



Case Study – 1 : District Collector's Responsibility To Conduct Fair Elections

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You are a District Collector of a city which is scheduled to go to polls in a week. The responsibility to conduct fair elections has been given to you. However, suddenly your mother suffers a heart attack and has to be admitted to a hospital in your home district, which is at a distance of 250 kms from the district of your posting. Doctor informs you that she needs to be shifted in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and her chances of survival are bleak. You are the only child and want to be with her and your family at this moment. Your plea for an emergency leave has been rejected by the Election Commission. What would you do under such circumstances?

Solution

I have been presented with an ethical dilemma of choosing between personal and administrative responsibilities. Under the given circumstances, both of them demand my immediate personal attention. I will try to deal with the situation in the following manner:

I will visit my mother immediately after work and then try to come back the very same day. I will ask the doctor to keep me updated about my mother's health. I shall communicate the same to my seniors in the government and request a medical attendant to my mother. Since the distance of the hospital is only 250 kms, I will try to pay a visit to my mother during the lean phases of electoral preparation by taking due permission from election commission. In my absence to ensure that the elections are conducted peacefully, I'll take the following steps:

I will keep the election commission informed of my absence from city after office hours.

I will ensure that my subordinates and colleagues are aware of their duties and work so that even in my absence, polls preparation and execution does not suffer.

I will keep only selected colleagues informed of my absence from the city so that the general assumption keeps prevailing that the district collector is in the city.

I will always be in constant touch with all the concerned authorities and stakeholders.

While at work I will try to be in touch with my mother so as to make her feel comfortable. During the telephonic conversation will try to comfort her that she would be well soon and also assure her that after the elections I will spend more time with her. I will try to use technological tools like Skype for video chatting with her on Internet so that she feels better. I will also request the best doctors in the district to examine my mother's case and ensure that she receives the best medical attention and care.