

Ethics Case Study Class 06

9th August, 2024 at 9:00 AM

CASE STUDY 1- Corporate Governance and Ethics in Private Organizations (09:00 AM)

You are working as the Head of Ethics and Compliance in a big mobile manufacturing company that is known for its innovation and quality products. Both the customers and the shareholders are pleased with the performance of the company as they get value for their money and high returns on their investments respectively. Tin is a major component in the products manufactured by your company. It was recently brought to your attention that workers - many of them children - are working in unsafe conditions, digging tin out by hand in mines prone to landslides that could bury them alive. About 70% of the tin used in smartphones manufactured by the company comes from these more dangerous, small-scale mines. The company defends its practices by saying it only has so much control over monitoring and regulating its component sources. The justification advanced for its sourcing practices is that it is a complex process, with tens of thousands of miners selling tin, many of them through middlemen or third-party contractors.

Based on the above case, answer the following questions:

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

(b) Can customers of the company be expected to take into account such practices before buying any product of the company?

(c) If the management were to seek your opinion on the matter, what course of action would you suggest?

- **Answer:**

- **Introduction**

- The case study highlights ethical issues related to sourcing tin from dangerous mines involving child labour and poor working conditions.

- **(a) Ethical Issues**

- **Child Labor and Worker Exploitation:** Minors working in hazardous conditions.
- **Human Rights Violations:** Unsafe, inhumane working conditions.
- **Neglect of Ethical Sourcing:** The company prioritizes profit over ethical practices.
- **Lack of Transparency:** The company's failure to monitor and regulate its supply chain effectively.

- **(b) Customer Responsibility**

- **Informed Consumerism:** Customers should be aware of the ethical practices of companies.
- **Impact on Corporate Behavior:** Consumer demand for ethical products can pressure companies to adopt fair practices.

- **Sustainable Practices:** Growing trend of consumers favoring brands that prioritize environmental and social responsibility.

- **(c) Suggested Course of Action**

- **Option 1: Stop Sourcing Tin from Unethical Mines**

- **Merits:**

- Immediate action against unethical practices.
- Enhances the company's reputation.

- **Demerits:**

- Disrupts supply chain.
- Potential increase in costs.

- **Option 2: Holistic Supply Chain Reform**
- **Merits:**
 - Long-term solution addressing root causes.
 - Improves working conditions and community empowerment.
 - Enhances transparency and brand image.
- **Demerits:**
 - Requires time and resources.
 - Complex implementation process.
- **Preferred Option: Holistic Supply Chain Reform**
- **Mapping and Identification:** Conduct comprehensive supply chain mapping to identify issues.
- **Community Empowerment:** Engage stakeholders, use technology for awareness, and deploy CSR funds.
- **Transparency:** Publish efforts and progress in the annual report to maintain accountability and encourage industry-wide changes.
- **Conclusion:** A balanced approach involving thorough supply chain reform addresses both ethical concerns and sustains business operations.
- This strategy promotes long-term sustainability, enhances corporate reputation, and sets a precedent for ethical business practices.

CASE STUDY 2- International Relations & Ethics (09:23 AM)

There is an ongoing ethnic civil war in a neighbouring country. The conflict has caused massive displacement of people from the country. Ironically, the developed countries have closed off their borders to the refugees on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, resource competition, domestic politics etc. With countries sealing off their borders, the refugees are left in a vulnerable situation and many are taking illegal routes to enter your country. As a Senior Official of your country's Ministry of External Affairs, you have been involved in discussions with officials of other nations and are entrusted with the mandate to design a national policy to safely accommodate India-bound refugees. In this context, answer the following questions:

(a) Discuss the moral issues related to the rights of international refugees, especially those from conflict-torn regions.

(b) What recommendations would you suggest given the large influx of refugees in India?

- **Answer:**
- **Introduction:**
 - The ongoing ethnic civil war in a neighbouring country has caused a massive displacement of people.
 - Developed countries have closed their borders, leaving refugees vulnerable. As a Senior Official in India's Ministry of External Affairs, you must design a policy to accommodate these refugees.
- (a) Ethical Issues
 - National Interest vs. Humanism: Balancing national security and resource management with humanitarian responsibilities.
 - Human Rights Denial: Failing to protect human dignity and rights.
- **Compassion:** Viewing displacement through a humane lens, not just economically.
- **(b) Recommendations**
- **Short-term Measures:**
 1. Temporary Refuge: Collaborate with neighbouring countries for temporary settlements and influence affluent nations for financial support.
 2. Nodal Offices: Establish an integrated asylum agency with nodal offices for verification and resettlement.
 3. Civil Society Involvement: Engage NGOs and private sectors for humanitarian aid.

