



Mains Practice Question

Case Study

Rohit has aided a businessman by speedily paying the bills for the goods he had provided to the government. The payment was sizable and it enabled the merchant to avoid a cash shortage. The businessman was so moved that he gave Rohit gifts as a token of his gratitude. Rohit turns them down. Soon after, Rohit visits a hill station with his family where the businessman owns a hotel. He conveys in advance to the businessman that he would like to stay in his hotel and checks into that hotel. The hotel management, on instructions from the businessman, treats Rohit and his family as guests and refuses to accept payment from Rohit. Even Rohit does not insist on making payment.

Q.1 Discuss the ethical issues and ethical dilemmas involved in the case.

Q.2 How would you have behaved if you were at Rohit's place? Suggest the way-out.

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The case given above depicts the problem of tardiness in the process and procedures in the working of public departments and shows how a public servant gives priority to one person over others for the sake of the fulfillment of self-interest. This case is the best example of portraying the state of the public departments. However, it does not mean that an employee should take it to advantage rather he should try to set things right.

Ethical issues involved in the case are as follows:

- **Lack of Integrity:** Rohit's act of first refusing the gift but later accepting the hospitality without paying the required amount.
- **Code of Conduct:** Rohit's special treatment to a particular seller and accepting the hospitality without paying. These acts of his are against the All India Services Rules.
- **Against the Code of Ethics:** Morally he is defying the set of values given by Nolan Committee.
- **Opportunist Attitude /Behaviour:** First denying the gift due to fear of being caught but later accepting the hospitality due to anonymity factor shows his opportunistic behaviour.
- **Misuse of Power/Official position (Self-aggrandizement):** Being a public servant it is his prime responsibility to see that he should use the resources and power assigned to him by the Govt. in the public interest.
- **Lack of Impartiality:** As a public servant he should treat all the sellers equally without favouring one over another but his act of giving priority to one seller over others shows lack of impartiality.
- **Issue of giving Bribe:** The businessman act of offering hospitality to Rohit without any charge and offering the gifts and kind is an act of bribing the official.

Ethical dilemmas involved in the case are as follows:

- **Integrity v/s monetary gain:** Accepting the free offer of hospitality raises questions over his integrity but if he goes for integrity then it leads to his monetary loss.
- **Personal interest v/s Public interest:** If he goes for maintaining his personal relations with the businessman then it conflicts with the public interest.

Stakeholders in the case:

- Rohit and his Family
- Businessman
- The whole Public Department

My Course of Action to deal with the situation:

- First of all, If I were in Rohit's position then I would have stuck to the values like honesty, impartiality, probity, public interest, etc and rules and regulations like the Code of conduct, as it is my prime responsibility to see that in any way public interest should not get hampered.
- Even if I have to address the concern of that particular businessman then I would have tried to address it through proper channels like asking him to raise the complaint on his part to raise the issue of delay in payment.
- And if his problem had been resolved with my advice and he had offered me gifts in cash or kind to show his gratitude towards me then I would have categorically denied his offer of gifts because it is the right thing to do.
- As receiving gifts from him will put me in his obligation and he would expect me in the future too to do something for him, so, clearly saying no to his gifts is a better option.

The problem of corruption and corrupt values has become very common in the case of public servants in day-to-day administration. In cases like these, there is a need for strictness from the side of the department and adherence to public values and ethics on the personal part.

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