



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

Mr. Chandrakant is a principal in a college. There is a professor who happens to be the brother-in-law of an MLA of the ruling Party. The professor's behavior towards fellow female teachers and students is derogatory. Several females have accused him of harassing them. The victims have lodged several complaints about his behavior. They are also afraid of filing a police complaint against him as he has threatened them to spoil their career if they do so.

Mr. Chandrakant is in a dilemma. He wants to act against the professor, but he also fears the political backlash from the MLA and his party. He knows that the professor is misusing his power and influence to harass the females and violate their dignity and rights. He also knows that the victims are suffering from mental trauma and insecurity due to the professor's actions.

1. What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
2. What are the options available for Mr. Chandrakant?
3. What should Mr. Chandrakant do and why?

02 Jun, 2023 GS Paper 4 Case Studies

Introduction:

In a college, Mr. Chandrakant, the principal, grapples with a dilemma. The professor, who happens to be the brother-in-law of an influential MLA, is accused of derogatory behavior towards female teachers and students. Despite complaints and threats to their careers, the victims fear taking legal action. Mr. Chandrakant seeks to act against the professor but fears political repercussions. The urgent need for justice and protection of rights in the face of power dynamics weighs heavily on his decision.

The ethical issues involved in this case:

- Sexual harassment
- Abuse of power and influence
- Moral responsibility
- Conflict of interest
- Violation of human rights
- Failure to uphold professional ethics

Stakeholders involved in the case:

- The professor
- The female teachers and students
- Mr. Chandrakant
- The ruling party MLA
- The higher authorities

Options Available to Mr. Chandrakant:

- **Do nothing:** Ignore the complaints and remain silent to avoid any trouble from the MLA and his party.
- **Conduct Inquiry:** Form an internal committee in the college to inquire into the allegations.
- **Speak to the professor directly:** This may be an option if Mr. Chandrakant believes that the professor is unaware of the impact of his behavior. However, it is important to note that this may not be effective if the professor is unwilling to change his behavior.
- **Convey the issue to the MLA:** Since the MLA is people's representative, it may be a possible option to report the issue to the MLA to stop the professor from practicing such a behavior.
- **Report the professor to the higher authorities:** Report the matter to the higher authorities and seek their intervention and support.
- **Report the professor to the police:** Encourage the victims to file a police complaint and provide every possible support to them.

The Possible course of action:

Since the issue is very big and grave where political interference is involved the most ethical and courageous option for Mr Chandrakant is to encourage and support the victims to file a police complaint and a complaint under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. So that proper legal procedure could be followed. Apart from this, he should also:

- **Ensure the safety and support of the victims:** Mr Chandrakant should provide a safe environment for the victims to express their concerns and seek support. He can create a confidential reporting mechanism or designate a trusted staff member to handle such complaints.
- **Document and investigate the complaints:** Mr Chandrakant should diligently document each complaint made against the professor, including specific details, dates, and any evidence available. An unbiased investigation should be initiated, ensuring confidentiality for the victims.
- **Seek legal advice:** Mr. Chandrakant should consult legal experts to understand the legal implications and available options for taking action against the professor. They can provide guidance on navigating the situation while minimizing potential risks.
- **Engage relevant authorities:** If the college has an internal disciplinary committee, Mr Chandrakant should involve them in the investigation process. Additionally, he should reach out to higher education regulatory bodies or associations to seek their support and guidance in addressing the issue.
- **Maintain transparency and accountability:** It is important for Mr Chandrakant to communicate his actions and decisions to the victims, faculty, and staff, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process. This will help build trust and confidence among the college community.
- **Engage external support:** If necessary, Mr. Chandrakant can involve external organizations or NGOs that specialize in addressing sexual harassment issues. These organizations can provide guidance, support, and advocacy for the victims, as well as help ensure an impartial investigation.
- **Preserve evidence and protect whistleblowers:** Mr Chandrakant should take measures to protect any evidence related to the professor's misconduct. Additionally, he must assure the whistleblowers that their identities will be kept confidential and that they will be protected from any potential retaliation.
- **Implement preventive measures:** Alongside addressing the immediate issue, Mr Chandrakant should work towards implementing preventive measures to create a safer and more respectful environment within the college. This may include sensitization programs, awareness campaigns, and policy revisions related to harassment and gender-based violence.

Conclusion

- This option would uphold his duty as a principal and a public servant to protect the dignity, rights and safety of the female teachers and students. It would also send a strong message to the professor and the others that such behaviour would not be tolerated in the college. It would also empower the victims to seek justice and redressal for their grievances. It would also improve the academic environment, reputation, and morale of the college.

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