- **Long-term Measures:**
- **1. Institutional Mechanisms:** Work with international agencies for protection and assistance to prevent displacement.
- **2. Moral and Diplomatic Persuasion:** Promote reconciliation and stop persecution in conflict regions.
- **3. Global Multilateral Asylum Policy:** Advocate for a fair distribution of refugee responsibilities globally.
- **4. National Refugee Policy:** Develop a comprehensive policy based on dignity, safety, and fraternity.
- **5. Data Collection:** Improve data accuracy on illegal immigrants for better preparedness.
- **Conclusion**
- A balanced approach, involving both short-term and long-term measures, is crucial to addressing the refugee crisis effectively.
- Global collective action and responsibility are essential for a more adequate refugee protection system.

CASE STUDY 3- Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (09:37 AM)

Rupa, a young civil servant, rejoined work soon after giving birth to her child and without availing her full maternity leave. However, she began to bring her child into the office and started attending meetings with her child in her arms. Some of her photographs were also uploaded on social media. While some are hailing her as a young independent working mother, she is also being criticized by others on account of trivialising her official work and trying to paint a heroic

picture by fulfilling both her personal and professional duties.

In this context, answer the following questions:

(a) Do you think the act of the officer was justified? Should there be an overlap between the personal and professional duties of a civil servant?

(b) Does the work culture in India hinder working mothers from fulfilling their dual roles?

- **Answer**
- **Introduction:** Rupa, a young civil servant, rejoined work soon after childbirth, bringing her baby to the office. While some hail her as a model of balancing personal and professional duties, others criticize her for trivializing her official responsibilities.
- **(a) Ethical Justification**
- **Justification of the Officer's Actions:**
- **Role of Working Mothers:** Working mothers often need to balance multiple roles. Bringing her child to work helps Rupa manage her dual responsibilities.
- **International Examples:** Prominent figures, like the New Zealand Prime Minister and an Australian Senator, have done similar acts, promoting a broader discussion on working mothers' challenges.
- **Awareness Raising:** This action highlights issues faced by working women, especially from poorer sections, and can lead to societal change.
- **Positive Impact on Children:** Exposure to various environments can help children develop a broader perspective and understanding.
- **Inspiration for Other Women:** Rupa's actions can motivate other women to pursue careers without fearing the challenges of motherhood.

- **Overlap of Personal and Professional Duties:**
- Professionalism and Dedication: Civil servants are expected to prioritize their duties, but strict separation between personal and professional lives isn't always feasible.
- Consideration of Circumstances: Given Rupa's recent motherhood, some overlap is understandable and should be handled with empathy.
- **(b) Work Culture in India**
- Challenges for Working Mothers:
- Bias in Hiring: Questions about potential pregnancy during interviews deter the hiring of women.
- Limited Organizational Support: The lack of flexible workplace policies forces many women to consider quitting or taking pay cuts.
- Post-Partum Support: Few companies offer support for post-partum stress and depression.
- Glass Ceiling: Motherhood often hinders women from reaching leadership roles.
- Creche Facilities: Despite legal mandates, compliance is limited, especially in smaller companies.
- Informal Sector: Many women lack basic legal protections like maternity leave.
- **Conclusion:** While Rupa's actions are justified given her circumstances, the work culture in India often hinders working mothers from fulfilling their dual roles. Companies and policymakers must create supportive environments to help working mothers balance their personal and professional lives effectively.

