

Q.1 Deepak is posted as the Deputy Commissioner of Police in a busy urban district of a Metropolitan city. The students of a reputed university are planning a massive protest rally against a bill passed by the Central Government. Although, the permission has been granted by the administration for peaceful assembly, Deepak has a strong and highly reliable Intel that some miscreants might disguise as students and cause violence in the rally. Deepak requests his superior and persuades him to put a stay on the rally. The students are enraged by this decision and launch a campaign on social media demanding the resignation of top police officials including Deepak's for having denied the permission for a democratic and peaceful protest. In a matter of hours, Deepak becomes the centre of online vitriol and thousands of memes. It hurts Deepak a lot. Even his family is highly perturbed by the series of events in Deepak's professional life.

How do you read this situation? Don't you think social media has made governance difficult? With social media having become an integral part of public life, is it even possible to get completely detached from the virtual world and do one's job? What qualities Deepak must possess to overcome this phase in his life? Should he respond to these personal attacks and mudslinging on the social media platforms or should he remain silent and just keep doing his job? Analyse.

Approach - It expects students to write about stakeholders involved and evaluate the ethical issues involved and address various issues asked in case study.

Introduction

The situation presents a very real ethical dilemma faced by many hard working and dedicated civil servants. The core issue in situation is managing freedom of expression also managing personal and professional lives which are intrinsically linked.

Body

Stakeholders involved:

- Deepak as DCP.
- Deepak's family disturbed by situation arising.
- Deepak's superior officials and top police officials.
- Central government with certain bill passed.
- Genuinely protesting students and others with public interest.
- Miscreants planning to cause violence.

Different values involved in case:

- Honesty
- Transparency
- Objectivity
- Anonymity
- Commitment to public welfare

The ethical moral issues involved in the case:

- Responsibility to act against a social menace.
- Public service values and maintaining integrity of the office prone to political influence.
- Consequences of actions and inactions which have the potential to change discourse.
- Courage of conviction.
- Freedom of Speech v/s Public Safety.

Social media making governance difficult:

- The rise of polarising and divisive content has been a defining moment in social media platforms. Which is fed by fake news propagation through social media channels.
- Social media has enabled a style of populist politics, which on the negative side allows extreme speech to thrive in digital spaces that are unregulated, particularly in regional languages. Therefore it's difficult for governance agencies mostly police force involved in such cases.
- But at same time Social media has made Indian politics and society more inclusive by allowing different people, who were traditionally excluded from politics and larger society due to geography and demography, to gain direct entry into the sociopolitical process.

Detaching from social media:

- Yes it's possible to be detached from social media. It will keep Deepak away from baseless criticism. Multiple studies have found a strong link between social media and an increased risk for depression, anxiety, self-harm, and even suicidal thoughts. Social media may promote negative experiences such as Inadequacy about your life or appearance.

Qualities to be possessed by Deepak to overcome such situations:

- Deepak must have fortitude to balance work and professional life. Respond situation with humility and grace, positivity can help in tackle the situation. He must have qualities in managing public pressure v/s carrying out one's duty.
- Taking decisions based on objectivity and ensuring freedom of expression as per constitutional values.
- Also strike a balance between the rights of the individual and the concerns of the state. With use of test of proportionality as per Supreme Court judgment in Anuradha basin case. Any restraint made on a fundamental freedom must be necessary and proportionate to the goal that it seeks to achieve.

