

Case Studies (2025) Q. 7

7. Vijay was Deputy Commissioner of a remote district of Hilly Northern State of the country for the last two years. In the month of August heavy rains lashed the complete state followed by cloud burst in the upper reaches of the said district. The damage was very heavy in the complete state especially in the affected district. The complete road network and telecommunication were disrupted and the buildings were damaged extensively. People's houses have been destroyed and they were forced to stay in open. More than 200 people have been killed and about 5000 were badly injured. The Civil Administration under Vijay got activated and started conducting rescue and relief operations. Temporary shelter camps and hospitals were established to provide shelter and medical facilities to the homeless and injured people. Helicopter services were pressed in, for evacuating sick and old people from remote areas. Vijay got a message from his hometown in Kerala that his mother was seriously sick. After two days Vijay received the unfortunate message that his mother has expired. Vijay has no close relative except one elder sister who was US citizen and staying there for last several years. In the meantime, the situation in the affected district deteriorated further due to resumption of heavy rains after a gap of five days. At the same time, continuous messages were coming on his mobile from his hometown to reach at the earliest for performing last rites of his mother.

- (a) What are the options available to Vijay?
- (b) What are the ethical dilemma being faced by Vijay?
- (c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Vijay.
- (c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Vijay.
- (d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why? (250 words, 20 marks)

Directions: Intro----Stakeholders involved + Ethical issues + explain each question ----- Conclusion.

Introduction:

Vijay faces a conflict between personal/familial duty towards his deceased mother and constitutional/public duty towards thousands of disaster victims under his jurisdiction.

Main Body

Key stakeholders involved

- Vijay & his family members
- People (victims)
- Civil administration team under Vijay.

Key ethical issues

- Public duty & personal life
- Conflict of roles and responsibilities
- Work-life balance
- Morality
- Leadership and accountability

(a) Options available for Vijay

- Leave for Kerala immediately to perform his mother's last rites.
- Continue personally leading rescue and relief operations.
- Temporarily hand over charge to the Additional District Magistrate/next senior officer and leave for Kerala.
- Coordinate the relief operation remotely while travelling to Kerala and return at the earliest.
- Request his sister to come from the U.S. and perform/arrange the last rites, while Vijay continues relief operations.
- Ask local authorities in Kerala to delegate someone to perform the last rites.

(b) Ethical dilemma

- Personal duty vs public duty
- Family obligations vs professional responsibility
- Compassion for family vs impartiality towards disaster victims
- Emotional attachment vs rational decision-making
- Individual responsibility vs delegation of authority
- Immediate personal need vs larger public interest
- Leadership presence vs institutional continuity.

(c) Critical evaluation of options

Options Available	Merits	Limitations
Leave immediately	Fulfils filial duty; provides emotional closure.	Abandoning leadership during a worsening disaster; may affect morale and coordination.
Stay and lead operations	Saves lives; ensures strong leadership and accountability.	Personal grief and inability to perform mother's last rites; risk of emotional burnout.
Delegate charge and leave	Balances family and public duties; ensures administrative continuity.	New leadership may lack Vijay's experience and local knowledge during a critical phase

Travel while coordinating remotely	Attempts to balance both responsibilities.	Connectivity is disrupted; remote leadership may be ineffective
Ask sister to perform rites	Allows Vijay to remain and save lives; family responsibility is addressed.	Emotional and cultural concerns; sister may not be able to reach immediately
Delegate someone in State help of State Government	Can fulfil his filial obligation without completely abandoning public responsibility.	Replacement officer may lack Vijay's local knowledge, experience and established coordination networks.

(d) Most appropriate option

Candidates must choose according to their own perspective.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.