

GS Comprehensive Test (PAPER – 4)

SECTION – A

1.

- (a) What is an Ideal? What, according to you, shall be the highest Ideal of human life? Explain your position with due justification.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

An Ideal shall be understood as a norm, standard or value. It can be the highest objective or end of the life. To life, it imparts meaning, substance and direction. It can inspire individual, society and state to replace existing state of affairs with a better scheme that ought to be realized. Ideals can be conceptualized through a critical normative discourse. For instance, through deliberations, in the collective wisdom we have envisaged Constitutional ideals and have solemnly resolved to uphold them. Thus, as Indians it is imperative for us to act in accordance with the Constitutional ideals. We strive to constitute India as a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic where Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity would prevail.

'Service to Humanity' can be the highest ideal of human life, whereby the autonomy of individuals, their right to life and right to self-determination will be honoured. We ought to treat humanity as an end and not merely as a means and shall expand the same to natural resources as well. Such an ideal would assimilate and integrate Constitutional ideals, classical ideals - Truth (Satyam), Good (Shivam) and Beauty (Sundaram) as well as purusharthas - dharma, artha, kama and moksha in a profound way.

(202 words)

- (b) Why do you want to be a civil servant? What attributes, do you believe, a civil servant ought to possess? Justify your answer with illustrations.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Individual, society and nature are organically related. An individual's happiness and personal aspirations can never be realized in isolation or at the cost of society or nature. As a civil servant an individual can have access to the resources and wherewithal to empower weaker and marginalized sections of people more efficiently and effectively thereby disseminate service to humanity and thereby attain a life of meaning, substance and contentment.

Some of the important attributes that a civil servant ought to possess are – integrity (honesty and strength of character without having temptation to misuse one's power), perseverance (despite one's best intent and effort, desired result may not always be realized at once and thus one is expected to strive continuously), compassion (service to humanity with a sense of love), accountability (ready to account for every act of omission & commission), temperance and courage (self-discipline with self-restraint).

Such an individual alone will have the soul-force and competence to be a Sarathi who can guide the chariot of human development along the right path and can create our State as a Welfare State on the lines of Gandhi's Sarvodaya.

(185 words)

2.

- (a) What techniques of social influence would you as an administrator use to increase the perseverance and commitment of your work force?

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Social influence refers to efforts by one or more individuals to change the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and behaviour of one or more others. Since successful administration demands a committed and dedicated workforce therefore administrators need to equip himself with the tools and techniques that would enable him to secure commitment and perseverance of his work force and social influence techniques assume considerable significance in this regard. Among the most popular social influence techniques deployed by an administrator for building perseverance and commitment of his work force are:

- (1) Rational arguments – which involve use of logical arguments and factual information to persuade.
- (2) Consultation – to seek the work force participation in decision making.
- (3) Inspirational appeals – attempts to arouse enthusiasm by appeal to their ideals.
- (4) Pressure tactics – use of demands, threats of persistent reminders.
- (5) Legitimizing tactics – Highlighting that one has the authority to make a request and secure compliance.
- (6) Exchange – offer to exchange favour later for compliance now.

Coalition tactics – seeking aid and support of others to increase the power of request.

Approach

The nature of problem is such that the sub-ordinate is capable but unwilling to carry on with the task due to his personal situation. It is important to probe a little to find whether:

- (1) His wife has some alternate care available at the moment or not
- (2) He can recommend somebody else to replace for him or not
- (3) Is it possible for him to work while not being in office premises
- (4) Whether project deadline can be extended or not.

If answers to all these questions is such that giving him a leave is not at all possible, it requires convincing skills of a high order to convey it to him that his wife can be cared for at her native place and maybe he can be given another leave with pay at the completion of the project. He can also be given some carrot like possibility of an employee reward in case the project is completed successfully. All such incentives can help in orienting him towards working with full zeal, despite his personal situation. However, care must be taken that whatever promised is possible and also that it does not sent a wrong example for the future. Others subordinates must be told in no unclear terms that this was a strictly one-off situation and they must plan such their leaves. Leaves of exigency would be very rare in critical times. Also, depending on size of the company, some bench strength can be thought about for very critical projects.