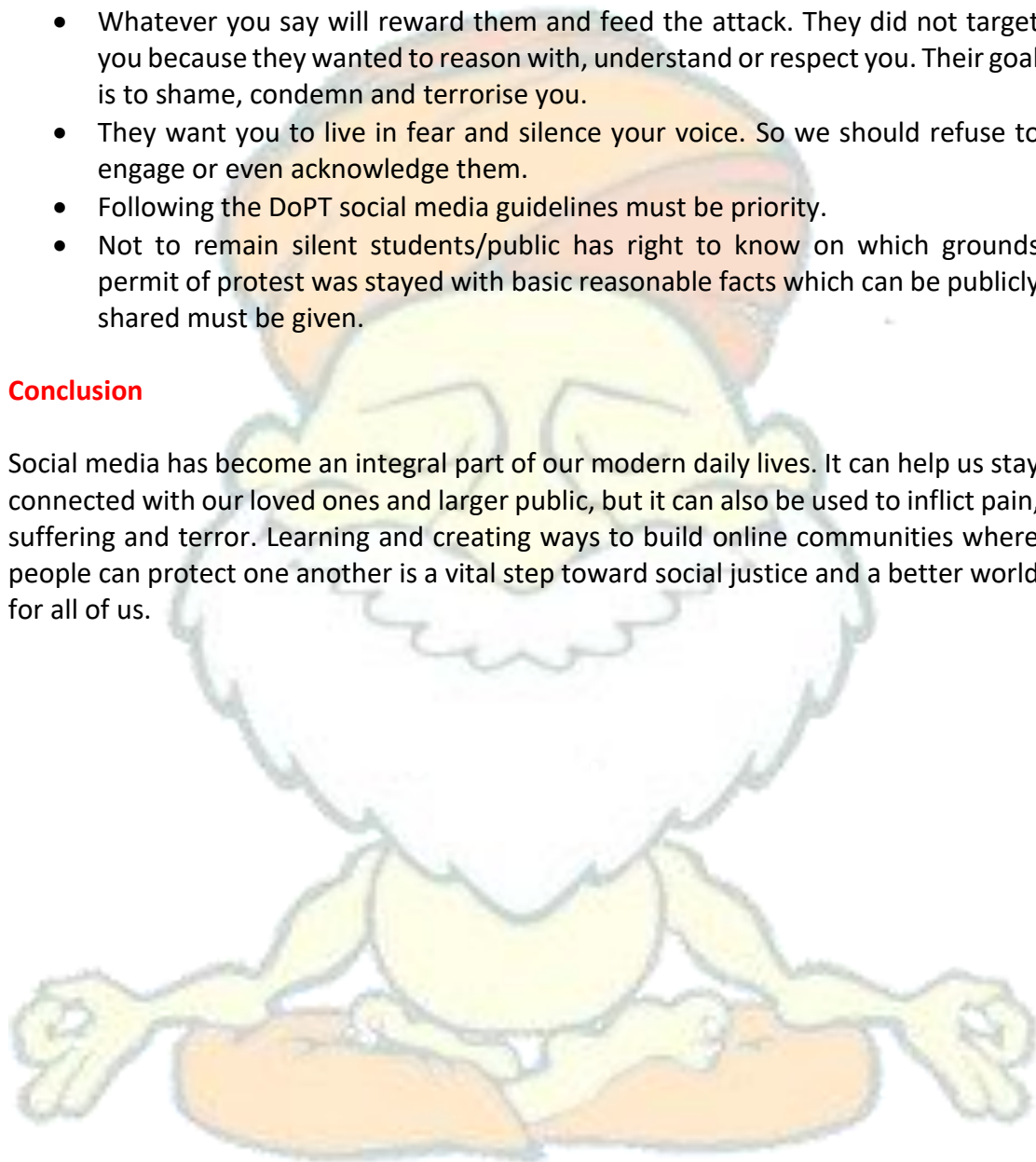
Responding to personal attacks on social media:

- Social media attacks can terrify and paralyze us. Aggressors aim to silence, shame, humiliate, bully, intimidate, threaten, terrorize and virtually destroy their human target. They wield weapons like rumours, innuendo, lies, hate speech and violent imagery.

- From online forums to community groups, research and experience shows people are more willing to insult and use menacing language online than in person, especially when there's the protection of anonymity behind a computer
- Social media aggressors want to single you out, isolate you and cut you off from allies. Don't let them. Reach out to people you trust those who will listen, validate, respect and support you.
- Whatever you say will reward them and feed the attack. They did not target you because they wanted to reason with, understand or respect you. Their goal is to shame, condemn and terrorise you.
- They want you to live in fear and silence your voice. So we should refuse to engage or even acknowledge them.
- Following the DoPT social media guidelines must be priority.
- Not to remain silent students/public has right to know on which grounds permit of protest was stayed with basic reasonable facts which can be publicly shared must be given.

Conclusion

Social media has become an integral part of our modern daily lives. It can help us stay connected with our loved ones and larger public, but it can also be used to inflict pain, suffering and terror. Learning and creating ways to build online communities where people can protect one another is a vital step toward social justice and a better world for all of us.



Q.2 You have joined as the Director of Operations in a government department. After joining the office, you start getting signals from your colleagues and subordinates that your's is a plum posting. Your predecessors have made fortunes out of this post and you are lucky to have got this position without actually even having bribed the superiors. They also start sharing ideas on how to extract quick fortunes by misusing your powers. Being an honest officer, you squarely refuse the ideas and tell them you have no such intentions. Within a week, you are called by your reporting officer who ridicules you for being naive and stupid for having refused to earn good money. He tells you that he is fine with your honesty though and that you are free to choose your saintly path. However, you must keep your mouth shut and don't interfere with the processes already defined and established by your predecessors. He also threatens that you shall be shunted to a remote location if you don't follow his directions.

How would you respond to this situation? Don't you think being honest doesn't only mean non-participation in corrupt activities but also standing firm against them? But if the entire system is against you and forcing you to follow suit, what are the options available to you? Which one would you choose and why? Substantiate.

Approach - It expects students to consider about fundamental principles or criteria that integrate and rearrange the process of dealing with ethical dilemmas in public administration such democratic accountability of administration, the rule of law and the principle of legality, professional integrity and write about stakeholders and different ethical values involved.

Introduction

This case involves a dilemma between professional obligations of a public servant in-charge as director of operations in office and his personal values. With highlighting the different stakeholders you have to write about different issues asked in question.

