



Mains Practice Question

Case Studies

Vinod is an honest and sincere IAS officer. Recently, he has taken over as Managing Director of the State Road Transport Corporation, his sixth transfer in the past three years. His peers acknowledge his vast knowledge, affability and uprightness. The Chairman of the State Road Transport Corporation is a powerful politician and is very close to the Chief Minister. Vinod comes to know about many alleged irregularities of the Corporation and the highhandedness of the Chairman in financial matters. A Board Member of the Corporation belonging to the Opposition Party meets Vinod and hands over a few documents along with a video recording in which the Chairman appears to be demanding bribes for placing a huge order for the supply of QMR tyres. Vinod recollects the Chairman expediting clearing of pending bills of QMR tyres. Vinod confronts the Board Member as to why he is shying away from exposing the Chairman with the so-called solid proof he has with him. The member informs him that the Chairman refuses to yield to his threats. He adds that Vinod may earn recognition and public support if he himself exposes the Chairman. Further, he tells Vinod that once his party comes to power, Vinod's professional growth would be assured. Vinod is aware that he may be penalized if he exposes the Chairman and may further be transferred to a distant place. He knows that the Opposition Party stands a better chance of coming to power in the forthcoming elections. However, he also realizes that the Board Member is trying to use him for his own political gains.

(a) As a conscientious civil servant, evaluate the options available to Vinod.

(b) In the light of the above case, comment upon the ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy. (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Briefly introduce the scenario presented in the case study.
- Evaluate the pros and cons of options available to Vinod in this case and comment upon the ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy such as compromised integrity, misuse of power etc.
- Conclude by highlighting the importance of upholding ethical standards in bureaucracy and the challenges faced by civil servants when political interests clash with their ethical obligations.

Introduction

Vinod, a conscientious civil servant, faces the **ethical dilemma of exposing alleged corruption involving the Chairman**, aligning with his **integrity and accountability** principles, or **remaining silent to avoid potential personal and professional consequences**.

Body

Here are the options available to him:

- **Expose the Chairman and Alleged Corruption:**

- **Pro:** Upholds **integrity and ethical values by combating corruption.**
- **Con:** Risk of **retaliation and potential harm to his career**, including transfers to remote areas.
- **Stay Silent and Continue with Duties:**
 - **Pro:** Avoids **potential personal and professional risks.**
 - **Con:** **Fails in his duty to address corruption** and uphold ethical standards.
- **Seek Legal and Internal Remedies:**
 - **Pro:** Upholds ethics by **following due process and the rule of law.**
 - **Con:** May face obstacles in **getting a fair internal investigation**, given the Chairman's influence.
- **Engage in Whistleblower Protection Measures:**
 - **Pro:** Balances the **need to expose corruption with self-protection.**
 - **Con:** Could still face **professional and personal consequences**, although to a lesser extent.

(b) In the light of the above case, comment upon the ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy.

- **Compromised Integrity:** Political pressure can compromise bureaucrats' integrity.
- **Misuse of Power:** Bureaucrats may misuse authority for political or personal gain.
- **Partisan Decision-Making:** Politicization leads to biased decision-making.
- **Diminished Accountability:** Accountability becomes challenging in a politicized environment.
- **Instrumentalization of Civil Servants:** Politicians may exploit civil servants for political purposes.
- **Erosion of Public Trust:** Politicization erodes public trust in government institutions.
- **Normalization of Unethical Practices:** Unethical behavior can become the norm.

Conclusion

Vinod's decision should prioritize upholding the principles of integrity, transparency, and public interest. The case underscores the need for a robust and impartial bureaucratic system that can withstand political pressures, ensuring that civil servants can fulfill their duties without fear of reprisal for doing what is ethically right.