Case Study 4: Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (10:03 AM)

You are a young upright person who has been newly appointed in the Anti-Corruption Bureau of your district. After joining, your office receives a tip-off from an anonymous person that an engineer working with the Municipal Corporation of the city has amassed wealth much beyond his known sources of income and is hand gloves in corrupt activities. Because the law is clear that anonymous complaints cannot be acted upon, you ignore the complaint. But in the next few weeks, you receive a few more anonymous complaints against the concerned engineer. You begin to make enquiries against the engineer and find that he is indeed a very corrupt officer. Sometime later, you make up your mind to conduct raids on his office and house, even though you have not received any official complaint in the prescribed format against him to date. What you unearth during the raids is shocking for you and your staff. You find not only vast amounts of unaccounted currency, much beyond the means of the engineer, but also gold, travel tickets to visits made abroad, reservations in five-star hotels, and a whole bunch of clinching evidence against influential politicians and bureaucrats - appointed in the past as well as present ones - in the district. However, soon after conducting the raid, you start receiving subtle messages from your superiors to drop the investigation in the interest of your long-term career and the safety and security of your loved ones. They also point out that you had not followed the rules stipulated for conducting the raid, and if the matter were to reach the courts, it would be disposed of in no time due to procedural lapses on your part.

Since you are an upright officer, you ignore these warnings and continue with your investigation. However, soon you are put on administrative leave on the grounds of flouting the rules. You also come to know that a few of your juniors have filed a complaint against you for being involved in corruption. They have also complained that you instructed them to extort money from not only the concerned engineer but also the politicians and bureaucrats against whom you unearthed evidence, to put a halt to the investigation.

Based on the above scenario, answer the following:

- (a) Identify the various stakeholders and the issues involved in the case.
- (b) What options do you have in the given situation?
- (c) Analyse the merits and demerits of each of these options.
- (d) Discuss your course of action, with proper justification.

- **Answer**
- **Introduction:** As a newly appointed officer in the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), I received multiple anonymous complaints about a corrupt municipal engineer. Despite the lack of official complaints, I conducted a raid, uncovering significant unaccounted wealth and incriminating evidence against influential figures. Post-raid, I faced pressure to drop the investigation and was placed on administrative leave with false allegations against me.
- **(a) Ethical Issues and Stakeholders**
- **Stakeholders:**
 - The engineer and associated corrupt officials.
 - My superiors and juniors in the ACB.
 - The public, whose trust in the system is at stake.
 - My family and myself.
- **Ethical Issues:**
 - Corruption: The engineer's extensive corruption undermines public trust and governance.
 - Criminal Nexus: Collusion between officials and influential figures compromises the rule of law.
 - Procedural Violations: Conducting the raid without an official complaint challenges the legitimacy of the evidence.
 - False Allegations: Allegations against me threaten my integrity and the investigation's credibility.
- **(b) Options Available**
 - 1. Drop the Investigation: Cease all actions against the engineer.
 - 2. Challenge Administrative Leave: Address allegations legally and seek reinstatement.
 - 3. Seek External Support: Involve higher authorities and media to escalate the matter.
- **(c) Analysis of Options**
- **1. Drop the Investigation:**
 - Merits: Protects my career and ensures immediate safety.
 - Demerits: Perpetuates corruption and undermines ACB's integrity.
- **2. Challenge Administrative Leave:**
 - Merits: Defends my integrity and allows continuation of the investigation.
 - Demerits: Risks prolonged legal battles and potential further obstruction.
- **3. Seek External Support:**
 - Merits: Increases chances of a fair investigation, exposes corruption, and garners public support.
 - Demerits: This may attract backlash and personal risks.
- **(d) Course of Action:** I would seek external support from higher authorities and media to escalate the matter.
- **Justification:**
 - Upholding Rule of Law: Ensures an impartial and lawful investigation, preventing cover-ups.
 - Protection from Pressure: Shields me and my family from undue influence and threats.
 - Exposing Higher-Level Corruption: Brings to light the involvement of influential figures, promoting accountability.
 - Maintaining Public Trust: Reinforces the integrity of the ACB and the justice system.
 - Mitigating Personal Risks: Public and media attention can provide protection and validate my actions.
- **Conclusion:** The anti-corruption efforts must balance procedural integrity with proactive measures against wrongdoing. By seeking external support, I aim to ensure a fair investigation, uphold the rule of law, and maintain public trust in the system. This approach addresses immediate threats while promoting long-term accountability and transparency.

CASE STUDY 5- Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (10:23 AM)

You are the principal of a college which has a long history of student politics. However, due to your personal belief, you are not in favour of conducting student elections and thus have kept the process of yearly student elections pending without any official announcement.