Body

Ethical values pertaining to case:

- Probity and integrity
- Ethical neutrality
- Transparency
- Good governance
- Honesty
- Moral righteousness
- Dedication to Public Service

Stakeholders involved in the situation:

- Myself as Director of operations.
- Colleagues and subordinate in the office.
- Predecessors in the office.

- Reporting officer.
- Public and there larger interest.

Being honest and standing firm against corruption activities:

- Being trustworthy, loyal, fair, and sincere. An honest person is free of deceit, is truthful and sincere. Moreover, an honest person does not tell lies and always speaks the truth. In a nutshell, Honesty is being truthful and open. In these type of case officers need to have value of probity.
- Probity is act of strict adherence to highest principles and ideals (integrity, honesty) and avoiding corrupt or dishonest conduct. It exhorts for prioritisation of public interest in the actions of civil servants. This ensures to participate in matter and try to avert corrupt practices.
- Ensuring the system is incorruptible is the biggest objective of probity. Hence it will avoid the potential for misconduct, fraud and corruption.

Course of action:

Following advise of colleagues and subordinate:

- It will help in meeting expectations of colleagues and subordinate. Also avoiding dereliction of duty. It will ensures predecessors standards to be in place and will not disturb the chain of command.
- But being honest and fair it will go against moral and ethical values and can create crisis of conscience.
- Following such an order is not only against individual dignity but also against code of conduct of civil services.
- Not showing accountable behaviour.
- Showing escapist tendency by avoiding the situation.

Going against advice, not following colleagues and subordinate:

- It will ensure Deontological approach of Immanuel Kant suggests that it is immoral to take the bribe and one must adhere to his duty.
- It creates positive role models in the society and ensures behavioural regulation at personal level.
- Help in discharging the duties in an impartial, unbiased non-partisan and incorruptible manner.
- It will help in avoiding moral dissonance.
- Avoiding any conflict of interest.
- Opportunity to show administrative leadership.
- Showing impartial attitude of administration.
- Following such step would disrupt the relationship with colleagues and subordinate and nexus of corruption which was set by all and my predecessors. And may harm the working environment.

Asking for written orders on issues pertaining to corruption:

- Written order is a legal proof of involvement and clearly delineates the chain of command. Asking for a written order from my reporting officer might act as a deterrent insomuch as the senior might refuse to do so.

- However, communicating clearly the illegality of the act is important. The reporting officer might refrain from issuing such an order knowing the illegality of the act.
- Even after knowing the illegality of the act if the senior issues a written order the onus is on me. The written order would protect me in terms of culpability as far as my initiative is concerned. I can cite on being questioned that I acted under orders. This might be technically correct however it is not ethically sound and amounts to abdication of responsibility.
- In effect following this option still makes the act illegal as well as unethical. It can be questioned in a court of law and the defence that you were acting under orders might not hold a ground there. Similarly, this option does not augur well for probity in governance.

Taking counsel and advise for proactive action from senior:

- Talking to the highest authority seems to be a logical corollary of duly considered action when communicating clearly to the senior fails. I must clearly and objectively explain the situation to him while seeking his counsel.
- This might result in the highest authorities censoring the reporting officer and supporting you in following the due process in consonance with the call of your duty. However, on the other side it might earn me the ire of my reporting officer and he might hold a grudge against me.
- Another flipside of this option depends on the approach of the highest authority. If he is also in conformity with the chain of corruption and the other colleagues then this step might prove to be counterproductive and add pressure on me. If such be the case then it does not resolve the larger concerns of prevailing law and order conditions as well.

Taking matter to vigilance department:

- The Central Vigilance Commission is mandated under the CVC Act, 2003, to enquire or cause an enquiry into complaints against public servants wherein allegations of corruption are involved. The Commission can cause an enquiry through the Chief Vigilance Officer of the organisation concerned or CBI or any other anti-corruption investigating agency under the Government of India.

I will Choose Whistle Blower Provision and inform the vigilance department:

- As such plum post was given to me without any bribery there must be government's intention to act against such nexus of corruption. And bring them to the due process of law. Lodging a complaint under Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers Resolution (PIDPIR) in CVC.
- CVC is mandated not only to maintain the secrecy of the complainant's identity but also provide protection to the complainant against any physical threat, harassment or victimization.
- This will help to maintain the highest value probity and integrity in administration without harming self and working towards larger public interest.

Conclusion

Corruption has a disproportionate impact on the poor and most vulnerable, increasing costs and reducing access to services, including health, education and justice. Corruption erodes trust in government and undermines the social contract. This is cause for concern across the globe, but particularly in contexts of fragility and violence, as corruption fuels and perpetuates the inequalities and discontent that lead to fragility, violent extremism, and conflict. Hence it is imperative that all forms of corruption are rooted out for a “Atmanirbhar Bharat”.

