

## Case Studies

Q8. A landslide occurred in the middle of the night on 20th July, 2023 in a remote mountain hamlet, approximately 60kilometers from Uttarkashi. The landslide was caused by torrential rains and has resulted in large-scale destruction of property and life. You, as district magistrate of the area, have rushed to the spot with a team of doctors, NGOs, media and police along with numerous support staff to oversee the rescue operations.

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

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

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

**(b) Evaluate the options available to you, being District Magistrate of the area.**

### Introduction

This case study is a classic example of conflict of interest of a civil servant's moral duty of saving an individual's life at the same time following professional ethics being a physician.

#### **(a) Ethical issues involved in the case**

- Professional conduct vs empathy
- Duty vs morality
- Human life vs legal procedures
- Conflict of values: Objectivity vs Compassion
- Conflicting professional duties (as a district magistrate and as a physician)
- Team disagreement

(b) **Different options available being a district magistrate**

**Allow the transfusion of blood and not penalise the doctors.**

**Pros**

- Putting the worth of life first while displaying humanity, empathy, and compassion.
- Applying the principles given in training, such as giving human service and saving lives of people a true priority
- Using the teleological approach to ethics (ethical behaviour is that which leads to good ends)
- optimum use of the blood donors' available resources

**Cons**

- Leaving the physician's professional ethics behind
- circumventing the law and established protocol
- compromising one's own and others' professional principles

**Start the blood transfusion process with the resources you have on hand, and in the interim, make arrangements for blood from neighboring blood banks or request a mobile blood bank van to come to the scene.**

**Pros**

- Showing qualities of both professional ethics as well as legal duty.
- Showcase the ability of quick decision making to save human life.
- following the legal procedure of blood transfusion and encouraging the volunteers to donate blood through proper channels.

**Cons**

- Delay in blood transfusion process may be fatal for both the pregnant lady and unborn.
- The process of arranging blood from nearby blood banks may temporarily disturb the rescue efforts (against utilitarian approach of greatest good of greatest number)

**Start the procedure with available resources and refer the patient to nearby district hospital in an ambulance**

**Pros**

- Proper medical facilities are required for a newborn
- More focus on rescue operation

### **Cons**

- Referring the patient in such a critical condition involves substantial risk
- The most appropriate course of action in this situation would be option 2 as available resources are utilised in an optimum manner along with following set procedures.
- Calling the blood bank mobile van to the rescue spot will also help in treating the injured and landslide-affected people.

### **Conclusion**

The secret in such circumstances is to strike a compromise between the moral imperatives of acting righteously to save lives and the need to comply with legal and regulatory regulations. The government workers require a blend of emotional intelligence and quick response time for this.

Q9. At 9 pm on Saturday evening, Rashika, a Joint Secretary, was still engrossed in her work in her office. Her husband, Vikram, is an executive in an MNC and frequently out of town in connection with his work. Their two children aged 5 and 3 are looked after by their domestic helper. At 9:30 pm her superior, Mr. Suresh calls her and asks her to prepare a detailed note on an important matter to be discussed in a meeting in the Ministry. She realises, that she will have to work on Sunday to finish the additional task given by her superior.

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

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

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

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

## **Introduction**

The case study presents a moral dilemma faced by Rashika, a Joint Secretary, torn between her demanding professional duties and her responsibilities as a wife and mother. This ethical conundrum prompts a reflection on work ethics, societal obligations, and the need for a balanced work-life approach.

## **Body**

### **a) The ethical issues involved in the case**

- Personal Life vs. professional Life balance
- Socialization of the Children getting affected
- Gender Justice as her husband is often out of the city but she has to handle the double burden
- Work Culture at the office that demands a compromise of the quality time spent with the family.
- Social constructs as household responsibilities are considered as the exclusive domain of the women.
- Mental health of the working women as they feel incompleteness at both levels (personal and professional), as felt by Rashika.

### **b) Laws that have been enacted by the Government with respect to providing a healthy, safe and equitable working environment for women.**

- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 2017)
- The Prohibition of Sexual Harassment of women at Workplace Act, 2013
- The Factories Act, 1948

### **c) Suggestions I would make to mitigate such working conditions**

#### **Suggestions to Husband**

- To share responsibilities towards upbringing of children.
- To ask if he can manage work from home in case a woman has to work on holidays.

#### **Suggestions to Seniors**

- To provide compensation if an employee is working on holidays.
- Provide flexible working hours to employees so that they can manage work-life balance.

- To allow children at the workplace in exceptional circumstances.
- To avoid gender discriminatory workload distribution.

### **Suggestions to Rashika**

- It is of utmost importance to keep motivated towards professional responsibilities.
- Very few people get an opportunity to serve at the highest level of the organisation, it is our duty to do justice to our responsibilities.
- Have a conversation with family members, husband to get out of the dilemma of the personal life Vs Professional responsibilities.