While you are mulling over the decision of not conducting elections, you get representation from some professors as well as students who criticize the activities of student unions as obstructive to the academic environment of the college. Sometime later, student leaders also come to talk to you regarding the conduct of elections, and you tell them about the representation received by you against allowing student elections. You further tell them that you are contemplating suspending all activities related to student politics on the campus. On hearing this, student leaders become aggressive and start sloganeering and destroying college property. In this

context, answer the following questions:

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

(b) How can you separate your personal ethics from professional ethics?

(c) How would you deal with this situation?

- **Answer**

- **Introduction:** As the principal of a college with a history of student politics, I am personally against conducting student elections. Despite my stance, there has been pressure from professors and students against student unions, and some student leaders are demanding elections.

- The situation escalated with aggressive protests and damage to college property.

- **(a) Issues Involved**

- Student Participation: Balancing the democratic involvement of students with academic integrity.

- Personal Belief vs Professional Ethics: My personal bias against student politics conflicts with the professional responsibility to uphold college traditions.

- Pending Elections: Addressing the delay in student elections and the growing unrest.

- Destruction of Property: Managing the fallout from the aggressive actions of student leaders.

- **(b) Separating Personal and Professional Ethics**

- Emotional Intelligence: Recognize and manage my biases to ensure impartial decision-making.

- Objectivity: Base decisions on evidence and logical reasoning, not personal beliefs.

- Consultation: Seek input from a broad range of stakeholders, including students and faculty.

- Committee Appointment: Delegate the decision to a neutral committee to provide an unbiased report.

- Transparency: Communicate openly about my personal views and the rationale behind them.

- Adherence to Rules: Follow the established rules and regulations of the college strictly.

- **(c) Course of Action**
- 1. Address Immediate Issues:
 - Call law enforcement to stop further damage and ensure campus safety.
 - Take legal action against those responsible for property destruction.
- 2. Ensure Impartiality:
 - Implement measures to separate personal beliefs from professional duties as outlined above.
- 3. Engage Stakeholders:
 - Meet with those against student politics to understand their concerns.
 - Convene with student leaders to discuss the importance and impact of student politics.
- 4. Appoint a Committee:
 - Form a neutral committee to study the matter in detail and provide recommendations.
- 5. Develop Alternatives:
 - If the committee advises against student elections, propose alternative ways for student participation in college administration.
- **Conclusion:** A balanced approach is essential to uphold democratic values in student politics while ensuring that academic integrity and campus safety are maintained. By involving all stakeholders and following an impartial process, a fair and constructive resolution can be achieved.

Case Study 6- Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (10:51 AM)

You are an Airworthiness Officer posted with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, tasked to conduct the safety audit of a major airline in the country. During the recent audit, you find that some of the aeroplanes belonging to the airline do not fully meet a few of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards. The issues are minor, mainly about some incomplete aircraft maintenance logs and safety rules related to the training of the crew. The airline belongs to a very influential business conglomerate with close ties to all major national political parties and has a long history of ethical business practices. The point person appointed by the airline to communicate with you has assured you that everything will be in order in a couple of months. Your senior in the department has also indicated that it is best not to mention such minor issues in the report, particularly given the image of the business group involved and the trust it enjoys. He also reiterates the assurance given by the airline to address these issues at the earliest in a time-bound manner. However, you are aware that airline safety norms are paramount and every other consideration is secondary to the safety of the crew and passengers.

As a public servant appointed to uphold public trust, answer the following:

- Bring out the dilemmas that you face, elaborating on the competing values in the given situation.
- What are the options available to you? Discuss the merits and demerits of each. Which of these will you choose and why?

Answer

- **Introduction:** As an Airworthiness Officer with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, I am tasked with auditing a major airline. Despite the airline's strong reputation, I found minor safety standard violations. My superior suggests ignoring these issues, but I recognize the paramount importance of safety and public trust.
- **(a) Dilemmas and Competing Values**
- **Safety vs. Reputation:** Ensuring passenger safety versus maintaining the airline's reputable image.
- **Professional Duty vs. Hierarchical Pressure:** Adhering to safety standards against the advice of superiors.
- **Transparency vs. Assurance:** Following international safety commitments versus trusting the airline's assurances.