(427 words)

3.

- (a) Private ownership is welcome provided it is accompanied by certain moral obligation and duties. Discuss.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Private ownership can be deduced from our right to the products of our own labour. Private ownership offers several advantages and these are

- (1) It ensures more equitable distribution of property
- (2) It attempts to bridge the gap between the rich and poor
- (3) It contributes to greater productivity as people tend to work harder when they work for themselves
- (4) It can lower migration because people tend to stay in their own countries when they are satisfied

The above mentioned benefits of private ownership however cannot be realised unless there is some, if not complete, equitable distribution of private property and this cannot occur unless the private ownership is accompanied with certain moral obligations and duties. Therefore private ownership should bring with it the corresponding obligations and duty to respect others right to ownership. Further, private ownership must carry an obligation of not causing injury to the community at large and providing sufficient opportunity to the propertyless to acquire a certain moderate ownership by skill and thrift. To conclude we can say that concept of private ownership can be meaningful only when a share of production be permitted to accumulate in the hands of wealthy and that an ample sufficiency be supplied to working men.

(206 words)

4.

- (a) In matters of conscience, the law of the majority has no place. How does this statement apply to a civil servant?

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Conscience is the act of the mind that comes into being when the intellect passes judgement on the morality of a particular action. It is an inherently personal act, guided by an individual's determination of right and wrong. Laws, on the other hand, reflect the collective conscience of a nation. As such, they apply uniformly to all who fall within their jurisdiction. Thus, it is the duty of every civil servant to uphold and abide by the existing laws. However, laws by their very nature are not perfect- they are open to amendments and repeal. This indicates that just because an action is legal, it is not necessarily moral. e.g. In Nazi Germany, many laws that were legally binding were also inhuman and barbaric.

Thus, while a civil servant is duty-bound to not violate an existing law, it is important to also realise that he is a vital instrument in shaping the laws that govern us. Therefore, if a law is rendered inconsistent by temporal or societal changes, it is imperative for a civil servant to employ his conscience in determining how the law deserves to be addressed e.g. Sec 66 A of the IT Act.

(196 words)

- (b) For a country to become corruption free, three societal members can make a huge difference - the father, the mother and the teacher. Give your perceptions in this regard with due justification.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Values are always open to change, for better or for worse. Corruption refers to a situation where poor values supersede good values. Since nobody is born corrupt, this implies that a poor upbringing or a poor experience of socialisation has damaged the individual's sense of propriety. Therefore, if the right values are to remain instilled in an individual, it is important that value education begins as early as possible. This emphasizes the role of the family. Since a child's first socialization is his/her parents, this makes it vital for the father and mother to display and reinforce good values e.g. a father who does not obey traffic signals will raise a child who shows disregard for the same. A mother who discriminates between her son and daughter will encourage chauvinistic mindsets in her children.

A child's first formal socialization is the school. This makes it vital for teachers to reinforce the values inculcated by the parents and taught by books e.g. a teacher who tolerates a lack of punctuality, is subconsciously teaching the student that punctuality is not a necessary virtue. If these three members uphold the right values and guide the children conscientiously, future generations will have a clear distinction between right and wrong and will abhor rather than aspire to corruption.

(213 words)

5.

(a) The credo of the state should be Minimum Government, Maximum Governance. Comment.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's resources for development. In this process, the Govt. is an important but not the only participant. Since the govt.'s functioning can be marred by its unwieldy size and the monopolistic nature of its services, it becomes important to assign it with a facilitating and enabling role, while simultaneously promoting self-governance and more delivery of services by the private sector. This is what we mean by Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.

This credo is in accordance with the Gandhian principle of Swaraj. It emphasizes the importance of self-government, empowering the citizens to deal with local issues to be dealt with at the grassroot level itself. Self governance boosts local capabilities and ensures prompt resolutions to everyday matters. Further, the inter-personal contact and common objectives that are fostered help in combating prejudices and promote social cohesion. Finally, assigning more responsibilities to the private sector promotes competition, resulting in better quality and pricing of services. Simultaneously, it also keeps the discretionary powers of administration check.

(176 words)

(b) The better the work culture of an organisation, the lesser the need for rules. Explain.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

A good work culture is one where an organisation's core values are widely shared and intensely held. Such a culture precludes the need for rules because:

- i) It promotes behavioural consistency since individuals from different backgrounds or at different levels in the organisation understand its core values and objectives in similar terms.

- ii) It acts as a substitute for rules, since it helps individuals understand what behaviours are considered desirable. A strong culture achieves predictability and standardization and also permits a high degree of flexibility since it does not depend upon any written documentation.
- iii) It guides not just behaviours but also attitudes, reducing the need for further rules, especially when individuals are not subject to direct supervision.

(118 words)

6. Given below are three quotations of great moral thinkers/philosophers. For each of these quotations, bring out what it means to you in the present context:

- (a) “You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger”. – Gautama Buddha.

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Through this statement Buddha has reminded us that we aggravate our pain and misery by becoming angry. Buddha has emphasized that the life is full of suffering and thus we ought to do our utmost to minimize pain and suffering from our own life as well as from the lives of every other. The root cause of this pain is our ignorance, we fail to understand the impermanent and momentary character of the reality and thereby end up in misery. Buddha’s teaching ‘Be a light unto yourself’ (atmadipo bhavah) suggests that we ought to take a resolve to have a life of self-reliance by conquering our greed, envy and anger. We ought to inculcate love and compassion within and that can help us make a difference to our sorrowful existence. A life of ahimsa and karuna can help us attain peace and tranquility but anger and violence would make the situation all the more worse.

One may intend to harm others through anger and violent acts not knowing that this is going to affect one’s own mental peace severely. In present times, where violence is regarded as the solution of every problem of life- social, economic and political, it is high time that we invoke Buddha’s teaching to make amend within and outside before it gets too late.

(219 words)

- (b) “Dream not that men will move their little finger to serve you, unless their own advantage in so doing be obvious to them”. – Jeremy Bentham

(10 marks, 150 words)

Bentham has argued that every action of human being is motivated by self interest. However, despite being selfish, according to him, we are motivated to work for ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’ since we are governed by two sovereign masters- pleasure and pain. His democratic principle of justice- “each is to count for one and no one for more than one” and utility principle has introduced many reforms in social and legal spheres of human life. Moreover, his own student J.S. Mill has countered his view by emphasizing on the progressive outlook of human being. Mill has acknowledged intrinsic nobility of human being whereby they are motivated from within to serve the interests of others.

In present times, I believe utilitarianism is not a very tenable idea for us to refer to. As Rawls has argued, such a theory may result into violating the rights of minorities for the sake of greatest number. We must recognize that basic human rights are inviolable. Similarly, Gandhi, in his conception of sarvodaya samaj, has emphasized that we should strive to empower and uplift each and every member of society rather than the greatest number, since that is the only way to attain happiness in true sense of the term. Thus,

we need to understand that even if we are selfish we need to contemplate to ascertain what constitute our self interest. And it is a tenable idea to maintain that selfishness, self-interestedness and selflessness can supplement and complement each other.

(249 words)

(c) “The morality of the individual and the morality of the state are one and the same”.
– Plato

(10 marks, 150 words)

Plato’s view that morality in every sphere of human life must have the same nature and character can help us resolve moral dilemmas of various kinds very effectively. It is often argued that there can be different guidelines for private sphere of human life as well as social, professional, economic, political and religious spheres, but in the light of this statement we can see that ethical life is the most fundamental sphere of human existence and every other spheres of human life shall be designed in accordance with fundamental moral insights. Plato’s view also strengthens feminist’s argument that ‘private is also political’.

Plato, like his teacher Socrates, has a very positive idea about human being. In his text Republic, Plato has argued that justice can be realized at the level of individual as well as at the level of State by establishing the rule of reason. Reason must prevail upon unjust bodily desires and vested interests. Thus, it can be argued that first and foremost an individual has to fight against one’s own inner forces and once one is able to conquer oneself thereby one has the competence to deal with the challenges of every other spheres of life in most just manner. The Socratic dictum, “The unexamined life is not worth living” reiterates that life and morality are integral and that we cease to exist in true sense of the term the moment we start to undermine moral ideals of life.

(242 words)

7. Is it appropriate for civil servants to accept gifts or hospitality from members of the public?

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

Accepting and giving gifts is a part of an essential social contract between human beings, which extends to civil servants also. However, civil Servants must not accept gifts or hospitality from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. However, a blanket refusal is also not appropriate since it may cause offence to the donor, especially when the gift is given as a token of regard e.g. in the case of a foreign organization. If there is a possibility of a conflict of interest with regard to the acceptance of a gift, it can be regulated by placing limits on their monetary value and frequency.

Further, in circumstances where a monetary estimation is not possible, it is expected of a civil servant to politely refuse the offer if he believes it may create suspicion or doubts. If even a refusal is not possible, the gift may be accepted but deposited with the State Treasury instead of retaining it in a personal capacity.

(167 words)

8. In a system plagued by bureaucratic apathy and rigid laws, corruption enables one to circumvent the bottlenecks. This saves time and money and preserves the growth trajectory of system. Can such corruption be considered feasible?

(10 marks, 150 words)

Answer:

No, corruption under any circumstance cannot be considered feasible. The flaw with this argument is that it takes the distortions caused by systemic deficiencies and the corrupt actions as acceptable. A prudent individual should recognize that corruption, despite such glamorised arguments, is inherently abhorrent because:

- i) It incentivizes corrupt officials to not correct distortions, but instead cause greater administrative delays to attract more bribes.
- ii) It promotes inefficiency and the allocation of talent, technology and capital away from their socially most productive uses.
- iii) If corruption is widespread and institutionalized, more resources would be used to obtain preferential access rather than to improve productivity.
- iv) In the long term, it may become an incentive for honest individuals to cast aside hard work and public-spiritedness and become a corrupt public official.

(130 words)

SECTION – B

In the following questions, carefully study the cases presented and then answer the questions that follow:

9. A friend of yours, who is a Police officer, has been killed in a landmine blast masterminded by the Maoists. The 10 year old son of the martyred officer is enraged by the killing of his father and states that after growing up he too would become a Police officer like his father and thereby he would take his revenge by killing the Maoists.

(20 marks, 250 words)

- (i) Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.

Answer:

The principal ethical issues are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Duty of the State (Raj Dharma) | (3) Right of the natives |
| (2) Duty of a police officer | (4) Right and duty of a son |

The given case reminds us that despite seven decades of self rule (swaraj), we have not been able to uphold Constitutional ideals and values. We have not been able to create a Welfare state. Basic amenities of human life are not accessible across the sections of society. We have not been able to meet aspirations of natives. We need to examine the functioning of means that we have employed to realize our Constitutional ends.

A Police officer has a moral and legal obligation to uphold Constitutional provisions and rule of law. One must recognize the overriding character of one's duty towards the State. That is, one's self-interest and obligations towards family is subservient to one's Sva-dharma as a Police-officer. Every native of a State has a basic fundamental right, right to life and State has a corresponding moral and legal duty to respect such a right. Thus, State must ensure that such a basic right of natives shall not be violated.

In the given case it is the legal and moral right of the son to seek justice for the loss of his father. At the same time, it is also his duty to respect law of the land and seek justice within the framework of the law.

- (ii) How would you try to console the young boy? How would you respond to the statement made by the boy?

Answer:

I would try to console the young boy by sharing some cardinal principles of life. Death is an integral component of human life, it is imminent and thus we ought to internalize this truth. Such internalization can give us inner strength and courage to deal with such extreme situations of life. I would advise him to remain 'stoical' to his loss. I would emphasize that he should feel proud of his father, since he could serve his motherland and became a martyr in the process. I believe such martyrs become immortal since their character, courage and commitment inspire every native to lead a life of authentic existence. Individuals come and go, but cardinal ideals of life shall never be subverted and undermined since life of self respect and dignity can never be composed without them.

