



## Mains Practice Question

### Case Study

Recently, a 19-year-old Dalit man who was part of catering service was attacked after he accidentally touched the food on the plate of an upper caste person at a wedding function. The matter was resolved after other people present there intervened and the victim returned home. However, the accused and his aides later went to the victim's residence and beat him up. When other members of the family tried to intervene, they were also beaten up. Further, the accused also damaged a motorcycle parked on the premises of the house. Despite this, police did not make any arrest and took the matter lightly. Due to inaction of police in making any arrest, the situation is further deteriorating and clashes broke out between two opposite groups of upper and lower caste.

**(a)** As an IPS officer, how would you resolve this issue and what would be your course of action?

**(b)** How could you prevent re-occurrence of such incidents in your district?

16 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.
- Discuss the course of action that should be taken by IPS officer.
- Conclude by giving suggestions so that these types of incidents could be curtailed.

### Introduction

- The case involves the assault on the Dalit boy for touching the plate of upper caste person, and after this incident, groups from both the sides are indulging in violence, a senior police officer who has been allotted the duty to resolve the issue.

### Body

- **Ethical issues involved:**
  - **Constitutional Morality:** It's the duty of the senior police officer to follow rule book.
  - **Neutrality:** The case highlighted the need for neutrality by public servants, the state should always remain neutral and must not take sides based on religion, caste, gender etc.
- **Stakeholders involved in the case:**
  - Victim of violence - 19-year-old Dalit man
  - Family members of the victim.
  - The preparators who assaulted Dalit man for touching the plate.
  - Family members of the assaulting group
  - IPS officer appointed to resolve this case
  - Society at large
- **Ethical Dilemmas involved:**
  - **Public accountability v/s not following Duty:** It's the dilemma faced by the IPS officer, that he might not take his duty towards the people seriously and consider these types of

protests as usual things, but in real sense he should rather perform his duty with compassion and without any bias.

▪ **Situational Ethics:**

- **Crisis Management:** Handling crisis efficiently with limited resources and without or minimum adverse effects to the local communities.
- **Maintenance of Law and Order:** Infighting between two groups may lead to sectarian violence and riots, therefore IPS officer needs to work on maintaining law and order in this tense situation.
- **Timely decision making:** It is crucial to maintain the healthy fabric of society and to enhance trust among the public by implementing efficient decision making.

▪ **Course of Action:**

- The first course of action can be that IPS takes the case lightly and supports the dominant upper caste side.
  - This course of action is totally vague and it's against all the basic principles of rule of law and doesn't seem to be fit in a sensible society.
- The second course of action can be that IPS takes strict action against the assaulter and make sure that the person is behind the bars, after the due investigation, because as per the Article 15 of the Constitution, there is prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, caste and place of birth etc. Further it violates Article-14 (equality before law), Article 21 (right to dignified life) and is against Article 17 (abolishment of Untouchability).
- In the next step, the IPS officer should try to organize and promote the announcements and campaigns, to make people understand that they will be punished for doing such discrimination in future.
- The IPS officer should try to hold meetings with all the members of both communities and explain to them discrimination and assaulting any lower caste person is wrong and each person in society is equal and should be treated equally.
- Further the IPS officer could suggest the government to promote inter dining at public places and other such programs, so that the ill practices of casteism can be nullified.

## Conclusion

The second course of action is the best fit in this situation as it eases the tension of sectarian violence and enables both sides to have a constructive dialogue to know each other better with the help from state administration, Lastly, educating and creating awareness among the masses through public outreach programs will be an effective way to tackle this problem of untouchability in long term.