



You have recently been posted as ADM (LR) in the Land Department. Your district is rich in mineral resources. Upon assuming charge, you find that pervasive corruption is rampant in your department. From peons to staffs to other senior officers, everybody is well involved in corruption to different degrees. Also, you find that documents of many land assignments, auctions, lease agreements, etc. are disordered and/or missing.

Meanwhile, a case was reported to you regarding the auction of a part of land, falling in the mineral belt, wherein illegal stone quarrying & mineral extraction is taking place. You came to know that few senior officers in liaison with the local land mafias, had extracted the auction approval from the previous ADM. The land mafias are politically linked. Also, the area being ecologically vulnerable, illegal mining & quarrying can unsettle the local ecosystem. 1)

What are the ethical issues involved in the case ? 2)

Discuss the options available to you in dealing with the case. 3) Mention with reasons what final course of action will you take ? (250 words / 15 M) (GS-4 Case Study)

Approach :

- Very briefly introduce the facts of the case.
- Mention the ethical issues involved.
- Mention the options available – pros & cons.
- Mention final course of action with reasons.

The case pertains to **widespread corruption in the Land department**, wherein most employees are involved in **gross corruptive behaviour**, differing in degrees. Also, there is instance of **collusive corruption** in auctioning a land within the mineral belt, which falls in the **ecologically sensitive area**, the **illegal mining & quarrying** of which poses **great risk for the local ecosystem**.

This points to **moral turpitude**. The **ethical issues** involved are :

(a) shows **lack of aptitude** and **grossly compromises professional integrity, honesty and**



the spirit of public service;

(b) reflects **loss of objectivity** and **dereliction of duty**, leading to **economic losses** for the government;

(c) **lack of accountability** displayed in **improper land-records** keeping & in **illegal auctioning**;

(d) **negates environmental ethics** by hampering preservation of local ecosystem.

Options Available:

- **Report to your senior and seek advice** : Senior's experience can give ***insightful knowledge*** on how to ***effectively deal with the situation***.
- **Identify the miscreants** : this will help to ***pinpoint the main persons involved in gross misdoings***. ***Departmental enquiry*** can be initiated against them, sending a stern warning to others to refrain from corruption.
- **Confiscate the illegally auctioned land** : this will help to ***immediately pause the illegal mining & quarrying*** activities taking place. Also, ***government's property will be restored***.
- **Bring to books the local land mafias** : this can ***restrict the operation of cartels***, thus bringing in ***transparency*** in the land-revenue system. However, this runs the ***risk of inviting political ire***, which may be damaging both personally & professionally.
- **Ignore the matter and go with the flow** : this is untenable, since, it will not only ***compromise professional ethics & integrity***, but it will mean an ***indifferent attitude towards wrongdoings***, thus, encouraging its continuance. It can ***raise questions on my credibility***, sending a wrong message to the public at large.

Final Course of Action:

- After **identifying the key office miscreants**, they will be **summarily suspended from service pending departmental enquiry**. Also, **cooperation from the police department** will be sought to **hunt down the local land mafias**, and **criminal proceedings** initiated against them under suitable sections of law. This will not only **deter future corruption**, but will bring **transparency** in the department's functioning. Nabbing the land cartels will **improve the law & order** situation too, besides **stopping illegal mining & quarrying**.
- A **nodal officer** will be appointed to **go through & record the other illegal land assignments and/or purchases lying unidentified** and also **recover the missing documents**. Such other lands, when identified, will be **confiscated immediately**, and **revenue losses** incurred by the government will be **legally extracted** from such unlawful occupiers or miners.
- A **central registry on-line** will be expediently created wherein **all records of purchase, sale, lease, etc.** will be catalogued. This will **streamline documental record-keeping**.
- **Seniors' advice** will be solicited, gaining **useful insights**.
- The **previous ADM** will be asked to **tender his explanation**, as, this will give **clarifications on what grounds he gave approval** to the auctioning. If the explanation is found **unsatisfactory**, **due legal process by appropriate authority** can be initiated



against him.

- Furthermore, **Environmental Impact Assessment** must be ensured before any mining & quarrying activities. Also, to **restore public faith** and **bring in accountability, public display of Charter** will be done mentioning **all details** related to the projects.
- **Periodic training modules to invoke spirit of public service & integrity** among **employees at all levels** will be done. This will be complemented by appointing an **Ombudsman officer**. This will uphold **workplace ethics**.

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