



## Mains Practice Questions

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**Q.** The government under PM Awas yojana has promised to provide affordable housing to the urban poor. However, after the inspection, it was found that there is a shortage of residential plots in the city.

You as the District Magistrate have requested the government to release some vacant public land for the construction of houses under this scheme. While accepting the proposal, the concerned minister suggests that 20% of houses should be allotted from his discretionary quota. In this situation, you have the following options:

1. Simply follow the orders of the minister.
2. Tell the minister that the proposed discretionary allotments will lead to serious controversy.
3. Delay the matter.
4. Oppose the decision tooth and nail.

Analyze these options and what advice you would have given to the minister?

### 1. Simply follow the orders of the minister:

- In my official capacity, I would highlight the risks involved in the process.
- I would cite the examples from CAG's audits and reports of anti-corruption agencies and showing how discretionary quotas are economically unjustified and lead to abuse of power.
- Under the provisions of the scheme, any discretionary quota will be arbitrary. Even for making allotments from the discretionary quota, criteria and procedures have to be laid down.

### 2. Tell the minister that the proposed discretionary allotments will lead to serious controversy:

- I would have told the minister that his proposal will lead to favoritism and corruption.
- As the case shows a typical situation of the extreme shortage of housing, there will be an inherent tendency for rich people to pay money to swing allotments in their favor.
- The houses will command a premium since the demand for them far exceeds supply.
- This will defeat the intended goal of social justice as envisaged by PM Awas Yojana.

### 3. Delay the matter:

- The third alternative is inappropriate.
- It will only postpone the implementation for some time.
- The problem will continue to linger. After some time, the minister may lose patience and demand implementation of his decision.

### 4. Oppose the decision tooth and nail: After explaining all the related challenges to him, I would leave it to his wisdom and implement the scheme

- Being a public representative, there is great pressure on the minister to make exceptions to criteria and procedures for the poorest of the poor.
- However, I would suggest to the minister the best option will be to first **lay down reasonable conditions** for eligibility of flats and then allot them by randomized computer lottery.
- In order to prevent flats from going to rich people, there can be some restrictions on the transfer of the houses by allottees.

## Conclusion

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Being a District Magistrate, it is under my administrative responsibility to provide an objective analysis to the concerned minister. However, it is my prime duty to uphold the public interest and abide by the ethos of empathy and probity. Therefore, I would advise the minister that the proposed discretionary allotments will lead to serious controversy and jeopardize social welfare.