



Mains Practice Question

Rampura, a remote district inhabited by a tribal population, is marked by extreme backwardness and abject poverty. Agriculture is the mainstay of the local population, though it is primarily subsistence due to the very small land holdings. There is insignificant industrial or mining activity. Even the targeted welfare programs have inadequately benefited the tribal population.

In this restrictive scenario, the youth has begun to migrate to other states to supplement the family income. Plight of minor girls is that their parents are persuaded by labour contractors to send them to work in the Bt Cotton farms of a nearby state. The soft fingers of the minor girls are well suited for plucking the cotton.

The inadequate living and working conditions in these farms have caused serious health issues for the minor girls. NGOs in the districts of domicile and the cotton farms appear to be compromised and have not effectively espoused the twin issues of child labour and development of the area. You are appointed as the District Collector of Rampura.

Identify the ethical issues involved. Which specific steps will you initiate to ameliorate the conditions of minor girls of your district and to improve the overall economic scenario in the district? (250 words)

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Introduction

The given case can be described as an ethical dilemma in which two basic necessities of minor girls are in conflict i.e. their **socio-economic rights of getting an education** and **good health vs. survival**, and **the livelihood of their families**.

Body

The given case of child labour involves multiple stakeholders and requires a number of issues to be resolved. To deal with this case every stakeholder requires to maintain very high ethical standards and efficiency in management of the crisis to bring relief and justice to the poor minor girls and their families.

Stakeholders Involved	Ethical Issues
State and Central Governments	Implement the constitutional values by endeavouring for prohibition of forced and child labour (Article 23).
Local administration/District Magistrate	As it is against the Child Labour law and Right to Education Act, administration should be showing non partisanship and probity in bringing perpetrators to justice no matter how powerful they might be. Show empathy towards the minor girls and their families. Maintain fairness in decision making and determining the accountability of mishap.
Police	Maintaining impartiality in taking legal actions against the

	<p>culprits.</p> <p>Be transparent and uphold rule of law in investigations.</p> <p>Elimination of corruption, promoting honesty in discharge of duties.</p>
Local Population	<p>Following fundamental duty (Art 51A(k)) and parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of six and fourteen years.</p> <p>Perform the duty of being a good citizen by helping the administration and police and file complaints against the contractors.</p> <p>Search other ways of livelihood rather than being dependent on the girl child earnings.</p>
Minor girls/Youth	<p>Poor family condition and labour contractor's pressure on girl child.</p> <p>Migration of youth and lack of livelihood options in the families.</p>
Contractors	<p>Uphold integrity by following the laws in letter and spirit.</p> <p>Hiring proper labour force to work in the fields.</p>
NGOs/Civil Societies	<p>Be responsible and liable for their duty, and work for the betterment of the poor families.</p>

Steps to Ameliorate the Conditions of Minor Girls

Working in Bt. Cotton farms are hazardous as they might inhale micro cotton fibers and develop respiratory ailments. Therefore, direct supervision of the District Collector is needed to immediately stop the employment of minor girls in Bt. Cotton farms.

Short Term Measures/Immediate Steps

- **Strict implementation of the Child labour prohibition:** The first and foremost step would be to immediately stop the girl child labour and take necessary steps to enroll them in the education system.
- **Managing Funds:** The available funds should be directed to provide nutritional needs and education to children.
- **Awareness Among Society:** The local communities and civil society need to be involved to increase citizen participation, avoid a manpower crunch in welfare initiatives.
- **Taking Help of NGOs/Civil Societies:** NGOs such as Kailash Satyarthi Children Foundation, working in child labour elimination must be engaged.
 - Meanwhile taking necessary steps against the NGOs that have been compromised.
- **Strict Action Against the Contractors:** Strict action would be taken against the culprits who are forcing minor girls into the child labour.

Long Term Steps

- **Support From Government:** The respective governments - state and center should be intimidated about the gravity of the situation for their immediate support.

- **Checking Migration:** In order to discourage the migration of youth, there is a need to generate employment opportunities in the region.
 - For example, youth can be equipped with proper skills to work in Bt.cotton farms. This provides a livelihood to families without engaging people in child labor.
- **Access to Welfare Schemes:** Targeted welfare programs have inadequately benefited the tribal population. Thus, it is important that the tribals get the benefits from the schemes devised for them.
 - Adherence to the provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act of 1992 and the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 in planning and implementation of various welfare schemes, should be ensured in letter and spirit.
 - Local people can be persuaded to collect minor forest produce with an assured MSP.

Conclusion

Thus, in this case my endeavour would be to not only to stop girl child labour but also to arrange for the livelihood of the local population.

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

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