



Mains Practice Question

Q. Suppose you are an officer-in-charge of implementing a social service scheme to provide support to old and destitute women. An old and illiterate woman comes to you to avail the benefits of the scheme. However, she has no documents to show that she fulfils the eligibility criteria. But after meeting her and listening to her you feel that she certainly needs support. Your enquirers also show that she is really destitute and living in a pitiable condition. You are in a dilemma as to what to do. Putting her under the scheme without necessary documents would clearly be a violation of rules. But denying her the support would be cruel and inhuman.

- a. Can you think of a rational way to resolve this dilemma?
- b. Give your reasons for it. (250 words)

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(a) Ethical Issues involved are:

- Conflict between Objectivity & Compassion.
- Crisis of Conscience.
- Fiduciary Responsibility to use public funds for intended purpose.
- Professional Responsibility to follow the rule book.

In view of above ethical issues, following short term measures can be taken:

- Requesting some NGO like HelpAge India having expertise in this field to help the poor woman until alternative arrangements are made.
- Accommodating her in some other scheme where she may be eligible.

For long term solution of the problem I shall try to generate relevant documents for her so that in future she doesn't encounter such procedural problems. Also, as a proactive measure, I shall try to find if there are other such destitute who are not getting benefits due to lack of documents.

(b) I would give following reasons to support my stance:

- Administrators are expected to be compassionate towards the voiceless but following the rules is equally important.
- Violating rules would set a wrong precedent.
- In the present era, administration and civil society are expected to work synergistically. Hence taking help from NGOs is justified.
- Administrators need to have creative bent of mind to find such innovative solutions.