



Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Elections have been declared in the state. According to the election code of conduct, all major decisions have been put on hold. In this situation, chief secretary, Deepankar Prakash faced a delicate problem that arose from the failure of rains in some parts of the state.

In this case, extra power has to be supplied to farmers to enable them to run irrigation pump sets. Power was also needed to tackle drinking water supply problems. The situation led to public dissatisfaction and the Chief Minister knew that it would affect the party's election prospects.

However, the state had no generation capacity, power has to be purchased at a high cost. Further, the state electricity board had no money. Funds can be given to the board only by withdrawing a large sum from the contingency fund.

In this situation, the chief minister has asked Deepankar Prakash to do something about the matter. Imagine yourself as the chief secretary and discuss the different options available and how will you respond in this case?

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Deepankar Prakash can think of the following alternative lines of action.

1. Tell the Chief Minister that because of the ongoing election process, he can not do anything.

- By opting for this option Deepankar Prakash would be playing safe.
- Since he is not taking any initiative, and postponing a decision until the completion of elections, no political party will accuse him of partiality.
- However, this approach is inappropriate since the state administration (and its head chief secretary) can not ignore the genuine hardships of people simply because the election process is in progress.

2. Advise the Chief Minister to approach the Election Commission for necessary approval.

- Opting for this option will reflect the escapist attitude since the chief secretary should not just leave the matter to the Election Commission.
- Further, this advice is pointless since the Chief Minister will be aware of the position and wants the chief secretary to do something

3. Arrange a liberal loan and make power available on a large scale all over the state.

- This alternative is again improper. As elections are going on, no extra facilities and advantages should be given to people.
- Also, large purchases of supply of power may be interpreted as an attempt by the state administration to support the government facing elections.
- Any decision regarding enhancement supply in these areas with normal rainfall should be left to the elected government which will take office after elections.

4. Arrange a temporary loan to the electricity board and give extra power supply to the areas of the state which are actually facing the adverse effects of inadequate rains.

- This alternative is appropriate, as it leads to quick action and avoids the detailed and time-consuming financial scrutiny.
- It concentrates on the genuine needs of the affected people.
- No one can reasonably object to this action.
- While remaining within the ambit of law and propriety, the chief secretary will be implementing the chief minister's instructions to the extent feasible

Conclusion

The free and fair election is the basic tenant of a functioning democracy. However, it is the non-partisanship for the administration that makes it possible. Given this following the last option seems a suitable choice for the chief secretary.