### **Conclusion**

It is important to provide a conducive environment to women at both family and official level so that they can achieve new heights in their professional capacity without feeling delineated from the family responsibilities.

Q10. Vinod is an honest and sincere IAS officer. Recently, he has taken over as Managing Director of the State Road Transport Corporation, his sixth transfer in the past three years. His peers acknowledge his vast knowledge, affability and uprightness.

The Chairman of the State Road Transport Corporation is a powerful politician and is very close to the Chief Minister. Vinod comes to know about many alleged irregularities of the Corporation and the high-handedness of the Chairman in financial matters. A Board Member of the Corporation belonging to the Opposition Party meets Vinod and hands over a few documents along with a video recording in which the Chairman appears to be demanding bribes for placing a huge order for the supply of QMR tyres. Vinod recollects the Chairman expediting clearing of pending bills of QMR tyres.

Vinod confronts the Board Member as to why he is shying away from exposing the Chairman with the so-called solid proof he has with him. The member informs him that the Chairman refuses to yield to his threats. He adds that Vinod may earn recognition and public support if he himself exposes the Chairman. Further, he tells Vinod that once his party comes to power, Vinod's professional growth will be assured. Vinod is aware that he may be penalized if he exposes the Chairman and may further be transferred to a distant place. He knows that the Opposition Party stands a better chance of coming to power in the forthcoming elections. However, he also realizes that the Board Member is trying to use him for his own political gains.

- (a) As a conscientious civil servant, evaluate the options available to Vinod.
- (b) In the light of the above case, comment upon the ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy.

### **Answer:**

In this case, options available to Vinod include-

**Option (1): Expose/Take action against the Chairman based on the video recording provided by the Board Member.**

**Pros:**

- It might be in the best interests of the Corporation if the corruption gets proved.
- When the new political party gets into power, he might be favoured even though he does not seek it.

**Cons:**

- It might be a hasty decision as it appears that the Chairman is involved in bribery-but cannot be ascertained without solid evidence.
- It might appear that Vinod is favoring the opposition Party.
- He might get a transfer immediately.
- Option (2): Refuse to intervene in the situation and ask the Board member to expose the video himself.

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**Pros:**

- It saves him to get into the political rivalry so that he can focus genuinely on the development of the corporation.
- No immediate transfer.

**Cons:**

- It shows incompetence of Vinod to deal with a complex situation—as he is escaping from his duty of taking notice of the issue which is against the best interest of the corporation.
- Opposition party, when it comes to power, might punish him with the transfer.
- He might seem to be favouring or fearing the ruling party.
- Option(3) : Inform the superiors about the situation (like Secretary-General Administration) and act accordingly as the Chairman is a political leader .

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**Pros:**

- As the political leader is involved in this, this option might provide him with more practical solutions and might save the face of the corporation.
- Vinods's reputation among the bureaucracy stays intact.

**Cons:**

- Again shows the incompetence of Vinod to deal with complex situations.
- The solution from the superior might have to be followed even if it is against the best interests of the Corporation.
- **Option (4):** Open a detailed investigation to verify the authenticity of the video recording and collect the evidence necessary for the same; then expose/action against the Chairman as per the rules of the corporation.

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**Pros:**

- This is in accordance with the civil service values of neutrality and impartiality.
- Collecting evidence and taking the action accordingly is in the best interest of the Corporation.
- Public trust as every action is based on evidence.
- Cons:
- Still Vinod might be seen as favouring the opposition party.
- Transfer from Corporation.
- Corporation will be losing an honest civil servant like Vinod.

**Best Option: Option (4)** seems the best option as whatever allegation comes, it's the duty of a civil servant to go into the details and investigate the facts associated, as this is with respect to corruption in the corporation. It's true that he might get punished by the transfer, but going by the record of Vinod, transfers are not new to him. He will be happy that his values and conscience remain sacrosanct as he acted in the best interest of the Corporation and Public.

(b) The politicisation of bureaucracy refers to the situation in which the bureaucracy is influenced by political considerations and is used to serve the interests of the ruling party or the political leadership. Politicisation of bureaucracy undermines the ethical principles of objectivity, neutrality and impartiality that are supposed to guide the work of the bureaucracy, and it can lead to corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability.

**Ethical Issues that might arise due to this include-**

- **Corruption (Objectivity/Impartiality):** The Bureaucrats who are appointed based on political considerations often use their positions to enrich themselves or to serve the interests of their political masters. This has eroded public trust in the bureaucracy and has made it difficult for the government to implement policies.
  - If Vinod takes action based only on the promises of the Board member for his growth, it amounts to corruption and is against the principle of neutrality.

