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Q14

Case study. You are a young, aspiring and sincere employee in a Government office working as an assistant to the director of your department. Since you have joined recently, you need to learn and progress. Luckily your superior is very kind and ready to train you for your job. He is a very intelligent and well-informed person having knowledge of various departments. In short, you respect your boss and are looking forward to learn a lot from him. Since you have good tuning with the boss, he started depending on you. One day due to ill health he invited you at his place for finishing some urgent work. You reached his house and before you could ring the bell you heard shouting noises. You waited for a while. After entering the house the boss greeted you and explained the work. But you were constantly disturbed by the crying of a woman. At last, you inquired with the boss but his answer did not satisfy you. Next day, you were compelled to inquire further in the office and found out that his behavior is very bad at home with his wife. He also beats up his wife. His wife is not well educated and is a simple woman in comparison to her husband. You see that though your boss is a nice person in the office, he is engaged in domestic violence at home. In such a situation, you are left with the following options. Analyse each option with its consequences. (a) Just ignore thinking about it because it is their personal matter. (b) Report the case to the appropriate authority. (c) Your own innovative approach towards situation.

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

Case Studies on above issues.

Core demand of the question

- You are a young assistant to a kind, able director who trains you. At his house you hear a woman crying; office inquiry shows he beats his less-educated wife. Analyse: (a) ignore as a personal matter; (b) report to the appropriate authority; (c) your own innovative approach. State consequences of each

Revision summary

A capable, kind director is beating his wife at home; you are his junior assistant.

Ignoring it as private life leaves her in violence and teaches that rank is a licence.

Reporting to the Protection Officer, police women's cell and a competent official is the lawful duty.

Do it with a safety plan, not as WhatsApp shaming or blackmail for career favours.

Innovative conduct is confidential evidence, professional protectors for her, and no bargain of silence for training.

Introduction

The boss is a good teacher at work and a violent husband at home. You are junior, you need the job, and you now know enough. Domestic violence is not a "private taste". The options in the stem must be weighed by harm, duty and the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**.

Body

Stakeholders

- The wife, who is less educated, isolated, and already being beaten.
- The director, who is your trainer and a violent offender at home.
- You as a junior assistant who heard the crying and confirmed a pattern.
- Other staff, whose silence would become a culture.
- Children if any, and the public that expects a government office not to incubate impunity.
- Protection officers, police, and the **Internal Complaints Committee** only if workplace sexual harassment is also in play - here the core is domestic violence.

Values

- Courage, empathy, integrity, and respect for dignity (**Article 21**).
- Loyalty to a mentor is real; it does not outrank a woman's bodily safety.
- Confidentiality of a family is not a cloak for crime. The **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** made that explicit.
- **Non-maleficence**: do not make her safer on paper and deadlier in the house by a reckless public shaming.

(a) Ignore it as a personal matter

- **Meaning**: treat the crying as none of your business because it is "inside the home".
- **Merit**: you keep the training, avoid a powerful enemy, and avoid a mistaken report if your office gossip was wrong.
- **Demerit**: you have already heard the noise and checked the office. Continuing silence is chosen ignorance.
- **Consequence for the wife**: the beatings continue with the office as a respectable front.
- **Consequence for you**: moral injury, and possible later blame if a serious injury occurs and it is shown you knew.
- **Consequence for the service**: a lesson that rank buys a private licence.
- **Ethical verdict**: reject. Personal life is not a free zone for assault. **Section 498A** of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (as then in force) and the 2005 Act already publicise this wrong.

(b) Report the case to the appropriate authority

- **Meaning**: a written, factual complaint to the competent person - typically the Protection Officer under the 2005 Act, the police if a cognisable offence is made out, and, for a government

servant, the designated superior or vigilance if conduct unbecoming is in issue, without a market-place poster.

- **Merit:** the law is used; the wife can get a protection order, residence order and medical help; the director faces a real process, not a junior's sermon.
- **Demerit:** he may try to destroy your career; the wife may deny out of fear, which is common; a clumsy report can worsen violence in the next hour.
- **Consequences:** inquiry, possible arrest or protection order, office disruption, and a chance of safety if the protection machinery actually moves.
- **Ethical verdict:** reporting is necessary, but not as a solo leak to a WhatsApp group. It must be to the lawful authority, with care for her immediate safety.

(c) Innovative approach (recommended mix)

- Do not choose (a). Do not make (b) a public execution without a safety plan.
- First, if you can do so without trespass, encourage the wife - through a woman colleague, a helpline, or a protection officer - to speak in a safe setting. The 181 women's helpline and the Protection Officer exist so that a junior man is not her only door.
- Record what you personally heard and what independent office sources said, dated, without embroidery.
- Inform the Protection Officer / police women's cell with that record, and ask them to approach her, not you as a lone hero at his door.
- Inform your organisation's competent authority in a confidential note that a domestic-violence allegation against a Group A officer needs lawful handling, so that transfers and appraisals cannot be used as revenge against you or her.
- Do not blackmail him ("train me or I talk"). That is another abuse.
- Do not counsel him as a moral tutor in his drawing room if that puts her at risk of punishment for "airing dirty linen".
- If he asks, you may say you heard distress and that violence is a crime; you will not bargain silence for mentorship.
- **Support:** National Commission for Women, State commission, legal services authority - for her, not as your press conference.
- **Workplace:** continue to do your job; recuse from his personal errands at home.

Consequences of the innovative mix

- She has a professional protector, not only a frightened junior.
- He faces law, not office gossip.
- You have a paper trail if he retaliates.
- Residual risk remains; ethics here is risk reduction, not a film ending.

Flow diagram

Heard crying and confirmed beating -> Do not ignore
 Do not ignore -> Protection Officer and 181 helpline
 Do not ignore -> Confidential note to competent authority
 Blackmail the boss -> Another abuse
 Office gossip -> More violence

Conclusion

Ignoring domestic violence because the boss is kind at work is complicity. A raw public report without a safety plan can also harm the wife. The sound path is confidential report to the Protection Officer and police machinery, a sealed note to the competent authority, no blackmail, and help routed through women's helplines and legal services.

Facts & figures

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

A civil-criminal protective statute creating Protection Officers, protection orders and residence orders; domestic violence is not a closed private affair.

Indian Penal Code, 1860, Section 498A

As in force in 2016, cruelty by husband or relatives is a criminal offence; reporting is not "interference in marriage" in the eyes of this law.

181 women helpline

A public emergency and support number meant to connect a woman to police, medical and shelter help without depending on a junior colleague.

Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987

Can give the wife free legal aid so she is not trapped by her husband's education and office.

Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964

Conduct unbecoming of a government servant can reach grave private violence; it is not a shield of "personal matter".

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