Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Ashok is Divisional Commissioner of one of the border districts of the North East State. A few years back, Military has taken over the neighbouring country after overthrowing the elected civil government. Civil war situation is prevailing in the country especially in last two years. However, internal situation further deteriorated due to rebel groups taking over control of certain populated areas near own border. Due to intense fight between military and rebel groups, civilian casualties has increased manifold in recent past. In the meantime, in one night Ashok got information from the local police guarding the border check post that there are about 200-250 people mainly women and children trying to cross over to our side of the border. There are also about 10 soldiers with their weapons in military uniform part of this group who wants to cross over. Women and Children are also crying and begging for help. A few of them are injured and bleeding profusely need immediate medical care. Ashok tried to contact Home Secretary of the State but failed to do so due to poor connectivity mainly due to inclement weather.

-
- **(a) What are the options available with Ashok to cope with the situation?**
- **(b) What are the ethical and legal dilemmas being faced by Ashok?**

- **(c) Which of the options, do you think would be more appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?**
- **(d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the Border Guarding Police in dealing with soldiers in uniform?**

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Humanitarian imperative, national security, border management, non-refoulement, medical aid, women and children, screening, disarmament, temporary shelter, identity verification, intelligence assessment, proportionality, due process, coordination

Model Answer

(a) Options Available

Ashok has three broad options: deny entry to the entire group; permit unconditional entry; or provide immediate humanitarian assistance while allowing controlled and screened entry under appropriate security protocols.

He may also establish a temporary holding and medical facility, separate vulnerable civilians from armed personnel, and simultaneously communicate with higher authorities through alternative channels.

(b) Ethical and Legal Dilemmas

The principal dilemma is between humanitarian compassion and national security. Women and injured civilians require immediate medical assistance, while armed foreign soldiers create risks of infiltration, espionage, weapons trafficking or cross-border violence.

Other dilemmas include protection of life versus border sovereignty, individual humanitarian rights versus collective security, and speed of emergency action versus proper verification.

(c) Most Appropriate Option

Ashok should adopt a humanitarian but security-conscious approach. He should permit immediate emergency medical treatment and temporary humanitarian protection for civilians, particularly women, children and the injured, while ensuring identity verification and security screening.

Armed personnel should not be allowed to retain unrestricted access with weapons. They should be safely disarmed, segregated and placed under appropriate custody or controlled supervision according to applicable law and instructions.

The entire process should be documented and communicated to the State Government, Central authorities and security agencies as soon as connectivity is restored.

(d) Precautions Regarding Soldiers

1. Separate armed personnel from civilian refugees.
2. Secure and inventory all weapons and ammunition.
3. Conduct identity and background verification.
4. Prevent unauthorised movement beyond the designated area.
5. Conduct security screening for intelligence and infiltration risks.
6. Maintain proper records, biometric identification where legally appropriate and continuous surveillance.
7. Ensure humane treatment and prohibit unnecessary force.
8. Coordinate with intelligence agencies, border forces, police and the competent Central authorities.

Conclusion

The appropriate approach is neither indiscriminate rejection nor uncontrolled entry. Ashok should uphold humanity without compromising national security by combining immediate humanitarian relief, controlled admission, disarmament, screening and institutional coordination.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP