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Mains Practice Questions

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The global death toll has crossed one lakh due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It spreads via airborne droplets (sneeze or cough) or contact with the infected person/surface. In this context, 'lockdown' was the step taken by most of the countries in the world, including India, to stop the spread of pandemic. The 'lockdown' has also left many poor and vulnerable people facing extreme hardships.

People are forced to stay home but shocking statistics revealed that domestic violence has surged globally since the start of the coronavirus lockdown. In India, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has also flagged the issue of a spike in cases of domestic violence since the enforcement of the national lockdown. However, it is also imperative to continue with the lockdown to stop the spread of deadly pandemic.

- a. Identify the ethical issues involved in the case.
- b. Suggest measures to resolve them.

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Approach

- o Introduce the case by mentioning the gravity of the situation that emerged due to covid-19 pandemic.
- o Mention the facts of the case, stakeholders and their interests.
- o Identify the ethical issues involved in the case.
- o Elaborate measures to resolve such ethical issues.

Introduction

The Government of India has imposed a national lockdown as part of a series of steps to reduce the transmission of the Covid-19. Though the lockdown has been welcomed by many as a necessary measure, the enforcement has left millions of people unprepared for this severe disruption, particularly poor and vulnerable people. Apart from this, there has been a surge in the number of domestic violence in the country as well as the world.

Body

Stakeholders	Their interests
Administration (Centre and state governments, local bodies)	To take steps to check the spread the pandemic, making laws relating to lockdown, ensure safety and security (food and finances) of the people, Checking 'Community Transmission' of the disease, ensure strict implementation of laws, assistance to women facing domestic violence
Hospitals and Medical staffs	Providing good health care services to covid and other patients, especially taking care of those who are more vulnerable like pregnant women, children, etc.

All People of the country, especially daily wage labourers and Poor and the weaker sections of the society	Fulfillment of basic needs and livelihood such as food, jobs, shelter
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Human rights bodies e.g. National Commission for Women	Ensure access to human rights even during the grave situation of pandemic, to provide services to affected people and help reduce the discrimination
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Ethical issues involved in the case are

- **Issues of ethical and good governance.**
 - Administration faces an ethical issue regarding its 'Lockdown Strategy'. It restricts the movements of people and imposes forceful 'Social Distancing'.
 - The dilemma, here, is about balancing the economic needs of the country and checking the spread of the covid infection.
- **Issue of maintaining Human rights**
 - The lockdown has limited the people's livelihood options, and they face hardships, especially the poor. They are not even able to fulfill basic needs like food and shelters, this is the issue of **violation of Human Rights**.
 - The **lack of empathy and compassion towards the weaker section** are inherent issues in the strict lockdown and restrictions on movement.
- **Issues of emotional breakdown**
 - The separation and curtailed movement of people creates a range of psychological and emotional breakdown like confusion, anger, depression, stress, insomnia and emotional exhaustion.
 - The issue is how to balance the emotional or mental state and the lockdown norms of staying only at home.

Measures to resolve these ethical issues

- **Human Rights and Intersectional based approach:** It is critical that governments utilise a human rights and intersectional based approach to ensure that everyone, including the most marginalised, has access to necessary information, support systems and resources during the current crisis.
An intersectional approach takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.

- **Role of Media:** Media can sensitize the public against gender-based violence, publicise resources and services available and encourage the equitable sharing of domestic tasks at home.

Also, **resources should be increased** for NGOs so that they can help in making people aware about the gravity of the covid-19 pandemic and may help in locating and reaching to the poor who are the worst affected.

- **Uninterrupted delivery of essential commodities:**
 - The state governments with the help of local administration and NGOs must be able to locate and provide basic items of necessities (food, shelter, medicines) to the poor.
 - The essentials must be delivered virtually at the doorstep during the lockdown. The Public Distribution System (PDS) and essential commodities delivery by e-commerce companies can be leveraged in this regard.

Conclusion

In the times of stay-at-home and social distancing, people should practice to use the skills of **Emotional Intelligence** to overcome anxiety. The most important factor in preventing the spread of the Virus is to empower the citizens with the right information and taking precautions as per the advisories being issued by the administration.