

Ethics Case Study Class 08

10th August, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Note- Please refer to the uploaded handout for more details.

ETHICS CASE STUDY 1 (09:02 AM)

- You are posted as Superintendent of Police (SP) in a district, which has a bustling market in the district headquarters with a high footfall. The area has traditionally been occupied by street vendors and hawkers. They form an intrinsic part of the market system in the area and derive their livelihood from it. Recently, you got reports that the policemen posted in the area harass the hawkers and also extort 'hafta' – a weekly bribe - from them despite complying with the laws. It has been brought to your notice that while those who comply with this arrangement are allowed to carry on with their daily operations, those who do not are being evicted from the market area. In the process of eviction, they are even physically assaulted and their saleable items are often confiscated and destroyed. As a result, some street vendors have been staging protests against the local administration in the market and have blocked the normal market passage. They have also threatened to intensify their protest over a period of time. The local police, however, has been in denial of any such wrong doings and argue that they are merely removing illegal encroachments, which were causing traffic jam in the area. In this situation, answer the following:
(a) Mention the stakeholders and ethical issues involved in the case.
(b) As the Superintendent of Police, what course of action would you adopt to diffuse the tensions in the area?

Also, suggest some policy recommendations, which will help resolve the issues in the long term.

- **Approach**
- In the introduction, briefly discuss the issues given in the case.
- Mention the stakeholders and ethical issues of the case.
- Highlight the course of action to be taken to diffuse the tension in the area.
- Suggest policy measures that can be taken to resolve the issues in the long term.

CASE STUDY 2 (09:26 AM)

- Tobacco is one of the major commercial crops cultivated in a district, where you have been posted as the District Magistrate. But being a signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, it is obligatory upon India to phase out tobacco cultivation. The state government had constituted a committee, which has recently submitted a report to gradually phase out its cultivation and rehabilitate farmers who shift to alternative crops. However, fearing loss of livelihood, farmers have blocked the railway lines, causing disruption at various places. They are demanding written assurance from the state government that tobacco cultivation will be allowed to continue.
- (a) What are the ethical and administrative issues involved in this matter?
- (b) What are the options available to you as the District Magistrate?
- (c) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option, which you would adopt, giving reasons.
- **Approach**
- Identify ethical issues and administrative issues involved in the case.
- Mention the options available to you.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option and indicate which action would take providing justification for the same.

CASE STUDY 3 (09:45 AM)

- You have recently been posted as a District Labour Officer in a state, which derives a substantial revenue from tourism. You come to know that a big hotel in the area has not been paying wages as per the Minimum Wages Act. The hotel owner is a powerful local leader having contacts with many influential officials of the state. You have the power to take suo-moto cognizance of such violations and accordingly you initiate a preliminary enquiry into the matter. However, no worker is willing to come forward to lodge a formal complaint because they fear loss of employment. Meanwhile, your action has attracted notice of the higher authorities, and you are advised to drop the matter altogether. You are deeply concerned about the situation as it involves not only a violation of the Minimum Wages Act but also denial of basic human rights of the worker.
- (a) Identify the issues involved in the given case.
- (b) Consider the options given below:
 1. Follow the informal advice of the higher authorities.
 2. Convince the owner of the hotel to take note of these violations and take appropriate remedial measures.
 3. Submit a detailed report on the matter highlighting violations of workers' rights and seek formal directions from the competent authority.
 4. Serve a notice to the hotel owner and initiate action as per your powers under the Minimum Wages Act.
- Evaluate the merits and demerits of each of these options and suggest your preferred course of action, giving reasons.
- **Approach**
- Giving a brief introduction of the case study, and highlight the issues involved in it.
- Analyse the merits and demerits of the given options
- Give the final course of action in this case and justify it with appropriate reasons

CASE STUDY 4 (10:05 AM)