- **(b) Options Evaluation**
- **1. Ignoring Minor Issues on Assurance**
- Merits:
 - Avoids conflict with influential entities.
 - May favour career growth.
- Demerits:
 - Risk to passenger safety.
 - Potential future accountability.
 - Erodes public trust in aviation safety.
- **2. Following Senior's Instructions**
- Merits:
 - Shares responsibility with higher-ups.
 - Provides guidance in complex decisions.
- Demerits:
 - Compromises professional integrity.
 - Fails to address safety issues adequately.
 - Damages personal reputation for accountability.
- **3. Reporting All Issues**
- Merits:
 - Upholds public safety and trust.
 - Promotes transparency and accountability.
 - Sets a strong precedent for industry standards.
- Demerits:
 - Potential backlash from influential parties.
 - May hinder career progression.
 - Faces possible departmental harassment.
- **(c) Course of Action: I would choose to report all issues.**
- **Justification:**
 - Public Safety: Ensuring passenger safety is non-negotiable.
 - Integrity: Upholding ethical standards is crucial for public trust.
 - Transparency: Promotes long-term credibility for the airline and the aviation sector.
- **Action Plan:**
 - 1. Document Findings: Prepare a detailed report of all safety violations.
 - 2. Communicate: Inform the airline and provide a timeline for compliance.
 - 3. Seek Written Confirmation: Request written orders from superiors if pressured to alter the report.
 - 4. Escalate if Needed: If necessary, escalate the issue to higher authorities or media to ensure accountability.
- **Conclusion:** This balanced approach ensures that safety standards are upheld while maintaining professional integrity and transparency.

Case Study 7- Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (11:12 AM)

There was an incident at a company wherein a fire broke out and led to several casualties. During the preliminary inquiry, one of the employees and bystander witnesses specified that the company had taken all the safety measures and the management was not at fault. During litigation, the same employee was identified as a witness and his deposition was to be taken. The issue is now in the court. You are a Senior Manager of the company and accompanying the said employee to the court for the deposition.

On the way the employee tells you that he had lied during the inquiry; and that the truth was worse for the company than he had stated previously.

(a) Identify the various ethical issues you would face in this situation.

(b) What would you suggest the employee to do? Give reasons for your suggestions.

Answer

- **Introduction:** In this case, an employee initially lied during a preliminary inquiry about a fire incident at a company, absolving the management of blame. Before his court deposition, he admits to the Senior Manager that he lied, revealing a more damaging truth for the company.
- **(a) Ethical Issues**
 - 1. Truth vs. Loyalty: Balancing the employee's duty to tell the truth against loyalty to the company.
 - 2. Justice vs. Reputation: Ensuring justice for the casualties and affected families versus protecting the company's reputation.
 - 3. Personal vs. Professional Ethics: The manager's internal conflict between personal ethics of honesty and professional duty to the company.
 - 4. Credibility of Testimony: The reliability of the employee's testimony and its impact on the case.
- **(b) Suggestions to Employee**
 - 1. Tell the Truth:
 - Merits: Ensures justice, maintains personal integrity, and upholds legal and ethical standards.
 - Demerits: This may harm the company's reputation and lead to legal consequences.
 - 2. Withdraw from Testimony:
 - Merits: Prevents potential harm from inconsistent testimony, and protects the employee from perjury.
 - Demerits: This may hinder the court's ability to uncover the full truth.
 - 3. Assess Credibility:
 - Merits: Ensures the reliability of evidence presented in court.
 - Demerits: Time-consuming and may complicate the legal process.
- **Course of Action**
 - 1. Advise the Employee to Tell the Truth:
 - Rationale: Upholds justice and personal integrity. Misleading testimony can obstruct justice and lead to wrongful outcomes.
 - 2. Prepare the Employee:
 - Calm the employee and ensure he understands the importance of truthful testimony.
 - 3. Consult Legal Counsel:
 - Assess the impact of the employee's revised statement and prepare for potential legal consequences.
 - 4. Report to Senior Management:
 - Inform senior management about the situation and recommend transparent handling of the issue.
- **Conclusion:** In this situation, prioritizing truth and justice over the company's immediate reputation is essential. Advising the employee to tell the truth ensures integrity and trust in the judicial process, aligning with ethical and legal responsibilities.

