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Q11

Case study. A fresh engineering graduate gets a job in a prestigious chemical industry. She likes the work. The salary is also good. However, after a few months she accidentally discovers that a highly toxic waste is being secretly discharged into a river nearby. This is causing health problems to the villagers downstream who depend on the river for their water needs. She is perturbed and mentions her concern to her colleagues who have been with the company for longer periods. They advise her to keep quite as anyone who mentions the topic is summarily dismissed. She cannot risk losing her job as she is the sole breadwinner for her family and has to support her ailing parents and siblings. At first, she thinks that if her seniors are keeping quiet, why should she stick out her neck. But her conscience pricks her to do something to save the river and the people who depend upon it. At heart she feels that the advice of silence given by her friends is not correct though she cannot give reasons for it. She thinks you are a wise person and seeks your advice. (a) What arguments can you advance to show her that keeping quiet is not morally right? (b) What course of action would you advise her to adopt and why?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS IV · 20 marks · Ethics Case Studies

Case Studies on above issues.

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round. This sheet is for revision, not a substitute for the model answer.

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Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974

The principal statute on water pollution; State Pollution Control Boards are the first public door.

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Umbrella environmental law under which hazardous discharge and related rules are enforced.

Article 21, Constitution of India

Life and personal liberty, read to include a life with dignity and, in environmental cases, protection from poisoned commons.

Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014

A Union statute aimed at public-interest disclosures in the public sector; the ethical analogue in a private plant is a documented complaint to regulators and courts.

Polluter pays

An environmental principle that the firm, not downstream villagers, must bear the cost of its waste.

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