- A state has been struck with floods and there is immense anger and frustration among people regarding delay in flood relief measures. A reason for the anger is that immediate relief is directed towards localities where the local MLA and MP (belonging to the ruling party) reside. There have been incidents where people have physically attacked the relief personnel. It is winter and there is threat of adverse weather in the coming week. You have been brought in as the new District collector as the previous one was transferred due to public pressure on the political leadership. Your senior has directed you to give special attention towards the same locality where the loyal voters of the MLA and MP live.
- In this background –
 1. Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.
 2. Also suggest the right course of action in the given situation.
- **Approach**
- Briefly introduce the situation highlighting the flood and the ensuing administrative and ethical challenges.
- Identify the ethical issues involved and discuss their implications.
- Suggest the course of action with a justification, considering the ethical principles and practical outcomes.
- Conclude accordingly.

CASE STUDY 5 (10:20 AM)

- You have been working in a well-known business consultancy company for nearly 15 years and have been promoted to a senior executive level. You have a junior colleague, named Meera, whom you have been mentoring from time to time. The time and effort she has invested in the company along with your guidance has led her to rapidly grow professionally in the organisation. The work environment has also been conducive for her growth. Meanwhile, Meera's mother has been ill and requiring medical attention for the past few years. Her medical bills have been increasing rapidly over time.

Recently, Meera encountered an uncomfortable experience of sexual advances at the hands of your immediate boss, which she reported to Human Resources Department (HRD) of the company instantly. The concerned boss has been instrumental in the success of the company and is also well-connected within the company and beyond. He has indirectly offered a large amount for the settlement of this issue to Meera. If Meera accepts his offer, she will have to sign a non-disclosure agreement that restricts her from re-opening the issue or even discussing about it. She came to know that the concerned boss has been involved in similar acts earlier as well. Given his position in the company and his connections, Meera feels that he could be a threat to her career in the future. She is also in dire need of money.

- In the given circumstances, address the following:
 - (a) Identify the main stakeholders involved in this case.
 - (b) Highlight the issues related to integrity and ethics in the case above.
 - (c) What are the various options available to Meera? Which option should she choose and why?

- **Approach**

- Briefly introduce the case study.
- Identify the stakeholders and mention their relevance to the case study.
- Discuss the ethical issues and questions of integrity involved in the case.
- Outline the options available to Meera and discuss the option she should choose and give reasons for the same

CASE STUDY 6 (10:50 AM)

- You are the Managing Director of a successful marketing company in India that has several high profile national and international clients. The company makes every effort to hire people from all social and religious backgrounds in order to promote diversity. One day, an employee Miss 'A' who was recently hired informs you that she often feels discriminated in the company due to the fact that she is a transgender woman. She points out that senior male employees are uncomfortable in her presence. Further, other employees want to discuss her personal life when she has no intention of doing so. She also states that she has been excluded from some departmental meetings without being given a valid reason. Due to these instances, she feels harassed and wants you to either correct the situation immediately or accept her resignation. If she resigns and the information becomes public, the image of the company will be maligned. However, you know it is difficult to bring about an immediate change in the attitude of your employees, especially senior members, as such changes require time.
- In this context:
 - (a) Highlight the ethical issues in this situation.
 - (b) As a Managing Director, what are the options available to you?
 - (c) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons

- **Approach**
- Introduce briefly with the crux of the case.
- Highlight the ethical issues involved in the situation.
- As a Managing Director, bring out and assess the options you have in this situation.
- State your preferred course of action in the situation and substantiate it with reasons.
- Conclude accordingly.

CASE STUDY 7(11:04 AM)

- You are a young IAS officer and have recently joined as a Sub-Divisional Magistrate in a district, which has been declared 'open defecation free'. However, you get information that some villages in your sub-division are still continuing the practice of open defecation out of habit despite availability of toilets. Your colleagues in the district administration confirm that the information is true. You call the village headmen of these villages and tell them to persuade their respective villagers to stop open defecation. But, they express their unwillingness and inability to fully stop this practice, as in some cases they themselves consider it healthy to defecate in the open. You discuss this matter with the District Magistrate who forbids you from taking any official action, as this may cause the 'open defecation free' status given to the district to be withdrawn.
- As a young and dynamic officer, answer the following:
 - (a) Why do people continue to practice open defecation even when they have access to toilets?
 - (b) What are the options available to you as the Sub-Divisional Magistrate in this case? Highlight the merits and demerits of each option.
 - (c) What will be your course of action?

