Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Sunil is a young civil servant and has a reputation for his competence, integrity, dedication and relentness pursuit of difficult and onerous jobs. Considering his profile, he was picked up by his bosses to handle a very challenging and sensitive assignment. He was posted in a tribal dominated district notorious for illegal sand mining. Excavating sand from river belt and transporting through trucks and selling them in black market was rampant. This illegal sand mining mafia was operating with the support of local functionaries and tribal musclemen who in turn were bribing selected poor tribals and had kept the tribals under fear and intimidation.

Sunil being a sharp and energetic officer immediately grasped the ground realities and the modus operandi followed by the mafia through their devious and dubious mechanism. On making inquiries, he gathered that some of their own office employees are in hand and glove with them and have developed close unholy nexus. Sunil initiated stringent action against them and started conducting raids on their illegal operations of movement of trucks filled with sand. The mafia got rattled as not many officers in the past had taken such steps against the mafia. Some of the office employees who were allegedly close to mafia informed them that the officer is determined to clean up the mafia's illegal sand mining operations in that the district and may cause them irrepairable damage.

The mafia turned hostile and launched counter-offensive. The tribal musclemen and mafia srted threatening him with dire consequences. His family (wife and old mother) were stalked and were under virtual surveillance and thus causing mental torture, agony and stress to all of them. The matter assumed serious proportions when a muscleman came to his office and threatened him to stop raids, etc., otherwise, his fate will not be different than some of his predecessors (ten years back one officer was killed by the mafia).

1. **Identify the different options available to Sunil in attending to this situation.**
2. **Critically evaluate each of the options listed by you.**
3. **Which of the above, do you think, would be the most appropriate for Sunil to adopt and why?**

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Integrity, courage of conviction, rule of law, illegal mining, administrative corruption, personal and family safety, tribal vulnerability, political-criminal nexus, impartial enforcement, institutional support, proportionality, accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

Sunil faces a conflict between personal safety and his constitutional duty to enforce the law. His response must uphold integrity while protecting his family and ensuring that action against the mafia remains lawful and sustainable.

Options and Critical Evaluation

- **Abandon raids or compromise:** This may temporarily reduce threats but encourages impunity, damages public trust and betrays official duty. It is ethically unacceptable.
- **Continue operations single-handedly:** This demonstrates courage but exposes Sunil and his family to grave danger. It ignores the need for institutional support.
- **Seek police protection and senior-level intervention:** This protects his family and enables coordinated action, though effectiveness depends on timely, impartial support.
- **Document evidence and pursue legal action:** Maintaining records, securing evidence and initiating prosecution strengthens the case and reduces arbitrary action.
- **Build community participation:** Protecting intimidated tribal residents and creating confidential reporting channels can weaken the mafia's local influence.
- **Seek transfer immediately:** A transfer may reduce immediate danger but should not become the sole response before protection and institutional action are explored.

Most Appropriate Course

Sunil should request a formal threat assessment and protection for himself and his family, inform senior authorities, preserve evidence, and coordinate raids with police and specialised enforcement agencies. He should initiate lawful action against implicated officials, protect witnesses and use transparent procedures to prevent fabricated cases or retaliation.

Conclusion

Courage must be combined with prudence and institutional cooperation. Sunil should neither surrender to intimidation nor act recklessly; he must uphold the law while protecting lives and ensuring accountability.

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