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Q11

Case study. You are aspiring to become an IAS officer and you have cleared various stages and now you have been selected for the personal interview. On the day of the interview, on the way to the venue you saw an accident where a mother and child who happen to be your relatives were badly injured. They needed immediate help. What would you have done in such a situation? Justify your action.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · GS IV · 20 marks · Ethics Case Studies

Case Studies on above issues.

Core demand of the question

- You are an IAS aspirant who has reached the **UPSC personality test**. On the way to the venue you see an accident: a mother and child, who are your relatives, are badly injured and need immediate help. What would you have done? Justify

Revision summary

The clash is a scheduled UPSC interview versus two badly injured relatives who need help now.

Life and rescue come first; the interview is a real but lesser good.

Action is scene safety, emergency call, hospital handover, police information, then a truthful request to UPSC.

Do not impersonate, bribe, or invent. Do not stay only to argue while they bleed.

The same duty holds for a stranger; kinship removes the excuse of walking on.

Introduction

The stem puts a life's work and two bleeding relatives on the same road. The ethical centre is the duty to rescue a life in front of you, not the duty to protect a timetable.

Body**Stakeholders**

- The injured mother and child, who need first aid, transport and a hospital now.
- Other road users, if the scene is still dangerous.
- You as an aspirant, with an interview letter that will not easily be reissued as a right.
- Family members waiting at the UPSC venue and at home.
- The **Union Public Service Commission**, which can be told the truth later; it cannot un-kill a child.
- Bystanders who may help or may only film.

Ethical issues and values

- **Sanctity of life and the duty of rescue:** a person who can help and walks away treats kin as less than a career file.
- **Justice and non-partiality:** they are relatives, but the same duty would hold for a stranger; kinship only removes the last excuse of "someone else will stop".
- **Integrity:** do not invent a story later. Do not, equally, use the accident as a casual lie if it did not happen.
- **Emotional intelligence:** panic will waste minutes; a sequence will save them.
- The interview is a legitimate personal good. It is not a higher good than two preventable deaths.

Options

- **Option 1:** Drive on to the interview and telephone someone else to help.
- **Merit:** you may reach the board on time.
- **Demerit:** if they need you now - bleeding, blocked airway, no other competent adult - the call is not help. A career built on that choice is already a comment on public service.
- **Option 2:** Stay for hours in a crowd argument with police, missing both hospital and any chance to inform UPSC.
- **Merit:** looks loyal.
- **Demerit:** you may not be the best person to file the FIR; the hospital is the first institution that matters.
- **Option 3:** Immediate rescue: make the scene safe, first aid, ambulance or your vehicle to the nearest hospital, hand over to doctors, inform family and police, then inform UPSC with facts and seek a later board if the rules allow.
- **Merit:** life first, then the career through a truthful channel.
- **Demerit:** you may still miss this day's interview; that is a real loss, not a moral error.

Action I would take

- Stop. Park without causing a second crash. Switch on hazards. Keep the child and mother from further traffic.
- Call emergency services at once (108 / 112) while checking breathing and bleeding. Use any first-aid you truly know; do not play surgeon.
- **Use bystanders for specific jobs:** one to wave traffic, one to fetch a doctor if a clinic is in sight, one to call the other parent.
- If the ambulance is late and the injuries are clearly time-critical, take them to the nearest hospital yourself, with someone in the back if possible.
- Do not abandon them in a corridor. Hand over to medical staff, give names, and leave a reachable number.
- Inform the police with a true account. You are a relative and a witness; do not manage the scene as if you owned it.
- Then contact UPSC / the designated help number / a mentor with the hospital record and time stamps, request postponement or a fresh interview slot as the Commission's process allows, and accept a no if the rules give no discretion.
- Do not ask a friend to impersonate you at the gate. Do not bribe a clerk for a false attendance.
- If a stranger had been on the road, the sequence would be the same. Relatives only make delay more shameful, not more optional.

Justification

- **Article 21** is not only for the State. A future civil servant who cannot stop for blood will not stop for a file that has no camera.
- Professional codes and the Good Samaritan principle, recognised in Indian policy after the Supreme Court's directions on road-accident helpers, protect a rescuer who acts in good faith.
- The personality test itself looks for integrity and compassion. Saving two lives is the test that arrived early.
- Career harm is a cost I should try to reduce through honest communication, not through neglect of the injured.

Flow diagram

Accident on the way -> Stop and make safe
Stop and make safe -> First aid and 108
First aid and 108 -> Hospital handover
Hospital handover -> Inform Inform UPSC with proof with proof
Drive past -> Maybe on time
Drive past -> Preventable death

Conclusion

I would stop, stabilise, move them to a hospital, inform police and family, then tell UPSC the truth and ask for whatever lawful second chance exists. An interview can be petitioned. A death on the kerb cannot.

Facts & figures

Emergency numbers 112 and 108

National emergency and ambulance numbers to be used at once rather than a long search for a known doctor.

Good Samaritan protection

Supreme Court directions and later government guidelines aim to protect genuine road-accident helpers from unnecessary harassment.

Article 21, Constitution of India

Life and dignity; a future public servant's first exam can be whether those two lives were treated as inconveniences.

UPSC personality test

A scheduled stage with limited discretion for postponement; a candidate may only ask through official channels with evidence, not through a lie.

First aid limits

A lay rescuer stops bleeding and keeps airway and scene safe; hospital care is the goal, not a roadside operation.

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