

Ethics Case Study Class 02

14th July, 2024 at 9:00 AM

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS CLASS (09:05 AM)

- Approach to Solving Ethics Case Study.

CASE STUDY (09:30 AM)

- **Refer to the uploaded handout for more details.**
- **Case Study 1**
- As the Head of the Municipal Corporation, you are faced with a challenging situation wherein two groups of concerned citizens have approached you. One, expressed their frustrations and concerns regarding the menace caused by street dogs in the city and another, taking steps towards encouraging compassion and humane treatment of these silent beings. The first plea highlights the rising incidents of stray dogs attacking or killing vulnerable members of society, especially children. They point to inadequate sterilisation and vaccination of dogs as exacerbating the situation. They demand the immediate removal of street dogs and their relocation elsewhere. The second plea however points to ineffective animal healthcare and control, illegal breeding centres, and pet owners abandoning their pets on the streets as the root of the problem. They argue that the system or the people responsible for the situation should be punished, not the animals. Furthermore, India has laws in place that make it illegal to remove a dog from the streets. This means that once a dog is on the streets, it has a "right" to stay there unless adopted. Balancing the animals' right to life with human safety concerns is proving to be a difficult task.
- (a) What are the ethical dilemmas involved in the case?
- (b) Evaluate the implications of favouring one plea over the other.
- (c) What course of action would resolve the situation in the immediate as well as long term?
- **Approach**
- Give a brief introduction of the case study.
- Highlight the ethical dilemmas involved in the case.
- Evaluate the implications of favouring one plea over the other.
- Give a course of action that would resolve the situation in the immediate as well as long term.
- Give a brief conclusion.

- **Case Study 2**

- You are working as a Divisional Forest Officer in an area that is home to tigers. Recently, there have been reports of a tiger venturing into agricultural fields and also killing the livestock of villagers. Unfortunately, 2-3 villagers have been killed by some wild animals in the last few weeks. Villagers claim that the tiger has killed their fellow villagers and request you to protect their lives and property by either relocating or killing the man-eater tiger. They also obstructed the investigation of forest officials to ascertain whether it was the work of a tiger or some other animal. Your attempts to trap the tiger have not been successful. Concerned over the delay in killing or relocating the tiger, villagers hire a private hunter to kill the tiger on their own and argue that they have a right to defend themselves and their property. In this context, answer the following questions:

- (a) Identify the issues involved in this scenario.
- (b) What steps would you take as the Divisional Forest Officer to ensure villagers' safety along with the protection of tigers?

- **Approach**

- Give a brief summary of the case at hand.
- Identify various stakeholders and issues in the case.
- List down the steps you would take to ensure villagers' safety along with the protection of tigers.

- **Case Study 3(10:14 am)**

- You are the District Magistrate of a district, which is the hub of coaching centres for engineering as well as medical entrance exams. Recently, around 5 students have committed suicide owing to academic and social pressure. Students in the age group 15-18 years from across the country come to the district with the dream of getting admission into prestigious institutions like the IITs and AIIMS. However, the coaching institutes are business-minded and want to have toppers from their institute so that they can attract more students. They create a lot of pressure on students to perform, with differential treatment like forming different categories of batches depending on students' performance. These students live as Paying Guests and in hostels away from their families and many cannot tackle the huge burden of competition and the associated mental stress. The recent spate of suicide by 5 students has been highlighted by the national media and you have been asked by the Chief Minister to present a report of the situation and take steps on the matter. The Chief Minister has also asked you to keep the matter away from the limelight so that the coaching centres continue with their business and generate revenue for themselves as well as the state. Upon investigation, you find out that 2-3 of the most famous coaching institutions are run by political leaders of the ruling party. They are involved in false advertisements in order to lure students. They also create undue pressure on the students to perform. Also, there is an emerging black market for performance-enhancing drugs, which have become common among students.

Given the situation:

- (a) Highlight the stakeholders involved and discuss the associated ethical issues in the given case.
- (b) Given the situation, what will be your course of action?
- (c) Discuss the various reasons for increased cases of suicides among students, and suggest measures to address the issue in the long run.

- **Approach**

- State the facts of the case in the introduction.
- Bring out various stakeholders and ethical issues involved.
- Discuss the course of action that can be taken in this case.
- Highlight the reasons for increased cases of suicides among students.
- Suggest measures to address the issue in the long run and conclude accordingly.