Case Study 8 Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (11:24 AM)

You have recently been posted as a District Development Officer in a traditionally rural area that has seen rapid economic development in the past few years. You notice that there is a huge disparity between the number of male and female children in the area. When you go to the hospital and check the birth registry, you realise that registered newborn babies are mostly males. On further investigation, you notice a similar pattern in the village primary school, which has more male students than females. When you raise the issue with your colleagues, they ignore it and carry on with their work. You suspect that the practice of female foeticide may be entrenched in the area as you had read about the issue in the context of this state while studying for the Civil Services Examination. It seems to you that respected members of the community like doctors, politicians and government officials have chosen to ignore the issue, given the prevalence of patriarchy and the mind-set of voters in the area. Thus, despite rapid economic development, the preference for male children continues to persist.

Based on the information above, answer the following:

(a) Do you have any ethical duty in this scenario? Justify your views.

(b) What would be your next steps and why?

- **Answer**

- **Introduction**

- The case study involves the issue of gender disparity and potential female foeticide in a rapidly developing rural area, where societal norms still favour male children.

- **(a) Ethical Duty**

- As a District Development Officer, I have both a professional and moral duty to address this issue:
- Professional Duty: Ensuring the implementation of laws like the PCPNDT Act and promoting gender equality through government programs.
- Moral Duty: Addressing the systemic discrimination against female children and promoting social justice and human rights.

- **(b) Next Steps**

- **Short-term measures:**

- 1. Immediate Investigation: Conduct groundwork research and gather data on birth and death rates for the last 10 years to identify patterns of gender disparity.
- 2. Engage ASHA Workers: Speak with ASHA workers to gather information about birth records and infant health, as they have direct access to families and can provide crucial insights.
- 3. Involve Law Enforcement: Request police to investigate potential violations of the PCPNDT Act to ensure legal accountability and prevent future violations.
- 4. Monitor Birth Registries: Ensure accurate and regular updates of birth records by hospital staff to prevent manipulation and ensure transparency.
- 5. Verify Well-being: Conduct physical verification of the well-being of female children, especially those under the age of 12 months, with the help of
- ASHA workers and NGOs to ensure their safety and health.

- **Long-term measures:**

- 1. Utilize Resources Effectively: Ensure efficient and target-based utilization of resources available for women and girl children's welfare to address social constraints in their education and bridge the gender gap.
- 2. Awareness Campaigns: Use local NGOs, media, and civil society to create awareness about the issue of female foeticide and its consequences to change societal attitudes and promote the value of female children.
- 3. Educational Programs: Implement programs in local schools and communities to educate about gender equality, instilling the importance of gender equality from a young age.
- 4. Support Role Models: Engage local male and female role models to advocate for gender equality, providing positive examples and influencing public perception.
- Conclusion: Addressing the issue of female foeticide and gender disparity requires a multi-faceted approach involving immediate investigation, legal enforcement, and long-term societal change. As a public official, I must ensure justice and promote gender equality in the community.

CASE STUDY 9: Ethical Dilemmas & Personal Integrity (11:39 AM)

Being the senior-most IAS officer, you are in line to be promoted to Chief Secretary after the incumbent retires in the next two months. Currently, you are heading the Public Works Department (PWD) and a road construction project worth crores has been opened for tender. A Company X belonging to the son-in-law of the incumbent Chief Minister has also applied for the same. The director in charge of the screening process, a young IAS officer, has reported that company Y and the state PSU have submitted the best bids. Both you and the director are facing political pressure to favour company X. The young IAS officer may be demoralised if you give in to the pressure. But if you don't give in then he may be transferred and your chances of promotion may also suffer. In light of the situation, answer the following:

(a) Discuss the ethical issues faced by you in the given case.

(b) What are the options available to you? Which of these options will you choose? Justify your stand with logical arguments.

