Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

You have done MBA from a reputed institution three years back but could not get campus placement due to COVID-19 generated recession. However, after a lot of persuasion and series of competitive tests including written and interview, you managed to get a job in a leading shoe company. You have aged parents who are dependent and staying with you. You also recently got married after getting this decent job. You were allotted the Inspection Section which is responsible for clearing the final product. In first one year, you learnt your job well and was appreciated for your performance by the management. The company is doing good business for last five years in domestic market and this year it is decided even to export to Europe and Gulf countries. However, one large consignment to Europe was rejected by their Inspecting Team due to certain poor quality and was sent back. The top management ordered that ibid consignment to be cleared for the domestic market. As a part of Inspecting Team, you observed the glaring poor quality and brought to the knowledge of the Team Commander. However, the top management advised all the members of the team to overlook these defects as the management cannot bear such a huge loss. Rest of the team members except you promptly signed and cleared the consignment for domestic market, overlooking glaring defects. You again brought to the knowledge of the Team Commander that such consignment, if cleared even for

domestic market, will tarnish the image and reputation of the company and will be counter-productive in the long run. However, you were further advised by the top management that if you do not clear the consignment, the company will not hesitate to terminate your services citing certain innocuous reasons.

(a) Under the given conditions, what are the options available to you as a member of the Inspecting Team?

(b) Critically evaluate each of the options listed by you.

(c) What option would you adopt and why?

(d) What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by you?

(e) What can be the consequences of overlooking the observations raised by the Inspecting Team?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

(a) Options Available: Approve the consignment under pressure, refuse clearance, seek independent reinspection, escalate concerns through formal channels, or document the defects and seek legal or regulatory guidance.

(b) Critical Evaluation: Approval protects immediate employment and reduces losses but risks consumer safety and credibility. Refusal upholds integrity but may invite retaliation. Documented

escalation and independent review offer a balanced, accountable approach.

(c) Best Option: Refuse to certify defective products, record objective findings, request corrective action or independent testing, and escalate through appropriate channels.

(d) Ethical Dilemmas: Job security versus professional integrity; family responsibilities versus consumer welfare; loyalty to management versus duty to the public; short-term financial loss versus long-term corporate reputation.

(e) Consequences: Consumer injury, product failure, complaints, legal liability, recalls, reputational damage, financial losses, and erosion of employee trust.

Model Answer

Introduction

The situation presents a conflict between personal livelihood and professional integrity. As an inspection officer, my primary responsibility is to ensure that products meet prescribed quality standards and are safe for consumers.

(a) Options Available

I can approve the consignment under pressure, refuse to certify defective products, seek an independent reinspection, or formally escalate the matter to senior quality-control authorities, compliance officers, or relevant regulators.

(b) Critical Evaluation

Approve the Consignment: This may protect my job and reduce immediate losses, but compromises integrity, exposes consumers to defective products, and risks legal and reputational damage.

Refuse Clearance: This upholds professional ethics and consumer welfare, although it may lead to retaliation or termination.

Seek Independent Reinspection: An impartial technical assessment may clarify the severity of defects and identify corrective measures, but could delay delivery and increase costs.

Escalate and Document: Written records and formal reporting promote accountability and protect against improper pressure, although the process may create workplace conflict.

(c) Most Appropriate Option

I would refuse to certify the consignment unless it meets prescribed standards. I would document the defects, request rework or independent testing, and escalate the matter through established quality and compliance channels. I would remain open to reconsideration if objective evidence confirms that the products meet domestic standards. This protects consumers without disregarding legitimate business interests.

(d) Ethical Dilemmas

The dilemmas include job security versus integrity, family responsibilities versus consumer welfare, obedience to management versus professional accountability, and immediate financial losses versus long-term corporate sustainability.

(e) Consequences of Overlooking Defects

Defective products may cause injuries, premature failure, consumer complaints, recalls, litigation, and regulatory penalties. The company may lose customer trust, face financial losses, and damage its domestic and international reputation. Employees may also become accustomed to unethical practices.

Conclusion

Ethical quality control requires courage, impartiality, and accountability. Protecting consumers and maintaining product standards ultimately serves both the company’s long-term interests and public trust.

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