



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

A woman and her male partner were living together in a live-in relationship. She faced physical and mental harassment by her partner for some years under the pretense of marriage by her spouse. This relationship continued for some time until one day police recovered a bag with a dead body nearby a river. After conducting a preliminary inquiry, the police discovered that her live-in partner had murdered her. Earlier, the woman's family had protested against her live-in relationship status and after this incident, there have been huge protests in the state against live-in relationships and people who are living with their live in partners are being threatened by various peer groups, religious groups etc. have come together and demanded from the state government to bring a law to ban live-in relationships in the whole state, claiming that the live-in relationships are against Indian culture.

As senior police officer in your area how would you handle the situation and what steps would you take to resolve the issue?

02 Dec, 2022 GS Paper 4 Case Studies

Approach

- Briefly introduce your answer by explaining the ethical issue involved in the case.
- Discuss about various stakeholders and ethical dilemmas involved in the case.
- Suggest possible multiple options to resolve the issue.
- In conclusion, choose a rational way to resolve this dilemma by giving reasons for it.

Introduction

The above case involves the issue of live-in relationships, as a woman is killed by her live-in partner. Therefore, there are protests in the area demanding a ban on live-in relationships. Hence, the senior police officer has to handle the situation.

Body

- **Ethical issues involved:**
 - Empathy of senior police officer towards live-in partners.
 - Professional responsibility to follow rule book.
 - Constitutional morality of senior police officer.
 - Impartiality
 - Crisis management.
- **Stakeholders involved in the case are as under:**
 - Male live-in-partner
 - Female live-in-partner
 - Senior Police officials
 - Parents of both live-in partners
 - Society at large.
- **Ethical dilemmas involved:**
 - **Rule of Law v/s Tradition of society:** The case involves the rule of law that permits the

live-in relationships and traditional society which is against the live-in relationships.

- **Personal Values v/s Professional values:** As the senior police officer I may have view against the culprit, but my personal values shouldn't come in between my professional values to uphold the rule of law.

▪ **Course of action:**

◦ **The course of action would be**

- I will check the preliminary investigation report to check whether the investigation was conducted in a free and fair manner and also involve the women police officers given the sensitivity involved in the issue.
- Side by side I would provide emotional support and legal guidance to the victim's family.
- Then I would try to calm down the protestors by explaining to them the police are doing investigation and rule of law will be followed by police.
- Even then protestors don't agree and continue their protest, then I would use police force to maintain the law and order as protestors could go out of control and damage public property and after that I would start a dialogue with the leaders of various groups like civil society, religious leaders, NGO's and try to pursue them to end their protest as the investigation is already going on and further, due process of law will follow, and justice would be delivered.
- Thereafter, I would provide police protection to the vulnerable live-in couples, as they are threatened by various socio-religious groups.
- As the protestors are demanding that live-in relationships should be banned, I would explain to them that as per the law, 'living together is not a crime, but it is part of the right to life'.
- Further, I would try to explain to them that banning the concept of live-in relationships is not in my hand, it's up to the government to take a call on it, therefore, I would suggest them to file Public Interest Litigation (PIL) or take any other peaceful measure to raise their voice against live-in relationships.

Conclusion

Live-in relationships are currently opposed by many traditional cultures around the world. But it is important to realise that societal pressure and demanding a ban can never be used to suppress emotional ties and connections, and that personal decisions can never be disregarded. Further, People who get into such a relationship, however, must act responsibly toward one another. In addition to overtly rejecting live-in relationships, support should be organised to assist couples who are already living together so that they can eventually switch to a healthier and more socially sustainable relationship.