



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

You are an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer posted in a developing country that is known for its human rights violations and corruption. Your job is to represent India's interests and promote friendly relations with the host country. However, you find that your host country's government is involved in several unethical practices, including suppression of political dissent, censorship of media, and siphoning off foreign aid.

One day, you receive a confidential report from your embassy that confirms the host country's government's involvement in illegal activities, including money laundering, trafficking of drugs and arms, and supporting terrorist organizations. The report also states that some Indian companies are indirectly involved in these illegal activities by providing them with funding and logistics support.

Q. In this scenario, what would you do as an IFS officer, and how would you justify your actions ethically?

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly explaining the case.
- Discuss about various stakeholders and ethical issues involved in the case.
- Discuss the various options available in front of IFS officer.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- The case revolves around an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer posted in a developing country known for its human rights violations and corruption. The host country's government is involved in several unethical practices, including suppression of political dissent, censorship of media, and siphoning off foreign aid. He received a confidential report confirming the host country's government's involvement in illegal activities, including money laundering, trafficking of drugs and arms, and supporting terrorist organizations, with the involvement of some Indian companies indirectly.

Body

- **Stakeholder Involved:**
 - The host country's government,
 - Indian companies,
 - Indian embassy,
 - Indian Ministry of External Affairs,
 - Indian Ministry of Home Affairs,
 - Indian public,
 - International organizations.
- **Ethical issues Involved:**
 - Promoting India's interests while maintaining ethical standards.

- Reporting illegal activities while protecting diplomatic relations.
- Preventing Indian companies' involvement in unethical practices while promoting their business interests.
- **Possible Solutions and Justifications:**
 - **Review the Confidential Report:** Firstly, I would verify the authenticity of the report, ensuring that the information is accurate and reliable. Once confirmed, I would report the matter to my superiors in the embassy and share the report with the relevant authorities in India, such as the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - **Option 1: Report the illegal activities to your superiors and take action against Indian companies' involvement.**
 - One possible solution is to report the illegal activities to my superiors and take action against Indian companies' involvement.
 - This would require me to be truthful and transparent in my reporting and take a firm stand against any involvement of Indian companies in the illegal activities.
 - As an IFS officer, my duty is not only to promote India's interests but also to ensure that Indian companies follow ethical business practices and do not engage in any illegal activities.
 - **Pros:** This option would uphold ethical standards, promote accountability, and prevent Indian companies from engaging in illegal activities.
 - **Cons:** This option could strain diplomatic relations and compromise India's interests in the host country.
 - **Option 2: Maintain friendly relations with the host country and overlook the illegal activities.**
 - Another possible solution is to maintain friendly relations with the host country and overlook the illegal activities. This would require me to prioritize India's interests over ethical concerns and turn a blind eye to the host country's unethical practices.
 - However, this option raises ethical concerns about my duty as an IFS officer to promote human rights and democratic values and your responsibility to uphold ethical standards in international relations.
 - **Pros:** This option would maintain friendly relations and promote India's interests in the host country.
 - **Cons:** This option would compromise ethical standards, promote illegal activities, and damage India's reputation.
 - **Option 3: Take a nuanced approach and engage in constructive dialogue with the host country.**
 - A third possible solution is to take a nuanced approach and engage in constructive dialogue with the host country. This would involve raising your concerns about the illegal activities and the involvement of Indian companies with the host country's officials in a diplomatic and tactful manner.
 - This option is the most ethically desirable, as it promotes a collaborative and constructive approach to addressing the issue and respects India's interests and the host country's sovereignty.
 - **Pros:** This option would promote collaborative and constructive relations, uphold ethical standards, and protect India's interests in the host country.
 - **Cons:** This option could require time and resources, may not be effective in preventing illegal activities.

Conclusion

- As an IFS officer, I would verify the report's authenticity and report the matter to my superiors in the embassy and the relevant authorities in India. I would then choose the third option that is to take a nuanced approach to engage in constructive dialogue with the host country, raising concerns about illegal activities and Indian companies' involvement in a diplomatic and tactful manner. This option would promote ethical standards, protect India's interests, and maintain diplomatic relations.

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