- **Inefficiency:** Bureaucrats who are appointed based on political considerations may lack the necessary skills and qualifications to perform their duties effectively. This can lead to delays, cost overruns, and poor implementation of policies and programs.
  - Vinod might get entangled in the political fight between the Chairman and the Board member even if he takes action against the Chairman in the best interests of the Corporation. This prevents Vinod from focusing on the other developmental works of the corporation.
- **Lack of continuity:** The frequent transfer and posting of bureaucrats, which is often used as a tool to reward or punish bureaucrats based on their political allegiance, undermines the continuity of policies and programs. This can lead to a lack of coherence in policy-making and implementation, which can negatively impact the development of the country.
  - Whatever action Vinod takes, there is a threat of transfer for him from the rival party.
- **Lack of innovation:** Bureaucrats who are focused on serving the interests of their political masters may be hesitant to take risks or to innovate. This can lead to a lack of creativity and innovation in policy-making and implementation.
  - Whatever action Vinod takes, there is a chance that his initiatives will be opposed by the members of the corporation who are supporters of the losing party. This might prevent Vinod from introducing any new initiatives.
- **Lack of trust:** When citizens perceive that bureaucrats are appointed based on political considerations and are not working in their best interests, they may become disengaged from the democratic process. This can lead to a lack of trust in government institutions and can negatively impact the development of the country.
  - When Vinod gets stuck in this political rivalry despite his neutrality, the members of the corporation and the public might perceive him to be associated with one of the parties who gains due to his actions.

## Conclusion

The politicization of bureaucracy in India has far-reaching implications for the development of the country. By **strengthening the selection process**, ensuring accountability, decentralizing power, and strengthening civil society, it is possible to reduce the politicization of bureaucracy in India and to build a more efficient, accountable, and effective system of governance.

Q11. You have just been appointed as Additional Director General of the Central Public Works Department. The Chief Architect of your division, who is to retire in six months, is



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

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

- (a) What are the ethical issues involved in the above case?  
(b) What are the options available to you in order to complete the project as well as to retain Seema in the organization?  
(c) What would be your response to Seema's predicament? What measures would you institute to prevent such occurrences from happening in your organization?

## Answer

### Introduction

The given case highlights the poor work culture in public office due to the blind race of credit-tacking tendencies among public servants.

### Body

#### (a) Ethical issues involved in the case

1. **Poor work culture-** as it is clear from the case the relations of the various employees in the office are not cordial and the chief architect is harassing his junior.
2. **Compromised dignity-** the unnecessary scolding of Seema by the chief architect is hurting her dignity

3. **Lack of ethical ecosystem**– as it is from the case that one employee is thinking about resignation it shows that there is a lack of ethical ecosystem to regulate the behaviour of the employees.

**(b) Options available**

1. Taking strict action against the chief architect– Asking Seema to ignore the chief architect as much as possible.
2. Asking the chief architect to mind his conduct concerning Seema.

**(c) My response to Seema's predicament–**

As soon as I come to know of her predicament, I will apologize to her on behalf of the organization then I will ask the chief architect to say sorry to Seema to restore her dignity and then I will warn him not to repeat the same in future.

**Measures to prevent such incidents:**

- Implement the SHE box idea in the office so that any woman can complain fearlessly.
- Taking strict action against such people to warn others.
- Ethical training of the employees.
- Arranging occasional get-together parties for the employees so that they can express themselves openly.

**Conclusion**

Thus, it can be said that there is a need to incorporate ethics at work culture in public offices to ensure the dignity of the individuals and maximum good to maximum numbers.

Q12. You hold a responsible position in a ministry in the government One day in the morning you received a call from the school of your 11-year-old son that you are required to come and meet the Principal. You proceed to the school and find your son in the Principal's office. The Principal informs you that your son had been found wandering aimlessly in the grounds during the time classes were in progress. The class teacher further informs you that your son has lately become a loner and did not respond to questions in the class, he had also been unable to perform well in the football trials held recently. You bring your son back from the school and in the evening, you along with your wife try to find out the reasons for your son's changed behavior. After repeated cajoling, your son shares that some children had been making fun of him in the class as well as in the WhatsApp group of the students by calling him stunted, duh and a frog. He tells you

the names of a few children who are the main culprits but pleads with you to let the matter rest.

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

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

**b) Discuss the pros and cons of using social media by you to put across the facts to counter the fake propaganda against your family.**

**Answer**

The emergence of social media has ushered in a host of advantages and complexities. This case study underscores the intricacies that individuals encounter when their personal matters become entangled within the expansive realm of the digital public.

