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Q7

Case study. There is a technological company named ABC Incorporated which is the second largest worldwide, situated in the Third World. You are the Chief Executive Officer and the majority shareholder of this company. The fast technological improvements have raised worries among environmental activists, regulatory authorities, and the general public over the sustainability of this scenario. You confront substantial issues about the business's environmental footprint. In 2023, your organization had a significant increase of 48% in greenhouse gas emissions compared to the levels recorded in 2019. The significant rise in energy consumption is mainly due to the surging energy requirements of your data centers, fuelled by the exponential expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI-powered services need much more computational resources and electrical energy compared to conventional online activities, notwithstanding their notable gains. Although there is already a commitment and goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, the challenge of lowering emissions seems overwhelming as the integration of AI continues to increase. (a) What is your immediate response to the challenges posed in the above case? (b) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case. (c) Your company has been identified to be penalized by technological giants. What logical and ethical arguments will you put forth to convince about its necessity? (d) Being a conscientious being, what measures would you adopt to maintain balance between AI innovation and environment footprint?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · 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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Scope 1, 2 and 3

Direct emissions, purchased electricity, and value-chain emissions; data-centre electricity is usually the core of a tech firm's climate story.

Net zero 2030

A near-term corporate claim that is already in tension with a 48 percent rise since 2019; ethics requires either a real path or a withdrawn claim.

Additionality

New clean generation that would not have existed without the buyer; paper certificates on an unchanged coal night are not that.

CBDR

Common but differentiated responsibilities; inside an industry it means historical and luxury emitters cannot hide behind a Southern HQ.

Land ethic

Aldo Leopold's idea that the land community is a moral party; a data centre that drinks a drought district fails it.

Conflict of majority owner-CEO

The same person loves share price and signs the climate promise; independent board climate power is the integrity tool.

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