority tries to be ethical? They are going to be rather ineffective and are bound to get

frustrated.

(iii) If we become fussy about ethical considerations, will it not hamper the economic progress of our country? After all, in the present age of high competition we cannot afford to be left behind in the race of development.

(iv) It is understandable that we should not get involved in grossly unethical practices, but giving and accepting small gratifications and doing small favors increases everybody's motivation. It also makes the system more efficient. What is wrong in adopting such practices?

Critically analyze the above viewpoints. On the basis of this analysis, what will be your advice to your friend?

3. You are a no-nonsense, honest officer. You have been transferred to a remote district to head a department that is notorious for its inefficiency and callousness. You find that the main cause of the poor state of affairs is the indiscipline of a section of employees. They do not work themselves and also disrupt the workings of others. You first warned the troublemakers to mend their ways or else face disciplinary action. When the warning had little effect, you issued a show cause notice to the ringleaders. As a retaliatory measure, these troublemakers instigated a woman employee amongst them to file a complaint of sexual harassment against you with the Women's Commission. The Commission promptly seeks your explanation. The matter is also publicized in the media to embarrass you further. Some of the options to handle this situation could be as follows:

(i) Give your explanation to the Commission and go soft on the disciplinary action.

(ii) Ignore the commission and proceed firmly with the disciplinary action.

(iii) Brief your higher-ups, seek directions from them and act accordingly. Suggest any other possible option(s). Evaluate all of them and suggest the best course of action, giving your reasons for it.

4. Suppose you are the CEO of a company that manufactures specialized electronic equipment used by a government department. You have submitted your bid for the supply of this equipment to the department. Both the quality and cost of your offer are better than those of the competitors. Yet the concerned officer is demanding a hefty bribe for approving the tender. Getting the order is important both for you and your company. Not getting the order would mean closing a production line. It may also affect your own career. However, as a value-conscious person, You do not want to give bribes. Valid arguments can be advanced both for giving the bribe and getting the order, and for refusing to pay the bribe and risking the loss of the order. What those arguments could be, Could there be any better way to get out of this dilemma? If so, outline the main elements of this third way, pointing out its merits.

5. Rameshwar successfully cleared the prestigious civil services examination and was excited about the opportunity that he would get through the civil services to serve the country. However, soon after joining the services, he realized that things are not as rosy as he had imagined. He found a number of malpractices prevailing in the department assigned to him. For example, funds under various schemes and grants were being misappropriated. The official facilities were frequently being used for personal needs by the officers and staff. After some time, he noticed that the process of recruiting the staff was also not up to the mark. Prospective candidates were required to write an examination in which a lot of cheating was going on. Some candidates were provided external help in the examination. Rameshwar brought these incidents to the notice of his seniors. However, he was advised to keep his eyes, ears and mouth shut and ignore all these things which were taking place with the connivance of the higher-

ups. Rameshwar felt highly disillusioned and uncomfortable. He comes to you seeking your advice. Indicate various options that you think are available in this situation. How would you help him to evaluate these options and choose the most appropriate path to be adopted?

6. In our country, the migration of rural people to towns and cities is increasing drastically. This is causing serious problems both in the rural as well as in the urban areas. In fact, things are becoming really unmanageable. Can you analyze this problem in detail and indicate not only the socio-economic but also the emotional and attitudinal factors responsible for this problem? Also, distinctly bring out why –

(a) educated youth are trying to shift to urban areas

(b) landless poor people are migrating to urban slums

(c) even some farmers are selling off the land and trying to settle in urban areas taking petty jobs.

What feasible steps can you suggest which will be effective in controlling this serious problem of our country?

UPSC Mains Ethics Case Study PYQ 2013

1. A Public Information Officer has received an application under RTI Act. Having gathered the information, the PIO discovers that the information pertains to some of the decisions taken by him, which were found to be not altogether right. There were other employees also who were party to these decisions. Disclosure of the information is likely to lead to disciplinary action with possibility of punishment against him as well as some of his colleagues. Non-disclosure or part disclosure or camouflaged disclosure of information will result in lesser punishment or no punishment. The POI is otherwise an honest and conscientious person but this particular decision. On which the RTI application has been filed, turned out to be wrong. He comes to you for advice. The following are some suggested options. Please evaluate the merits and demerits of each of the options:

(i) The POI could refer the matter to his superior officer and seek his advice and act strictly in accordance with the advice, even though he is not completely in agreement with the advice of the superior.

(ii) The POI could proceed on leave and leave the matter to be dealt by his successor in office or request for transfer of the application to another PIO.

(iii) The POI could weigh the consequences of disclosing the information truthfully, including the effect on his career, and reply in a manner that would not place him or his career in jeopardy, but at the same time a little compromise can be made on the contents of the information.