In response to the statement of the boy, I would recollect the significance of ahimsa and emphasize that violence breeds violence, anger and hatred can aggravate the pain and suffering of human life further. As Socrates says, "injustice shall not be answered with injustice", that is, let everyone be wrong and unjust but one should never do what one thinks is wrong. Being evil is compared to being ignorant, as Christ has stated, while he is being crucified, "Oh my Lord! Please forgive them as they do not know what they are doing". The path of Love, Compassion and Ahimsa can be arduous but this is the only panacea which has the potential to solve every problem from the very root.

Moreover, I would like to make him understand the significance of institutions in a State and that it is important to regard them as sacrosanct and paramount. Rule of law and Principles of Natural justice must be respected and letter and spirit.

(iii) How do you see the problem of Maoism? Is it a moral or legal problem? Justify your answer.

Answer:

I see the problem of Maoism primarily as a moral problem and secondarily as a legal problem. Such problems cannot be resolved completely through legal framework. The root of the problem lies in social, economic and political disadvantages and injustice. But disgruntled and misguided natives have opted for a path of violence, which is undemocratic, immoral and illegal. Keeping in mind the root cause of the problem, we ought to create a framework whereby empowerment of the weaker and marginalized people can be realized, a proper rehabilitation programme can be implemented and at the same time legal deterrence can be created through proper implementation of law.

(644 words)

10. You are preparing for the Civil Services exam and residing in the State Capital. After Prelims you visit your native village for few days to meet your parents. While being there, you get to know that *Community Panchayat* has issued a Charter of Duties for the girls and women of the village. As per the dictates, the women folk ought not to wear jeans and shall not carry personal mobiles. You also learn that the sex ratio of girl child vis-à-vis boy, in the age group of 0-5, is dismal. At the same time, there have been alleged cases of honour killings for marrying among the taboo *gotras*. All these developments outrage you to the core and you resolve to make amends. However, your family advises you to focus on your forthcoming Mains exam rather than wasting time in the futile exercise.

(20 marks, 250 words)

(i) What would you do under the given circumstances?

Answer:

I believe it is the responsibility of every individual to act as a moral aspirant in every walk of the life. By 'moral aspirant' I understand having critical outlook towards life, whereby one ought to question dogmas, prejudices and uncritical assumptions of life and value system. Thus, under the given circumstances I would have no option but to act like a moral aspirant and to uphold moral and Constitutional ideals.

Unfortunately women have been subjugated in every possible form in every sphere of human life. The structure of the human society has remained androcentric, men have occupied the central position while women have been at the periphery. Men are regarded as ends while women are treated as means. The discrimination and subordination of women have been justified on grounds of biological differences. However, feminists distinguish between 'sex' and 'gender'. 'Sex' refers to biological differences whereas 'gender' refers to differences that are imposed by social norms. As Simone de Beauvoir says, "One is not born, but is made a woman". The dictates of the Community Panchayat and poor sex-ratio manifest the same world-view.

Customs and conventions cannot be reformed overnight, however, in this case if we strive to empower women folk through right orientation and education, and inculcate a sense of self reliance in them whereby they can be given right to self determination then significant improvement can be noticed in a short period of time. Thus, I would try to sow the seeds of such engagement at the level of community and by involving administrative institutions. Specific problems like gotra taboo etc. will be dissolved on its own once we try to restructure the very fabric of patriarchal society with androgynous society, an equal opportunity society.

I believe education goes beyond the realm of books and the best way to learn is to study the book of life. Thus, I can continue with my preparation and at the same time I will try to spread awareness about the issues of women in my village through different mode of communication.

(ii) Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.

Answer:

The principal ethical issues are subordination of women, subverting their right to life, not granting them autonomy and respect as equal. Imposing unjust and illegal restrictions and limitations on them by undermining their basic right to self determine. It involves uncritical assumption that socio-cultural identities are too sacrosanct to be questioned or defied and even killing is a just punishment for such an act of violation.

(iii) What do you understand by empowerment? Suggest measures for women empowerment.

Answer:

Empowerment can be regarded as a state of autonomy, sovereignty, where one can have complete control over one's life and one shall be treated as an end rather than as a means. Thus, an empowered woman will be self-reliant and will have independence in every sphere of life- social, economic, political and religious.

