



Mains Marathon

Day 27: Case Study-2

You have recently got the interview call letter as a candidate for the Civil Services after passing the first two exam stages. You made the choice to go to a religious place close to your home on this memorable day to express your thankfulness to God. At the entrance of the shrine, you encounter a disturbing spectacle of exorcism. A dominating religious man is slapping, cursing, and shouting at two ladies as the relatives of the victims are watching in silence. You are certain that these ladies have psychiatric problems, but the family members interpret their signs as the existence of demonic spirits. You are brought to tears by the women's suffering and feel sympathy for them.

- (a) How will you react in this circumstance and what options do you have?
- (b) What moral dilemmas are raised by the exorcism procedure? (250 Words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Introduce by mentioning how society views mental diseases
- Enumerate the choices you have in the above case
- Justify your choice with rational arguments
- Analyze the ethical issues involved in the exorcism

Answer:

In Indian civilization, mental health and psychological illnesses are frequently stigmatised, and those who suffer from them face societal prejudice.

In addition to having a responsibility as a prospective government servant, I also have a responsibility as an educated civilian to stop and speak out against any instances of prejudice and cruel treatment that may be going on in my neighborhood. As Swami Vivekananda said 'as long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every person a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

Women in the aforementioned case appear to be the victims of family members' ridiculous views.

There are several options I can consider:

- I may disregard the suffering of the ladies and go to pay my respects at the shrine since I have a

wonderful chance ahead of me in life and should not waste my time on a superstitious custom that is common in our nation.

- Report the incident to the shrine administration and confront the man who is assaulting ladies in the guise of driving out evil spirits.
- Ask the family members to seek the advice of a medical professional and try to reason with them. If they don't have the money, help might be provided through a public or private organisation that deals with mental health issues.

I have three options, but the third one seems the most appropriate for a civil servant aspirant with education whose job is to help others whose belief is irrational..

The second option also sounds reasonable, but even if temple officials ban it in response to my protest, the misery of the ladies would continue.

The first choice, however, has moral and ethical drawbacks because it would entail my abandoning my civic duties as a civilian.

Because the vast majority of informed and responsible persons serve as "silent spectators," many exploitative, outdated behaviours continue to plague our society. In the Mahabharata, which places a strong emphasis on civic duty, it is claimed that only half of the responsibility for a crime lies with the perpetrator, one-quarter with co-conspirators, and the other one-fourth belongs to those who silently saw it.

I should thus pay attention to the voice of my conscience and take action. I should also make an effort to persuade my relatives that such cruel treatment would only make women's conditions worse. Counseling may totally cure mental health difficulties, therefore those who experience them should seek out a reputable psychiatrist instead. If they are struggling financially, I can help them set up assistance from the government and NGOs. I would also let some NGOs know about the practises that are occurring close to the temple so that they may investigate them and stop such occurrences in the future.

Ethical issues involved in Exorcism:

- These women are being exploited by an impersonator, which violates their dignity and respect for others.
- **Religious belief is being misused:** The family members have confidence in the shrine's divinity, which is being abused to cure mental illnesses.
- **Public apathy:** As devotees do not interfere in such practices.
- **Role of the state:** These actions expose the state's shortcomings in raising public awareness and facilitating access to mental healthcare.
- **Constitutional morality:** According to our Constitution, one of a person's fundamental responsibilities is to "develop scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform," but this is lacking in this case because superstitious beliefs appear to have taken precedence over Constitutional morality.

7.5% of Indians are estimated to be affected by a mental condition, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) research. However, families turn to such superstitious practices owing to lack of information, inadequate healthcare facilities, and a dearth of psychiatrists. Acting to eradicate such societal ills is urgently required.

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