- **Case Study 4**

- You have recently been posted as a Nodal Education Officer in one of the districts, where mass cheating in examinations is a regular phenomenon. Media reports have shown parents and relatives scaling school walls and buildings to pass answer sheets to students taking secondary school examinations in the district. Moreover, with the advent of new technological devices, cheating in examinations has become more sophisticated and exam rules are flouted openly. On investigation, it has come to your notice that these rackets are run by many school authorities, including exam invigilators who are mostly teachers, and they are hand in glove for profits. With a shortage of staff, invigilators threaten to go on mass strikes if any action is taken. Conducting the exams, cancelling them on account of cheating and having re-exams are a loss of time and money for the government and this vicious cycle goes on. As the Nodal Education Officer of the district, address the following questions:
 - (a) What are the ethical issues involved in the above case?
 - (b) How will you resolve the issues in the given case?
 - (c) What long-term strategy needs to be adopted to deal with the menace of cheating in various examinations?

- **Approach**

- Give a brief overview of the case.
- Discuss the various ethical issues involved in the case.
- State the measures that you would adopt to deal with the situation.
- Delineate a long-term strategy to be adopted to deal with the menace of cheating

- **Case Study 5 (11:00 am)**

- You are the Chairperson of the Staff Selection Commission of a state. Recently, an exam for recruitment to the position of sub-inspectors was conducted by the commission. But a video of some students using hi-tech devices like spy mics, and placing “solvers” to cheat in the exam by hiding Bluetooth devices in wigs, has been surfacing on the internet. Also, this is not an isolated incident; many instances of organized cheating scandals have shocked the state in recent years. Students are agitated and demanding cancellation of the exam and there is pressure on you to resign. However, your daughter also appeared in this exam and is confident of clearing it. There are many other students who have waited for this exam for a long time and are hopeful of clearing it with honest efforts. Whatever decision the Commission takes is bound to affect the career of a large number of candidates who appeared in the exam, including your own daughter.
 - (a) Highlight the ethical issues concerned in the case.
 - (b) Why is cheating in examinations prevalent in many states across India?
 - (c) What measures would you take to make sure that a similar situation does not arise in future?

- **Approach**

- Introduce the answer by briefly highlighting the facts of the case.
- Mention various ethical issues concerned in the above case.
- Discuss various reasons, which spurs/perpetuates cheating in the examination across states in India.
- Suggest measures to ensure that such instances do not arise in future.

- **Case Study 6**

- You are a single mother and work as a school counsellor for the psychological well-being of primary and secondary school children at a reputed school. Recently, you have found through your interactions that several students have been facing emotional trauma and mental health issues. Realising the gravity of the situation you want to discuss this with the school authorities and the board of trustees and come up with an advanced plan that can help parents get better involved. However, during the meeting, concerns were raised regarding your findings and the lack of supporting evidence is also cited by some. Moreover, senior members who are present express a sense of displeasure at what this might mean for the reputation of the school. You are thoroughly appalled with this approach of the school authorities, yet you are mired down in your own financial circumstances.

- On the basis of the above situation, answer the following:

- (a) Identify the most relevant stakeholders in the case.
- (b) What are the dilemmas in the case?
- (c) Discuss how stigmatisation of mental health issues can be addressed in schools.

- **Approach**

- Briefly explain the case study.
- Mention the most relevant stakeholders in the case study.
- Explain the ethical dilemmas involved in the case.
- Explain how mental health issues can be de-stigmatised in schools.
- Conclude briefly

- **Case Study 7 (11:30 am)**

- You, the chairperson of a State Public Service Commission (SPSC), come to know that there were instances of rampant cheating in a competitive exam conducted recently by the SPSC. Your daughter, who also appeared in this exam and is confident of clearing it corroborates the same. However, she denies engaging in any such activity herself. Whatever decision the Commission takes is bound to affect the career of a large number of candidates who appeared in the exam, including your own daughter.

- (a) Identify the different stakeholders and their interests in the case above.
- (b) Enumerate the options you have to handle the current situation. What will be your choice and why?
- (c) Suggest measures that you would take to make sure that a similar situation does not arise in future.

- **Approach**

- Identify the different stakeholders and their interests.
- Discuss the options available and give reasons for the most suitable option.
- Enumerate measures that can make sure that similar situations can be avoided in future.

- **Case Study 8**

- The promotion of harmful products like liquor, tobacco, etc. through mass media and advertisements has been banned in India. However, many companies are roping in big celebrities to promote these harmful products and brands through surrogate advertisements. In the disguise of another product, surrogate advertising is used to promote regulated products, like cigarettes and alcohol. There have been many debates on this issue, particularly in recent times, with many arguing that such advertisements should be banned altogether. In this context, answer the following:
 - (a) What are the ethical issues involved in surrogate advertising?
 - (b) Suggest steps that can be taken to address these types of advertisements in India.

