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Mains Practice Questions

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You're a manager at an NGO. Your subordinate has been working in the NGO for five years. Four years ago, his performance was poor because he was undergoing chemotherapy. Since then, it's improved to average but, in the past few months has declined severely again. He explains that his cancer has recurred and has spread to his lymph nodes, so he's in the middle of a six-month round of chemotherapy and his prognosis is not good. He says he prefers to keep working but if you terminate him, he won't file a legal claim. He is his family's sole source of income and his salary is modest and so he has little in savings. What are the options available to you? Point out the pros and cons of each of them.

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Approach

- Identify stakeholders.
- Point out the available options with their pros and cons.

An employee with chronic cancer and undergoing chemotherapy will not be able to work with his full potential. Continuing with the employee will impact the functioning of the NGO but it will ensure that the modest income to his family is ensured. Any decision should balance the twin aspects of the NGO's functioning and the family's well-being with due regard to the ethical values of compassion and empathy.

Stakeholders Involved

- The organisation (NGO)
- Employee
- Self

Broadly the options available are:

- **Terminate the employee**– This decision gives importance to the efficient functioning of the NGO. As a manager of an organisation, one is duty-bound to ensure that it runs smoothly. I should deftly tackle any obstacle in this regard. But terminating a loyal employee disregards the understanding of the situation he is in. In the absence of a sensitivity factor, this decision comes out to be a harsh one. It also refutes the roles and responsibilities of an organisation to its employees in a difficult situation. Such a decision will surely impact the morale of other employees.
- **Continue with the employee**– This decision gives importance to the ethical aspect of an individual. The values of empathy and compassion demand that the employee is not fired in a harsh manner. He should be given support in the time of need. But it will surely impact the output of the organisation.

- **The middle path**– I should be conscious of the situation the employee is in. I can leave it to the employee to take the appropriate decision. I can offer him leaves so that he can complete his chemotherapy and in the meantime interest-free loans from the NGO's fund, if possible, should be provided. Funding can also be contributed by means of donations from other employees. Flexi working hours or work from home option can also be explored. I can also look for any relative in his family who can be a replacement to his position. This will ensure that the source of family income is continued. Going with the third option will not only give a compassionate touch to my decision-making but also it will be in line with the constitutional provision of the right to life. It will surely promote our NGO as a role model of work culture. The ultimate objective of any decision taken should be to support the employee till the end. In the longer run, I would try to put a system in place where such matters are institutionalised.