- **Approach**
- Briefly write about the crux of the case study at hand.
- Highlight the reasons behind continuation of the practice of open defecation.
- Mention the options available to you along with their merits and demerits.
- Mention a course of action that you would take.
- Conclude accordingly.

CASE STUDY 8(11:23 AM)

- In order to tackle climate change, green energy is touted as one of the best solutions. Countries are now replacing coal with hydroelectric power, fossil fuels with solar energy, petrol and diesel cars with electric vehicles (EVs). EVs are being pitched as a cleaner, greener and sustainable alternative. Electric cars use batteries, and lithium and cobalt are rare metals that make up these batteries. The cobalt in the battery keeps it stable and allows it to operate safely. Cobalt is used in about half of the electric cars, which is about four to 30 kilograms per battery. You are the District Magistrate of a district where cobalt is found in abundance. On a visit to one such cobalt site, you find out that children are employed in the mines and these children flirt with death daily. They enter vertical tunnels that are too narrow for adults to enter and dig for cobalt under inhumane conditions in a furnace-like environment. Although they sometimes use shovels, they typically dig with their bare hands. They are not provided with masks, gloves, work clothes and are only provided with 20 minutes of oxygen at a time. Yet, these young children dig for hours. Upon digging the rock, they crush it, wash it and then take their finds to the market in order to sell them.
- In this regard, answer the following questions:
 - (a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.
 - (b) Despite the legal and institutional measures, discuss the reasons behind the prevalence of child labour in India.
 - (c) In context of the given situation, what steps will you take to address the issue of child labour in the district?

- **Approach**

- Briefly introduce the case and mention its key stakeholders.
- Discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.
- Give reasons for the prevalence of child labour in India and mention the institutional steps taken to combat it.
- Mention the short-term and long-term solutions for tackling such a situation.
- Conclude accordingly.

CASE STUDY 9(11:39 AM)

- You have recently joined as the Chief Executive Officer of the Water Supply and Sewerage Board in a metropolitan city of India. Recently, there was an incident where two poor people died while undertaking hazardous cleaning of sewers in a posh neighbourhood, housing top corporate honchos of the city. The preliminary report found that a few residents in the said neighbourhood employed private workers to clean the sewers without the knowledge of the local city administration. A complaint for causing death by negligence has been registered against the concerned residents as well as the private contractor through whom these poor people were employed to carry out the task. The complaint has come as a shock to the residents of the neighbourhood, most of whom never had a brush with the law before. During the investigation, the residents of the neighbourhood complained that the local administration has not been cleaning sewers for a long time, forcing them to hire private workers. You also come to know that there has been confusion over the maintenance works in the city administration, with no resolution till date. The city administration, as a whole, has also been facing a shortage of funds to build the requisite infrastructure and provide protective gears to carry out the sewage cleaning work.
- In the meantime, the family members of the deceased have started pressurising the government for compensation and there has also been a media blitzkrieg blaming the apathy of the city administration for the incident and pressure to withdraw the complaints registered against the high profile residents of the neighbourhood.
- In light of the above situation, answer the following questions:
- (a) Identify the stakeholders involved in the case along with the associated issues.
- (b) Evaluate the options that are available to you in the given case. Which of these options will you choose and why?
- (c) What will be the long-term measures you will take to prevent such an incident from occurring in the future?

- **Approach**

- Briefly state the crux of the given case study.
- Identify the stakeholders along with the issues associated with them.
- Evaluate the options available and state your preferred option along with the reasons.
- Provide some long-term measures to prevent such instances from happening in the future

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