- **Approach**

- Give a brief overview of the case.
- Discuss the ethical issues involved in it.
- Mention the steps to address surrogate advertisements in India.

- **Case Study 9**

- You are one of the producers of a television reality show. The show is very popular in the country and has a wide viewership among all sections of society and across various regions. However, a controversy has emerged wherein in the latest season of the show, a contestant from the film industry who has been accused of sexual harassment by many of his co-workers has been accepted as a participant. Several media houses have reported it and have criticized the show for giving a national platform to one of the country's most high-profile alleged perpetrators of female harassment. They term it as a denigration of those women who had bravely spoken up about their harassment. In a personal capacity, you also feel the same and are of the view that such a controversial person should not have been invited to the show. However, when you talk to other producers about it, they opine that the controversy is good for the show, as it generates free publicity. Also, they say that a person is not guilty unless the court of law declares so and the career of a person should not be sabotaged due to media trial. Moreover, the person in question is very close to the host of the show, who is an extremely popular public figure in the country. The show commands a huge fandom and the success of the show is also contingent on him. None of the producers want to antagonize the host.
 - In the given situation, answer the following questions:
 - (a) What are the ethical issues involved in the case?
 - (b) What are the options available to you and what will be your course of action?
 - (c) Discuss the positive and negative impacts of trial by media in such cases.

- **Approach**

- Briefly mention the facts of the case.
- Highlight the ethical issues pertaining to the case.
- Mention the various options available to you and give justification for the course of action that you will adopt.
- Bring out the pros and cons of media trials.
- Conclude accordingly.
- **Case Study 10**
- With the advent of 24x7 news and the prevalence of an array of news sources across the board, the media is omnipresent in nature. In this competitive environment, many media professionals who are overcome by deadlines, bottom-line imperatives, and corporate interests are losing sight of the ethical implications of their work. Further, there have been several cases of irresponsible reporting where the reportage has interfered with court proceedings, compromised delicate security situations or led to the spread of fake or unverified news. In this context, answer the following questions:
 - (a) Identify the ethical issues prevalent in the profession of media.
 - (b) How does unethical reporting and sensationalization of news impact the society?
 - (c) What can be done to strengthen the role of ethics in media?

- **Approach**

- Give a brief introduction about the case.
- Highlight ethical issues involved in the case.
- Highlight the impact of unethical reporting and sensationalization of news on Indian society.
- Suggest suitable steps to strengthen the role of ethics in media.

- **Case Study 10**

- You have joined as a reporter in a newly launched news channel. This choice was based on the assurance given by the channel's management that it would emerge as the voice of the downtrodden. While working on various assignments, you reported political incidents and covered national stories as instructed by the organization. But later you come to know that the channel was targeting particular individuals, rather than serving its stated mission. The reporters were also pressurised to go out of their way to accomplish the organisation's wishes. Given the economic slowdown, most reporters complied with these directives. Some who left the job also did not blow the whistle against the organisation fearing a lack of other employment opportunities. Recently, you have also been assigned a similar task by the organisation. In this context,
 - (a) Identify the various ethical issues involved in this case.
 - (b) You tried to convince the management to change its functioning and work as per its assurance given earlier but to no avail. In such a scenario,
 - consider the options given below:
 - 1. Follow the task given by the organisation.
 - 2. Work with other reporters in protest against the organisation's actions.
 - 3. Leave the job
 - 4. Blow the whistle on the organisation's work.
 - Evaluate the merits and demerits of each of these options and suggest your preferred course of action, giving reasons.

- **Approach**

- Discuss the ethical issues involved in this case.
- Evaluate each option by highlighting the merits and demerits.
- Suggest the preferred course of action, giving reasons.
- Conclude the answer by suggesting a long-term solution.

- **Case Study 11**

- India is one of the biggest fairness product markets in the world. A number of firms produce, advertise and sell fairness creams, marketed mainly as whitening products in the country. At the same time, there have been many debates on this issue, particularly in recent times, with many arguing that such advertisements should be banned altogether. In this context, answer the following:

- (a) What are the ethical issues involved in advertising fairness products?
- (b) Highlight the consequences of preference for light-skinned people in a society like India.
- (c) Do you think such issues are better tackled at the societal level rather than regulating advertisements through legal and administrative measures?

- **Approach**

- Briefly mention the facts of the case.
- Highlight the ethical issues pertaining to advertisements related to fairness products.
- Mention the consequences of preference for light-skinned people in a society like India.
- Discuss the advantages of social measures over legal and administrative measures to address the issue

TOPIC OF THE NEXT CLASS- DISCUSSION OF ETHICS CASE STUDY (TO CONTINUE)