

## ETHICS SECTION - B

**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 party gate-crashed 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 gate-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 favours to civil administration that also includes law enforcement agency. Such incidents occur in public sector also.

- 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?
  - What could be the long-term solution to the issue discussed in the case?
  - Every solution/action that you suggest will have a positive and a negative impact on you (as CEO), the employees and the performance of the employees. Analyse 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 the 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 cook is 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.
- Discuss some feasible strategies to overcome the conflict and to create right ambience.
  - What should be the responsibilities of different social segments and agencies to create positive social ambience 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 bestselling veterinary drug B has the potential to cure a currently incurable liver disease that 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 company would recover the costs as the disease was rampant only in poverty stricken areas having very little market otherwise.
- If you were the CEO, then -
- Identify the various actions that you could take;
  - 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 included senior citizens, patients in hospitals, women and children, hiker, tourists, ruling party's, regional president 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 from 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 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:
- (a) What do you understand by the following terms in the context of public service?
- (i) You can await the visit of the superior officer and let him take a decision.
- (ii) You can seek his advice in writing or on 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 are 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 elder 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 mould patriarchic attitude of the village elders to ensure harmony in the inter-generational relations?

**2014**

7. 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 developmental activity and environmental quality. It is neither feasible to stop or curtail the development process, nor it is advisable to keep degrading the environment, as it threatens our very survival. Discuss some feasible strategies which could be adopted to eliminate this conflict and which could lead to sustainable development.
8. Suppose one of your close friends, who is also aspiring for civil services, comes to you for discussing some of the issues related to ethical conduct in public service. He raises the following points :
  1. In the present times, when unethical environment is quite prevalent, individual attempts to stick to ethical principles may cause a lot of problems in one's career. It may also 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?
  2. 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.
  3. 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.
  4. It is understandable that we should not get involved in grossly unethical practices, but giving and accepting small gratifications and doing small favours 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?

9. 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 working 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 :

1. Give your explanation to the Commission and go soft on the disciplinary action.
2. Ignore the Commission and proceed firmly with the disciplinary action.
3. 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.

10. 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 for 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 bribe.

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.

11. 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?

12. 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-

1. Educated rural youth are trying to shift to urban areas;
2. Landless poor people are migrating to urban slums;

3. Even some farmers are selling off their land and trying to settle in urban areas taking up petty jobs.

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

**2013**

13. 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 into 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.

14. 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 the 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 sick.

15. Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu is known for its manufacturing clusters on firecrackers and matches. The local economy of the area is largely dependent on 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 non-registered 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?
16. 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 favour 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.
17. 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 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.

18. 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's 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 tenders her resignation and leaves 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.

