



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

Ms. Sunanda Vashisht, IAS, comes from a family with strong moral and religious inclinations. She is the DM of a Hindu majority district with substantial Muslim population. There is only one good town hall in the district headquarters controlled by the estate department under the DM. Every year, both Hindus and Muslims used to celebrate their prominent festivals like Eid, Diwali or Ganesh Puja, in this hall. This year Eid and a well-known Hindu festival coincides. And the groups of both communities protesting for allotting the hall to celebrate their religious festival.

(a) Mention the ethical and situational challenges that are faced by the DM.

(b) Also mention your course of action to resolve the issue so that both communities can celebrate their festivals peacefully.

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The stakeholders involved in this case study are:

- Me as a DM
- The religious leaders of both the communities.
- The community and society as a whole (including the people of the religious communities).
- Other officials and personnel under the state govt.

The ethical and situational challenges that are faced by the DM are:

- **Ethical issues:**
 - **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.
 - **Impartiality:** Taking the issues and concerns of both communities with equal intensity and resolving the issues with same priorities without fear, favour, affection and ill will.
 - **Tolerance:** Facilitate the peaceful celebration of every religious community irrespective of her personal religious beliefs, likes and dislikes.
 - **Conflict of Interest:** DM's religious belief on side of one religion and issue of allotting hall to either religious community.
- **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:** In front of protest by both communities. It may invoke religious violence and riots by disturbing elements of society.
 - **Timely decision making** to prevail the healthy work culture in the office and trust among the public for efficient decision making.

DM's course of action to resolve the issue so that both communities can celebrate their festivals peacefully:

As there are people protesting to pursue their own interest. The probability of violent protest and riots

can't be ignored. The three major issues are:

- Ending the protest by the communities,
- Deciding the question of hall and venue for the festival celebration of both the communities.
- The peaceful celebration of the festivals.

Let's decide/resolve each issue one by one:

- As both the communities are eager to celebrate their prominent festivals and under their religious emotions they are protesting, situation could take violent nature. To end the protest by the communities, I will:
 - Invite the religious leaders of both communities and meet them along with other public officials.
 - I will inform them about the sensitivity of the issue like their protest can harm the peace of both the communities and whole society due to the action of some disturbing elements present in the society.
 - I will arrange deployment of adequate police force at the site of protest.
- **Deciding the question of hall and venue for the festival celebration of both the communities.**
 - We (public officials) will ensure them that a suitable place, adequate facilities, and tight security will be provided by the government to both the communities.
 - And all the decisions will be taken by bringing all the major stakeholders into confidence.
 - But the pre-requisite condition for any further action is the ending of protest by the communities and the respective religious leaders must pursue their people to end the protest and the state machinery will help the leaders in all possible way.
 - The case study mentions the only Hall in the town and presently two contenders are there for the hall. Allowing one community and denying another to celebrate festival in the hall may lead to confrontation among the stakeholders.
 - So, I will choose 2 sets of places (either public field or rented private land), both adequately separated from each other (to avoid any future confrontation and for other security reasons) and ask community leaders to choose one place from either of group.
 - The government will facilitate all the arrangements ranging from security and management.
 - Administration will also charge the reasonable fee from the communities for the services and will ensure the community that this fee will be used for constructing another such hall to avoid such conditions in future.
 - I will ask the neighboring district to provide adequate resources like security personnel etc. To manage the crowd at the venue.
- **The peaceful celebration of the festivals.**
 - I will establish a proper Standard operating Procedure (SoP) for each and every thing and procedure.
 - I will establish a proper and effective 24*7 communication line between people organizing events, govt officials, me (DM) and other stakeholders to prevent any unforeseen event.
 - On the Day of event extra Vigil will be maintained. Human resources like Rapid Action Force (RAF), fire services and other instant demanded resources will be kept on high alert mode on the day of celebration.
- Usually scarce resources, diverse communities and emotional elements create trouble in society. It is the duty of every stakeholder of society to contribute to the wellbeing of the society by cooperating among people with diverse backgrounds and managing the scarce recourse.