In order to realize women empowerment, education can play the most significant role. Women have to be educated to be aware of their rights and privileges. Most importantly, we ought to get rid of patriarchal mindset and conventions from every sphere of life. It is argued that equality within home would make gender equality possible in all other areas of life. Political equality through reservation of seats in the parliament and legislative assembly can be a major step.

The process of land and property distribution within the family is crucial in determining the status of women as social beings and as citizens. The prevailing patterns of male

ownership and control over resources have further consolidated and perpetuated the gender bias against women.

Another serious challenge is to eradicate female foeticide and infanticide. Unless women are empowered and take a decisive part in the social, political and economic life of the country, the very development of the country will be adversely affected.

(619 words)

11. A poor man has an ailing wife, he has spent all his savings and money on her medical treatment. One evening, she is struggling with her life but the man has no money to buy the life saving drugs.

(20 marks, 250 words)

(i) Do you think he should steal the drug in order to save the life of his wife?

Answer:

In such an unfortunate case if the man is coerced to 'steal' life saving drugs then I believe it can be illegal but it may not be immoral in true sense of the term. Stealing can be understood as an act at the level of thought, word and deed, whereby one tries to take hold of something that does not belong to one. In such an act the principal motive can be greed, envy or arrogance, where one tries to treat others as a means to one's vested interests. Moreover, such an act can be primarily voluntary, that is out of choice.

But in the given case, one's act at the level of thought is not motivated by any ignoble intent but with love and respect for human life. In fact, the way Gandhi ji has explained Asteya, which is an act of himsa, the act of this case cannot be characterized as Asteya since it seems to be an act of ahimsa- love and compassion is the primary motive. Somewhat, it comes close to Kierkegaard's ideal of 'Leap of Faith' where conventional morality can be suspended for a higher purpose and in this case that higher purpose is 'life, since overridingness of saving a life can be recognized. However, if the man 'steals' the drug then he must hold oneself legally responsible and shall either pay back the medical storekeeper in cash or kind or shall submit oneself to law enforcement agency.

(ii) Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case.

Answer:

The ethical issues are as follows: Most importantly, it is an issue of right to life, it is indeed our collective failure that we have not been able to ensure quality medical care and employment across sections of society. In case we punish the man for stealing the drug as it can be seen as a legal offence then morally we may feel like punishing him twice, since to begin with he is a victim first.

(319 words)

12. Ram is an honest and extremely diligent officer. Unfortunately, his only sister recently lost her husband, who too was working for the government. She is well-educated but has not been working ever since her marriage. She has received the money from her husband's provident fund and gratuity. However, she confides in Ram that this money is bound to run out in a few years, unless she invests it wisely. After that, she will be left with only a meagre pension to meet her expenses and those of her two small children.

Ram is currently working on a master-plan for a proposed IT City. The details of this project are known only to him, since the project is still at the planning stage. The land

rates at the proposed site are dirt-cheap and anyone who invests there now will reap a bounty in just a few years, once the project is notified to the public.

- (i) Should Ram advise his sister to invest in the land at the proposed site?
- (ii) What are the moral and ethical issues involved in this case? How should Ram proceed with taking an appropriate decision?

(20 marks, 250 words)

Answer:

Ram's only sister has recently been widowed. Thus, he is bound to assume the responsibility for her and her children's well-being. Her husband's gratuity and PF have been released but need to be invested wisely to ensure long-term security.

Ram has insider information of an upcoming IT city project. Disclosing this information to his sister would undoubtedly fetch her exponential returns. However, Ram should not use this path to help her. Making an exception for her would instantly dent his integrity and be a violation of his duties towards the office of trust he holds. Further, since such behaviour does not match his portrayed attitude, he is likely to suffer cognitive dissonance, which is bound to adversely affect his work. Most importantly, if news of this misuse of discretion becomes public, he may face penal action, jeopardizing not just his future but also that of his sister and her children.

Ram faces an apparent conflict between his personal and professional duties. However, an appropriate resolution is possible by realizing that his sister is well-educated and has not worked only after marriage. Thus, he can petition the government to provide her a job on compassionate grounds or he can even help her to secure employment in the private sector. The money she has received can be invested judiciously, securing her future. Meanwhile, depending on his own financial condition, he can share her immediate financial burdens, for instance by sharing accommodation with the bereaved family etc.

