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Mains Practice Questions

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You are the District Collector of an area that has recently witnessed a communal riot between Hindu and Muslim communities. Many people have lost their residences, businesses and lives because of these riots. During the communal violence, schools were targeted and burnt; ambulances were denied access to the grievously injured; and journalists were beaten up. A list released by the hospital showed that several victims had died of assault and burns (from acid and fire). The hospitals in the area are flooded with the victims, and are running short of doctors and infrastructure to cater to the large population.

As many people had died of gunshot wounds, several policemen have been accused of siding with the rioters instead of trying to maintain the law and order.

Many students in the area are to write their class 10th and 12th Board exams, and are now staging a protest demanding the exams to be postponed. Several families who have lost their homes, have created makeshift tents in front of your office to express their protest. The media is blaming the government for its inaction and you are under the pressure to immediately hold a press conference and speak on the behalf of the government.

- a. Identify the stakeholders and the ethical issues involved.
- b. What course of action will be most appropriate to establish the law and order in the area again? Justify. (250 words)

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Approach

- o In the introduction give a brief context of the case and highlight the main issue.
- o The first part of the body should include the stakeholders and their respective interests followed by the possible ethical issues of these stakeholders.
- o In the second part, enlist the available options/actions. Mentioning the merits and demerits of each action, write an appropriate course of action with a valid conclusion.

Introduction

The given case is very sensitive, it has multiple stakeholders involved and requires a number of issues to be resolved. In dealing with this case as an administrator I will maintain very high ethical standards and efficiency in management of the ongoing crisis to bring relief and justice to victims of riots and restore the public faith in the Government.

Body

Stakeholders Involved

Ethical issues and Interests

State and Central Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upholding the constitution values of secularism ○ Maintaining social harmony
District Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beneficence and justice ○ Show empathy towards the victims, casualties and the displaced families ○ Maintaining impartiality in rescue and rehabilitation ○ To be transparent in conduct of liabilities ○ Maintain fairness in decision making ○ Show honesty in providing relief and delivering services
Victims of the riot and People of both the communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cultivate tolerance to abjure violence and feeling of vengeance. ○ To uphold the spirit of fraternity ○ To adopt moral values of forgiveness to not harbour hatred against other community
Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take action against the perpetrators with an unbiased attitude ○ To maintain non partisanship in discharge of their duty ○ Maintaining integrity in delivering duty. ○ To be accountable omissions and commissions of duties.
Journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adopt cautious attitude in information dissemination to check spread of rumours creating panic among people. ○ Moral duty to propagate the message of peace, tolerance and brotherhood ○ Moral restraint from showing anything that could further increase communal tensions. ○ Maintain Integrity to practice unbiased journalism
Students	Show resilience, patience and tolerance in these challenging times.

(a) Resolution of the issues of the case requires a mixture of short and long term measures which can be tabulated as following:

	Short Term Course Of Action	Merits	Demerits
1	Ask the subordinate or seniors to hold press conference	I will be saved from the tough questions from the media.	It would be morally wrong to escape from my duty.

2	Take the onus of administrative failure in checking the break out of riots on myself.	It shall absolve the rest of the officials from being held accountable for the riot outbreak	It will put a permanent blot on my reliability and efficiency hampering my career growth as an administrator.
			It shall exonerate the officials who should be held accountable for dereliction of duty.
3	Impose IPC section 144 in most disturbed areas and order marching of security forces in areas where rioters are most active.	This shall prevent the further spread of communal clashes.	It shall cause inconvenience to the public for a short duration.
		Save the unaffected area from being engulfed in riot	
4	In the press conference inform about the actions being taken by the government and also ascertain the people that administration is fully committed to their service in this crisis.	It shall negate the allegations of inaction of the Government.	If facts are not carefully presented, it shall backfire as these statements would be analysed among media and people
		It shall repose the faith of people in administration.	
5	Order the Police to adopt zero tolerance towards perpetrators of violence and initiate strict actions against rioters as prescribed under law	It will bring to book the rioters including the assaulters of journalists to justice.	It may take a long time to bring the perpetrators of communal violence to justice given the slow rate of judicial proceedings.
		It shall act as a deterrent against such crimes in future.	

6	Bring more doctors and medical assistance from other districts on an emergency basis and take help from private hospitals to treat the injured.	It shall solve the problem of insufficiency of medical assistance.	It may incur additional cost to district administration.
7	I would order the concerned examination board to change the venue of exams to schools in peaceful areas and look into the demand of postponing exam and to act in the best interest of students	It would safeguard the security and interests of students Save their time and prevent unnecessary delays in schedules of the current academic year.	Students from all across the country can be affected if the Board decides to postpone the examination.

- o The first two courses of actions would not be taken by me because the former is morally unsound and latter is professionally inappropriate.
- o With the third, fourth and fifth course of action, I would be able to control the riots, restore the public faith in the government and bring perpetrators of the riot to justice. There are few caveats in these courses of action but most of them are temporary and manageable in the line of duty.
- o With the sixth course of action I will be able to provide immediate medical relief to the victims and plug the gap in the required medical assistance.
- o The issues of students appearing for the board exams will be resolved by the seventh course of action.
- o To establish permanent peace and order and to address the other underlying issues of the case the following course of action will be taken:

Course Of Action In Long Term

Merits

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| 1 Order constitution of a commission to find circumstances and causes of the riot. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It shall bring to light the exact facts of the communal riots.○ It shall expose and bring to justice the police officers guilty of sidelining with the rioters.○ It will highlight the lapses on the part of Government.○ It shall provide an opportunity to reform the shortcomings in the administration. |
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| 2 Appeal to people to not incite violence by taking into confidence leaders and representatives of both the communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It may lessen the tension among the people○ Facilitate initiating constructive programmes to restore peace between the two clashing communities.○ It shall bring about a long lasting peace. |
| <hr/> | |
| 3 Commission rehabilitation process of people affected in the riot for this I will request allocation of adequate funds from the Government. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It shall provide relief to the victims of riots○ Enable the victims to return to their normal life. |

Conclusion

Thus, the above plan would help me as a district collector to take decisions which are morally sound and are more appropriate to restore the law and order situation at the earliest and bring maximum justice to most of the stakeholders.