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Q12

Case study. You are appointed as an officer heading the section in Environment Pollution Control Board to ensure compliance and its follow-up. In that region, there were large number of small and medium industries which had been granted clearance. You learnt that these industries provide employment to many migrant worker. Most of the industrial units have got environmental clearance certificate in their possession. The environmental clearance seeks to curb industries and projects that supposedly hamper environment and living species in the region, But in practice. most of these units remain to be polluting units in several ways like air, water and soil pollution. As such, local people encountered persistent health problems. It was confirmed that majority of the industries were violating environmental compliance. You issued notice to all the industrial units to apply for fresh environmental clearance certificate from the competent authority. However, your action met with hostile response from a section of the industrial units, other vested interest persons and a section of the local politicians. The workers also became hostile to you as they felt that your action would lead to the closure of these industrial units, and the resultant unemployment will lead to insecurity uncertainty in their livelihood. Many owners of the industries approached you with the plea that you should not initiate harsh action as it would compel them their units, and cause huge financial loss, shortage of their products in the market. These would obviously add to the sufferings of the labourers and the consumers alike. The labour union also sent you representation requesting against the closure of the units. You simultaneously started receiving threats from unknown corners. You however received supports from some of your colleagues, who advised you to act freely to ensure environmental compliance. Local NGOs also came to your support and they demanded the closure of the polluting units immediately. (a) What are the options available to you under the given situation? (b) Critically examine the options listed by you. (c) What type of

mechanism would you suggest to ensure environmental compliance? (d) What are the ethical dilemmas you faced in exercising your option?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · 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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Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

The umbrella Union statute for environmental protection, standards and closure directions when a unit endangers the environment.

Water Act, 1974 and Air Act, 1981

The principal water and air pollution statutes under which State boards grant and enforce consent to operate.

Common effluent treatment plant (CETP)

Shared treatment for a cluster of SMEs that cannot each afford a full plant; a compliance tool, not a licence to dilute illegally.

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

The criminal frame if an owner pays to stall a notice or if an officer sells a go-slow.

Environmental clearance versus consent to operate

A past clearance paper does not legalise current illegal discharge; fresh consent must match present samples, not a file from years ago.

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