(244 words)

13. You are the Chief Engineer of the State Public Works Department. You have been given the task of deciding whether a flyover should be built to decongest the road passing next to the Inter-State Bus Terminus. However, when you visit the site for preliminary inspection, a large group of locals approach you. They plead before you to not sanction the construction of the flyover since it will significantly reduce the footfall to their businesses and severely affect their livelihood. With folded hands, they submit before you that should you proceed with the project, they will have no choice but to go on an indefinite hunger strike, even if costs them their very lives.

You are further informed by your staff that most of these shops are illegal and have encroached upon the existing road, leading to traffic congestions. Many of them will have to be demolished to make way for the flyover, further aggravating the protests.

- i) What are the options available to you?
- ii) Evaluate each of the options and choose the option you would adopt, giving reasons.

(20 marks, 250 words)

Answer:

My principal objective here is to ensure smooth traffic management, with minimum disruptions. The problem is that the locals are contemplating an indefinite hunger strike, despite the fact that it is their illegal encroachments that have led to the congestions.

An easy set of alternatives is to either ignore the locals and proceed with the construction or to cave in to their threats and shelf the construction of the flyover. Neither is advisable because the former risks protests and agitations while the latter sets a bad precedent wherein the mere threat of hunger strikes can derail projects.

It is vital to recognize that the illegal encroachments have to be demolished, with or without the flyover. Thus, I would first attempt to have them demolished peacefully. If this eases the traffic problems, the flyover may not be needed, saving the exchequer money. If required to appease the locals and if viable, I can also grant the locals legitimate property rights in the new dispensation.

However, if even the demolition is not adequate to restore smooth traffic flow, I will have to recommend the construction of the flyover. Here, I would take the locals into confidence and inform them not only how the flyover benefits the city at large but more importantly, how their encroachments are in violation of established laws. To earn their trust, I can elicit the support of local leaders and politicians. Further, a proposal to resettle the displaced shopkeepers can also be mooted.

If even this does not placate the locals, I would use the authority vested in me and, with an eye on the larger public good, use force to clear the illegal encroachments and ensure smooth and timely construction of the flyover.

(287 words)

14. You saw your friend, a rich and popular boy of your college, creating a trap to play a prank on one of your teachers. After the incident, the angry teacher calls upon you sensing correctly that you saw it happening. The teacher wants you to tell who did it in the school assembly as she is reasonably sure that you knew and wants the guilty punished severely. She threatens to punish you if you do not reply but reward you with a letter of recommendation that would get you scholarship for higher education if you speak up. Your friend pleads with you not to tell the teacher about him.

What will you do in the situation? Clearly enunciate the pros and cons for the different options available to you and with reasons explain why you would choose a particular course of action.

(20 marks, 250 words)

Answer:

It is a case in which speaking out the truth (which gives you personal gain) versus value of your friendship. The options available are:

- (i) Tell the teacher who committed the act blatantly
- (ii) Withhold the information completely in order to save the friend from a punishment.
- (iii) Try to show complete ignorance and say that you are not aware about the act.
- (iv) Try to convince the teacher to not act from anger but assess the situation in proper perspective.

Option (i) does punish the guilty but it must be understood that the teacher is acting in a fit of rage and because of the authority she has over the student, she may act in an unreasonable manner, hurting the future prospects of the student.

Choosing option (ii) may protect your friend, but by saying nothing, you are guilty of a sin of omission which may set a very wrong precedent and give legitimacy to the act of your friend. Respecting teachers is of utmost importance and must be adhered to by all.

Option (iii) is wrong not only because you are stating a lie but it shows the person doing this in poor light as he is running away from the situation rather than attempting to correct it.

Option (iv) seems to be right way forward. In this case, the nature of the offence is not so grave as to warrant a very severe punishment. It would be prudent to plead with the teacher that a mild punishment could be given to the boy that may teach him a lesson but request him not to escalate the matter to a higher level as it may harm the future of your friend. A good course of action may be to talk to another teacher about the event who may talk to the teacher in question and present the case in a sympathetic light.

(314 words)