



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

Your friend Ritwik hails from a village whose surrounding areas were submerged due to floods during the monsoon last year. Government assisted the affected people by giving them cash doles to purchase household goods, seeds to replant crop and cash to compensate for loss of standing crop. Ritwik had his house site on high ground and suffered no loss of personal effects. Luckily, his agricultural land being relatively far away from the flooded river escaped the ravages of the flood. Normally, government machinery is unable to thoroughly assess the damage suffered by each individual family. As a result, people take advantage by making extravagant and often fictitious claims. Ritwik has made false claims like others in the village.

As a close friend of Ritwik, what do you think about his action? Is it a right thing to do? what would be your appropriate response to Ritwik's conduct?

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Approach

- Briefly introduce your answer by explaining the ethical issue involved in the case.
- Discuss about various stakeholders and involved in the case.
- Discuss your course of action in regard with the above case.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

The case mentioned above involves the scenario of where Ritwik, a resident of village where floods had created a havoc and damaged crops, but he accepted government cash, which was a compensation meant for crop loss, despite his crops were in a good shape.

Body

- **Ethical issues involved:**
 - **Honesty:** It could be regarded as truthfulness in financial matters.
 - **Integrity:** It means that the moral agent acts according to a Persons' inner convictions.
 - **Avarice:** It's also known as greed, its's a desire to possess more than one has need or use for an excessive love of money, it may extend to power and to various material possessions.
 - **Injustice:** The practice of being unjust and unfair.
- **Stakeholders Involved in the case:**
 - Ritwik as a beneficiary of government reimbursement.
 - Me as a friend of Ritwik
 - Government agencies involved
 - Society at large
- **Course of Action:**
 - **Options ahead of Ritwik:**
 - Just follow others and makes fictitious claims as it's for government agencies to

ensure that no false claims are entertained.

- Knowingly or unknowingly, Ritwik is harboring a wrong belief that his moral responsibility does not arise because government functionaries are expected to verify details and only after verification pass a payment order. If the authorities have not taken care to do their job, it is they who are responsible and not he. But this answer choice as explained above, is wrong.
- When everyone is cheating the system, Ritwik cannot do anything singly, he should follow the crowd.
 - Ritwik is also wrong in justifying his improper conduct on the ground that everybody else in a similar situation in his village has done the same.
 - This is a bandwagon impropriety as we may call it. Bandwagon behavior is a conduct of imitating others – irrespective of whether the conduct in itself is right or wrong.
 - Populism causes social aberration, and this is common in our country – everybody wants to take the benefit of government schemes irrespective of whether the eligibility conditions apply to him or not. Other’s conduct is good for imitation only to the extent it is worthy.
 - Confucius put it very nicely, “If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.”
- It’s the problem of the government as they provide relief whenever natural calamities occur for winning cheap popularity, rather they should scale down the benefits.
 - The fact that governments provide relief on a liberal scale is no argument for misusing such relief. Scale of benefits has no connection with morally desirable conduct in this case.
- As a friend of Ritwik, I would tell him that the way he opted for cash reimbursement despite his crops are in good condition is wrong and the above-mentioned options should not be exercised by Ritwik, as they are just excuses, therefore I would suggest him to make only genuine claims not the fake ones, so, that the needy should able to get its claim.
- Ritwik should only have made genuine claims:
 - The choice is correct course of action. Actually, moral responsibility springs from within. One source of ethical values is conscience. Inside every sentient moral agent there is a voice which tells him/her what is right and what is wrong. An action is wrong, even when nobody else has observed it if it does not pass the test of morality.
 - Ritwik or for that matter anybody else deserves the benefit of flood relief only if he has suffered specific losses due to flood. If crop has been lost then for crop loss the claim is morally sound. If no loss has taken place, one cannot make a claim at all. Whether government sanctions a false claim or not is not relevant from his ethical perspective.
 - It is with this deep sensibility that the great philosopher Immanuel Kant had written “Two things awe me most, the starry sky above me and the moral law within me”. One has to remain sensitive to the promptings of conscience.

Conclusion

The course of action of not making false claim and be morally correct is the best-case scenario of the above-mentioned case, as it will bolster his moral standing among the society.

