



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

Arjun is an IAS officer posted as District Magistrate (DM) in a backward district. The district has recently been declared as an “Aspirational District” and is receiving special funds for education, health, and infrastructure development.

During a routine review, Arjun discovers that a large portion of the education funds have been diverted by middle-level officials to construct a new VIP Guest House. The justification given is that frequent visits of ministers and senior bureaucrats require better accommodation facilities, which indirectly helps the district by attracting more attention and projects.

Arjun confronts the officials, but they argue that:

- The project has political backing and halting it will upset powerful leaders.
- The guest house is “technically within public interest.”
- Exposing the misuse might delay other ongoing schemes due to political retaliation.

At the same time, Arjun receives a complaint from local civil society groups that several schools lack even basic facilities like toilets, clean drinking water, and teachers. He realizes that continuing the misuse of funds will directly harm the education of children, worsening inequality.

If he resists, he risks straining relations with political leaders, possible transfer, and jeopardizing his ability to work in the district. If he complies, the basic rights of children will be sacrificed.

Questions

- (a) What are the ethical dilemmas faced by Arjun in this case?
- (b) If you were guiding young civil servants on this case, what ethical principles and leadership qualities would you emphasize for handling such dilemmas in public life?
- (c) Suggest the most appropriate course of action for Arjun, balancing administrative pragmatism with ethical responsibility.

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Answer will be published shortly.

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