(iv) The POI could consult his colleagues who are party to the decision and take action as per their advice. Also please indicate (without necessarily restricting to the above options) what you would like to advise, giving proper reasons.

2. You are working as an Executive Engineer in the construction cell of a Municipal Corporation and are presently in-charge of the construction of a flyover. There are two Junior Engineers under you who have the responsibility of day-to-day inspection of the site and are reporting to you, while you are finally reporting to the Chief Engineer who heads the cell. While the construction is heading towards completion, the Junior Engineers have been regularly reporting that all construction is taking place as per design specifications. However, in one of your surprise

inspections, you have noticed some serious deviations and lacunae which, in your opinion, are likely to affect the safety of the flyover. Rectification of these lacunae at this stage would require a substantial amount of demolition and rework which will cause a tangible loss to the contractor and will also delay completion. There is a lot of public pressure on the Corporation to get this construction completed because of heavy traffic congestion in the area. When you brought this matter to the notice of the Chief Engineer, he advised you that in his opinion it is not a very serious lapse and may be ignored. He advised for further expediting the project for completion in time. However, you are convinced that this was a serious matter which might affect public safety and should not be left unaddressed. What will you do in such a situation? Some of the options are given below. Evaluate the merits and demerits of each of these options and finally suggest what course of action you would like to take, giving reasons.

- (i) Follow the advice of the Chief Engineer and go ahead.
- (ii) Make an exhaustive report of the situation bringing out all facts and analysis along with your own viewpoints stated clearly and seek for written orders from the Chief Engineer.
- (iii) Call for explanation from the Junior Engineers and issue orders to the contractor for necessary correction within targeted time.
- (iv) Highlight the issue so that it reaches superiors above the Chief Engineer.
- (v) Considering the rigid attitude of the Chief Engineer, seek transfer from the project or report sickness.

3. Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu is known for its manufacturing clusters on firecrackers and matches. The local economy is largely dependent on the firecrackers industry. It has led to tangible economic development and improved standard of living in the area. So far as child labour norms for hazardous industries like firecrackers industry are concerned, International Labour Organization (ILO) has set the minimum age as 18 years. In India however this age is 14 years.

The units in industrial clusters of firecrackers can be classified into registered and nonregistered entities. One typical unit is household-based work. Though the law is clear on the use of child labour employment norms in registered/non-registered units, it does not include household-based works. Household-based work means children working under the supervision of their parents/relatives. To evade child labour norms, several units project themselves as household-based works but employ children from outside. Needless to say that employing children saves the costs for these units leading to higher profits to the owners. On your visit to one of the units at Sivakasi the owner takes you around the unit which has about 10-15 children below 14 years of age. The owner tells you that in his household based unit, the children are all his relatives. You notice that several children smirk, when the owner tells you this. On deeper enquiry, you figure out that neither the owner nor the children are able to satisfactorily establish their relationship with each other.

- (a) Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.
- (b) What would be your reaction after your above visit?

4. You are heading a leading technical institute of the country. The institute is planning to convene an interview panel shortly under your chairmanship for selection of the post of professors. A few days before the interview, you get a call from the Personal Secretary (PS) of a senior government functionary seeking your intervention in favor of the selection of a close relative of the functionary for this post. The PS also informs you that he is aware of the long

pending and urgent proposal of your institute for grant of funds for modernization, which are awaiting the functionary's approval. He assures you that he would get these proposals cleared.

(a) What are the options available to you?

(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons.

5. As a senior officer in the Finance Ministry, you have access to some confidential and crucial information about policy decisions that the Government is about to announce. These decisions are likely to have a far-reaching impact on the housing and construction industry. If the builders have access to this information beforehand, they can make huge profits. One of the builders has done a lot of quality work for the Government and is known to be close to your immediate superior, who asks you to disclose this information to the said builder.

(a) What are the options available to you?

(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons.

6. You are the Executive Director of an upcoming Infotech Company which is making a name for itself in the market.

Mr. A, who is a star performer, is heading the marketing team. In a short period of one year, he has helped in doubling the revenues as well as creating a high brand equity for the Company so much so that you are thinking of promoting him. However you have been receiving information from many corners about his attitude towards the female colleagues; particularly his habit of making loose comments on women. In addition, he regularly sends indecent SMS to all the team members including his female colleagues. One day, late in the evening, Mrs. X, who is one of Mr. A's team members, comes to you visibly disturbed. She complains against the continued misconduct of Mr. A, who has been making undesirable advances towards her and has even tried to touch her inappropriately in his cabin. She tendered her resignation and left your office.

(a) What are the options available to you?

(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option you would adopt giving reasons.

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