- **Answer:**
- **Introduction:** In India, the process of awarding public contracts and tenders is guided by stringent rules to ensure transparency and fairness. The given case presents a complex scenario where political pressures and ethical dilemmas intersect with the responsibilities of a senior IAS officer in charge of overseeing a major road construction project.
- **(a) Ethical Issues Faced:**
 - 1. Political Pressure: Misuse of political authority to influence the tender process.
 - 2. Corruption and Nepotism: Favoring a company due to its political connections undermines fairness.
 - 3. Leadership and Integrity: Upholding ethical values and setting a correct example for the young IAS officer.
 - 4. Conflict of Interest: Balancing personal career advancement with public duty and integrity.
 - 5. Public Trust: Ensuring the tender process remains transparent and in the public interest.
- **(b) Options Available:**
 - 1. Debar Company X:
 - Merits: Upholds fairness and deters unethical practices.
 - Demerits: Requires concrete proof of wrongdoing; high career risk.
 - 2. Communicate with the Chief Minister:
 - Merits: Open communication could clarify misunderstandings.
 - Demerits: Likely futile as the CM is likely aware; could backfire.
 - 3. Award Contract to Best Bidder (Company Y or PSU):
 - Merits: Ensures integrity, transparency, and accountability; upholds public trust.
 - Demerits: Potential transfer or career setbacks due to political backlash.
 - Chosen Option: I would choose the third option: Award the contract to the best bidder (Company Y or PSU). This decision is based on the following reasons:
 - Integrity and Duty: As a senior IAS officer, my primary responsibility is to uphold the principles of fairness and transparency, ensuring the tender process is free from undue influence.
 - Long-term Impact: Setting a precedent for ethical decision-making will positively impact the work culture and future governance.
 - Public Interest: Ensuring the best bidder wins promotes efficient use of public funds and reinforces public trust in the administration.
- **Conclusion:** By taking this stand, I demonstrate commitment to public service values and provide a strong example to the young IAS officer, preparing him to handle similar pressures in his career. This decision, although risky, aligns with the core values of civil service and upholds the integrity of the office.

Case Study 10: Ethics in Administration & Governance (11:50 AM)

The Right to Information (RTI) Act is one of the most important reforms brought by the government. You have recently been transferred as the Public Information Officer (PIO) in the irrigation department of a district. While inspecting the RTI applications, you find that many of these applications relate to information on the recruitment of staff in your department. Your juniors point out that all of these have been filed by an aspiring local politician who may be trying to create an issue related to irregularities in recruitment in the department. The department fears that he is filing RTI applications for political gains in the upcoming state elections.

In this context, answer the following questions:

(a) Identify the stakeholders and the issues involved in the case.

(b) What measures will you take to handle the situation?

- **Introduction:** The given case involves a local politician filing multiple RTI applications related to recruitment in the irrigation department, raising concerns about the potential misuse of the RTI Act for political gains.

- **(a) Stakeholders and Issues**

- **Stakeholders:**

- 1. Public Information Officer (PIO): Responsible for responding to RTI queries.
- 2. Local Politician: Filing RTI applications.
- 3. Department Staff: Involved in the recruitment process.
- 4. Job Applicants: Affected by any irregularities in recruitment.
- 5. General Public: Trust in government processes at stake.

- **Issues:**

- 1. Potential Negative Propaganda: RTIs may be used to create unwarranted issues.
- 2. Personal Political Gains: Politicians may exploit the information for electoral advantage.
- 3. Government Disruption: Multiple RTIs can hinder departmental efficiency.
- 4. Possible Recruitment Irregularities: Need to ensure no malpractice occurred

- **(b) Measures to Handle the Situation**

- 1. Detailed Recruitment Analysis:

- Verify the recruitment process for any irregularities.
- Take corrective actions if discrepancies are found.

- 2. Proactive Transparency:

- Publish all recruitment-related information on the department's website.
- This preempts RTI queries by making information publicly accessible.

- 3. Engage with the Politician:

- Request the politician to refrain from negative propaganda.
- Encourage constructive dialogue to address genuine issues.

- 4. Improve RTI Handling:

- Implement ICT tools for efficient processing and tracking of RTI applications.
- Categorize and respond to similar RTI queries collectively.

- 5. Regulate Frivolous RTIs:

- Suggest higher fees for frequent RTI applicants.
- Introduce affidavits for applicants known to file motivated RTIs.

- **Conclusion:** To uphold the integrity of the RTI process while ensuring departmental efficiency, a balance must be struck between transparency and safeguarding against misuse. Implementing proactive measures and maintaining open communication channels will help in addressing both the ethical and operational challenges in this scenario.

Topic for the next class: Case Studies (Continued)