

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q9

Case study. Seema is a senior bureaucrat with a reputation of honesty and professional efficiency. She has recently been posted as the District Collector (DC) to Surinder Nagar, where a large industrial area is being established. The new industrial area had caused many farmers to submit applications for change of land use (CLU) to convert their farmlands into residential areas. There is an unusually large backlog of these applications awaiting processing. Seema noticed that some applications had been approved selectively with no visible chronological pattern. The case files showed a few complaints of some approvals being subject to receipt of large bribes from the applicants. On further fact-finding, Seema realized that a small group of touts was controlling this illegal activity through some subordinate officials in the Collectorate. This had created a fear in the other employees who were reluctant to process any application. The resultant backlog has been piling up thereby hindering local economic progress and causing public dissatisfaction. Seema was faced with a major moral and administrative challenge of dismantling this corruption network without hampering daily administrative operations. An aggressive internal investigation would result in institutional resistance and, possibly, a backlash from labour unions. Conversely, ignoring this situation would encourage the wrongdoers and unnecessarily continue this avoidable harassment to the populace. (a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case? (b) Discuss the options open to Seema. Identify the recommended option and justify it.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2026 · GS IV · 20 marks · Ethics Case Studies

[Open on wrapexams.com](https://wrapexams.com)

Case Studies on above issues.

DEMAND

- Identify and explain the ethical issues involved in the case study concerning corruption in land use conversions
- Examine the options open to Seema as District Collector to address the administrative and moral challenge
- Identify the recommended option and provide a reasoned justification for its implementation

REVISION MAP

- Here is a quick revision summary for your notes:
- 1. **Core Dilemma:** Balance immediate anti-corruption action against the risk of administrative paralysis and institutional pushback.
- 2. **Key Ethical Issues:** Abuse of discretionary power for personal gain, betrayal of public trust, and the systemic fear paralyzing honest staff.
- 3. **Option 1 (Crackdown):** Fast results via suspensions and police probes, but risks severe union backlash and office walkouts.
- 4. **Option 2 (Status Quo):** Easiest short-term path, but deepens public harassment, perpetuates injustice, and rewards corruption.
- 5. **Option 3 (Tech & Reform):** Digitize workflows and use a strict digital queue to remove human touchpoints and tout interference.
- 6. **Best Choice:** Implement Option 3 paired with quiet, targeted intelligence gathering and strategic administrative transfers.
- 7. **Justification:** Technology removes human discretion and fear, closing loopholes permanently without triggering a generalized staff strike.
- 8. **Final Takeaway:** True ethical leadership fixes broken systems rather than just punishing individuals, making integrity the default rule.

INTRODUCTION

As District Collector, Seema faces a classic administrative dilemma where systemic corruption paralyzes service delivery and erodes public trust. Balancing the urgency of dismantling an entrenched nexus of touts and subordinates with the need for continuity in local economic development tests her leadership, integrity, and crisis management skills.

BODY

Ethical Issues Involved

- **Integrity vs. Institutional Fear:** The moral conflict between upholding absolute personal and professional integrity and the paralyzing fear among subordinate staff.
- **Duty of Public Service:** The dereliction of duty by corrupt officials causing avoidable harassment to farmers and hindering regional economic progress.
- **Abuse of Discretion:** Selective and arbitrary processing of Change of Land Use (CLU) applications for personal enrichment rather than public good.
- **Administrative Paralysis:** The ethical cost of inaction, which emboldens wrongdoers and denies citizens timely, transparent administrative services.

Options Open to Seema

Option 1: Aggressive Internal Investigation and Suspension

- **Point:** Launch an immediate vigilance probe, suspend implicated staff, and file police cases against the touts.
- **Limitation:** Risks severe institutional resistance, union backlashes, and complete standstill of routine administrative work.

Option 2: Total Status Quo and Gradual Delegation

- **Point:** Ignore the micro-irregularities, delegate file processing downward, and focus only on future industrial approvals.
- **Limitation:** Perpetuates corruption, rewards wrongdoers, and deepens public harassment and economic distortion.

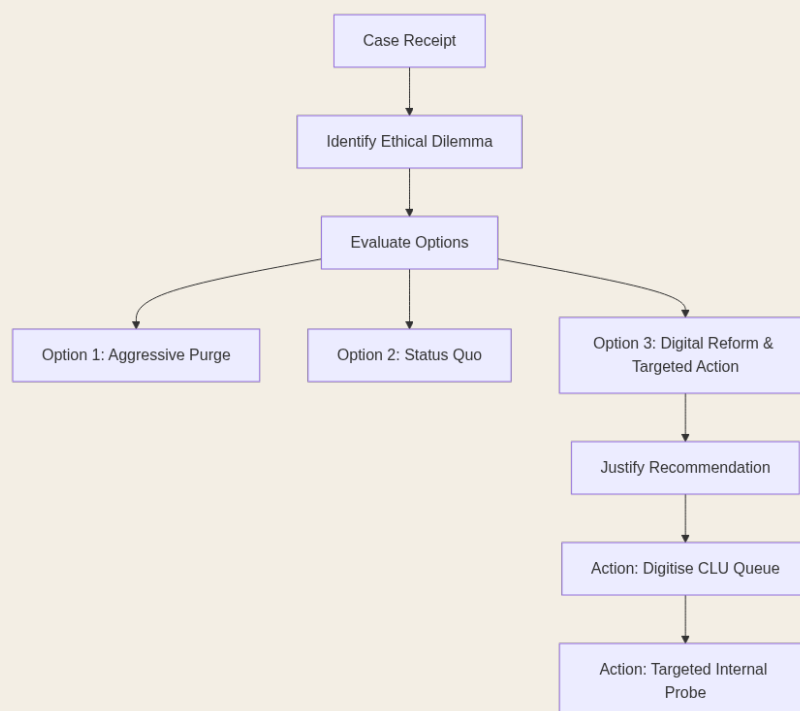
Option 3: Systemic Reform through **Technology and Targeted Action**

- **Point:** Digitize the CLU application tracking system to eliminate discretionary touchpoints while quietly gathering intelligence against the core nexus.
- **Merit:** Restores order without immediate violent institutional backlash while permanently closing loopholes for touts.

Recommended Option and Justification

- **Selected Course:** Option 3 combined with calibrated administrative cleansing is the most prudent and ethical choice.
- **Transparency First:** Introducing a strict first-in, first-out (FIFO) digital queue removes human discretion and fear among honest staff.
- **Targeted Disruption:** Using gathered intelligence to quietly transfer and take departmental action against key corrupt insiders without triggering a general union strike.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Rebuilding employee morale through transparent leadership and assuring citizens of grievance redressal.

Flow diagram



CONCLUSION

Seema must navigate this crisis not merely as a law enforcement officer, but as an institutional leader who restores systems rather than just punishing individuals. By combining technological transparency with resolute, quiet administrative corrections, she can dismantle the corruption network while upholding public interest. True administrative ethics lies in creating resilient systems where integrity becomes the default path.

FACTS & FIGURES

Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)

Emphasizes that ethics in governance requires minimizing administrative discretion and maximizing transparency through e-governance.

All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968

Mandates members of the civil services to maintain absolute integrity, devotion to duty, and avoid acts unbecoming of a public servant.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice.

[Open on wrapexams.com](https://wrapexams.com)

ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com