**Stakeholder Analysis**

Stakeholder	Role and Interest
Father	Parent and government official: Interested in protecting your family's reputation and addressing the false allegations against you.
Son	The victim of cyberbullying: He desires support, privacy, and relief from online harassment.
Colleagues and Friends	Concerned about your well-being and the truth, potentially offering support or seeking clarification.
Alleged Perpetrators	Those accused of cyberbullying: Interested in privacy, avoiding repercussions, and their own reputation.
Social Media Users	The general public: Affected by the spread of misinformation and may form opinions based on the information presented.
Teachers	They are to guide the students and teach them ethical behavior.

**a) Ethical Issues in the Use of Social Media:**

1. **Privacy and Consent:** The ethical issue of privacy arises when son's predicament is discussed on social media without his consent. Sharing personal information and experiences without permission can violate an individual's right to privacy.
2. **Cyberbullying:** The case highlights cyberbullying, where son was subjected to ridicule and harassment online. The perpetrators used derogatory terms and created caricatures, causing emotional distress.
3. **Responsibility:** As a responsible parent and government official, father has a duty to protect child. However, sharing information about the alleged perpetrators on social media may raise ethical concerns related to accountability and the potential for vigilantism.
4. **Truth and Misinformation:** The use of social media to counter fake propaganda highlights the importance of truth and accuracy. It is ethical to correct false information and provide context, but this should be done responsibly and without further harm.
5. **Social Media Impact:** The case demonstrates how quickly misinformation can spread on social media. Ethical considerations include the impact of social media on individuals' lives and the potential for harm caused by viral content.

#### Pros of Social Media:

1. **Communication and Connectivity:** Social media platforms facilitate instant communication with friends, family, and colleagues regardless of geographical boundaries. It allows people to stay in touch and exchange messages, photos, and videos.
  - **Example:** A person in the USA can video call their family in India using platforms like WhatsApp or Zoom, fostering a sense of closeness despite the distance.
2. **Information Sharing and Awareness:** Social media serves as a powerful tool for sharing news, information, and updates. It helps raise awareness about important issues, events, and causes.
  - **Example:** During natural disasters, social media platforms are used to disseminate emergency information, connect volunteers, and coordinate relief efforts.
3. **Networking and Professional Opportunities:** LinkedIn and other professional networks enable individuals to connect with peers, mentors, and potential employers, leading to job opportunities and career growth.
  - **Example:** A job seeker connects with a recruiter on LinkedIn, eventually leading to an interview and job offer.

4. **Entertainment and Leisure:** Social media platforms offer a plethora of entertainment options, from streaming videos to gaming, making it a source of relaxation and enjoyment.
  - **Example:** YouTube provides endless entertainment through diverse content, including music videos, vlogs, and educational channels.
5. **Social Activism and Awareness Campaigns:** Social media platforms provide a global stage for social and environmental causes. Activists can mobilize support, share petitions, and drive change.
  - **Example:** The #BlackLivesMatter movement gained momentum through social media, drawing attention to racial injustice and inequality.
6. **Business Marketing and Brand Promotion:** Companies leverage social media for marketing, advertising, and connecting with customers. It offers a cost-effective way to reach a broader audience.
  - **Example:** Coca-Cola's interactive social media campaigns engage consumers and build brand loyalty.

#### Cons of Social Media:


1. **Privacy Concerns and Data Breaches:** Users' personal information is at risk due to data breaches, and there are concerns about how social media platforms handle and share user data.
  - **Example:** The Cambridge Analytica scandal involved the unauthorized access of Facebook user data for political profiling.
2. **Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** Social media can be a breeding ground for cyberbullying, trolling, and harassment, causing emotional distress and harm to individuals.
  - **Example:** Celebrities often face relentless online harassment and derogatory comments on platforms like Twitter and Instagram.
3. **Spread of Misinformation and Fake News:** False or misleading information can spread rapidly on social media, leading to confusion and influencing public opinion.
  - **Example:** The dissemination of inaccurate COVID-19 information, including false remedies and conspiracy theories, on social media during the pandemic.
4. **Addiction and Mental Health Issues:** Excessive use of social media can lead to addiction, anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy, especially among young users.
  - **Example:** Research suggests that heavy social media use can contribute to feelings of social isolation and low self-esteem.

5. **Impact on Real-Life Relationships and Isolation:** Over-reliance on social media can erode face-to-face interactions, affecting personal relationships and leading to social isolation.
  - **Example:** Friends and family members often prioritize screen time over in-person conversations, impacting the quality of relationships.
6. **Security Risks and Hacking:** Social media platforms are vulnerable to hacking, identity theft, and phishing attacks, posing risks to users' personal and financial information.
  - **Example:** The Target data breach in 2013 exposed the credit card information of millions of customers who shopped at the retail chain.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, using social media **to address false propaganda** involves ethical considerations related to privacy, truth, responsibility, and the potential consequences of online actions. It's essential to strike a balance between defending one's reputation and ensuring that the response does not exacerbate the situation or violate ethical principles.

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