

PYQ

Ethics

Case Studies

by

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REAL-LIFE
SITUATIONS



ETHICAL
DECISION MAKING



VALUES IN
ACTION



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Keyword toolkit for answers

The five-step answer skeleton

Khemka Sir's closing words

How to use this for Mains

Internalise Part A first — these recurring principles are what you actually apply; the case is only the wrapper.

For each case, cover the right column and write a 150–250 word answer using the 5-step skeleton (Part C), then compare.

Group your practice by theme so you build a default approach for each family of dilemmas.

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Core Ethical Toolkit

Ten ideas that recur across almost every answer. Make them your default reasoning kit.

- 1 The difficult-choice rule.** Of two or three options, the harder one is almost always ethical; the easy, convenient (suvadhavadi) option usually slides toward corruption. Ethical conduct is measured by the benefit you forgo and the hardship you accept.
- 2 The Sunshine Test.** Do only what you could state openly, in public, and still feel proud of. If you wouldn't say it in the open, don't do it.
- 3 Public interest is supreme.** A public servant is paid by the public and is its servant; public interest can never be sacrificed for private interest. Working against public interest is itself corruption, even with no bribe.
- 4 No 'big' vs 'small' corruption.** Corruption is corruption; 'petty corruption oils the engine' is a rationalisation. But don't be a rigid rule-bound 'lakeer ka fakeer' — judge by your larger intent.
- 5 Without fear or favour.** The Constitution requires it. Paying a goonda tax out of fear, or bending a decision for a favour, both fail this test.
- 6 Recusal — justice must be seen to be done.** Where a relative or personal interest is involved, step away; disclose the conflict. In a private firm, disclose to top management and act only if they still entrust you.
- 7 Whistleblowing belongs to the private sector.** It is loyalty to the company vs the larger loyalty to the public. In the public sector the same act is simply duty, because a public servant already owes loyalty only to the public.
- 8 Resistance reduces injustice.** Against entrenched wrongdoing, surrender lets it grow; resistance — even in defeat — shrinks the wrongdoer's power. Stay optimistic that truth prevails.
- 9 Dignity is non-negotiable.** An individual's dignity — especially of women at the workplace — cannot be exchanged for profit; a high-performing harasser still faces action.
- 10 Speed and fairness in process.** 'Justice delayed is justice denied' — but 'justice hurried is justice buried' too. False complaints should carry the same punishment as the offence they falsely allege.

Theme-wise Case-Study Bank

Theme 1 — Office & Work Culture (RTI · Whistleblowing · Secrecy)

1.1 · 2016

Your boss is beating his wife at home; you witnessed it while dropping files. Do you intervene in this private matter?

Khemka Sir's Response: Intervene. Violence is never justifiable, least of all between spouses, and mere intervention usually de-escalates the aggressor. Stay out only of a non-violent verbal quarrel.

● **Principle:** Human dignity & duty to protect override the 'private matter' framing.

1.1 · 2023

A woman employee with two children is harassed by 9:30 pm WhatsApp messages from her boss to finish file-work. Work-life balance.

Khemka Sir's Response: No file-work needed at 9:30 pm; 9-to-5 is enough and late demands reflect the boss's poor time management. She should voice her difficulty; routine file-work can always wait till morning.

● **Principle:** Work-life balance; reasonable working hours; situational human judgement.

1.2 · 2023

A foreign-educated woman architect's talent makes her boss insecure; he repeatedly humiliates her in public and she has lost confidence. What should she do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Never lose self-confidence; a mature professional must learn to handle the boss and let deliberate insults pass without internalising them. Document a pattern of harassment and use grievance channels if it persists.

● **Principle:** Emotional intelligence; protect self-worth; use redressal for sustained harassment.

1.2 · 2021

Pawan's boss is toxic and humiliates him before everyone though Pawan's work has no fault — the boss is only venting frustration on him.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Separate the behaviour from your competence: it is the boss's failing, not yours. Respond with composure, keep a record, seek a candid one-to-one, and escalate to HR/grievance redressal if the conduct continues. Don't absorb misplaced blame.

● **Principle:** Emotional intelligence; dignity at work; structured grievance redressal.

1.3 · 2013

A high-performing male director is accused of harassment; a woman employee resigns saying he molested her. As company head, how do you handle it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Act against the harasser regardless of his performance; a woman's dignity cannot be traded for company profit. Trigger the Internal Complaints Committee (PoSH Act) and follow due process — 100% lawful action.

● **Principle:** Dignity over profit; PoSH due process; sexual harassment is non-negotiable.

1.3 · 2019

A loss-making textile firm with many women workers is turned profitable by a new male manager; a woman files a sexual-harassment FIR; owners offer her a large sum to withdraw. What should she do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Hush money cannot buy away dignity or wrongdoing. She should refuse the inducement and pursue the complaint through the ICC/PoSH and law; profitability of the accused is irrelevant. The owners' attempt to buy silence is itself unethical and obstructive.

● **Principle:** Dignity is not for sale; refuse inducement; integrity of complaint process.

1.3 · 2014

An honest officer transferred to a new office tightens lazy staff; one woman files a FALSE caste-harassment complaint with the Women's Commission. What now?

Khemka Sir's Response: Be patient, state your case truthfully and stay optimistic that truth prevails; the complainant must furnish proof. A false complaint, if proved false, should attract the same punishment as the alleged offence, since the falsely accused suffers real mental torture and risk.

● **Principle:** Due process + patience; symmetry of punishment for proven-false complaints.

1.4 · 2023

A woman bank employee needs Rs 10 lakh for her father's treatment; her boss arranges money from a customer's dormant account, promising to repay it quietly later.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Refuse. However sympathetic the motive, this is misappropriation of a customer's funds — a fraud and breach of fiduciary duty; a compassionate end cannot justify illegal means. Seek legitimate routes instead: salary advance, bank welfare/loan, CM relief or health schemes (PMJAY), or transparent crowdfunding.

● **Principle:** Ends don't justify means; fiduciary duty; integrity of public trust in banking.

1.5 · 2020

As Finance Secretary you can fund only one of two announced projects — a housing scheme for the poor, or a new SEZ — and the unfunded one will invite heavy criticism of the government.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Decide on merit and constitutional values, not on fear of criticism. Weigh distributive justice (housing for the weakest, DPSP Articles 38/39) against growth and employment (SEZ); prioritise the basic need of the poorest while exploring phased funding, PPP or external aid for the other. Place a transparent, reasoned note on record.

● **Principle:** Distributive justice; decision on objective merit, not optics; Rawlsian priority to the worst-off.

1.6 · 2022

Illegal mining in the Aravallis; journalist Ashok writes the report, but his TV-channel owner colludes with the mafia and offers Rs 10 lakh + promotion to bury it.

Khemka Sir's Response: Straightforward bribery — no two views. A journalist serves only the public interest; suppressing truth out of greed or fear is itself corrupt conduct, arguably worse than the crime he conceals.

● **Principle:** Public interest is supreme; integrity and independence of the press.

1.6 · 2018

Snowden, a CIA contractor, leaked classified documents to the media/WikiLeaks; he broke the law but believes the public had a moral right to know about wrongdoing. Your view?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: A genuine dilemma between the public's right to know and national security plus rule of law. His moral conviction is real, but the ideal route is disclosure through protected, legitimate channels rather than wholesale leaks; a conscientious whistleblower should also be willing to face lawful consequences. Strong whistleblower-protection laws reduce the need for such extreme acts.

● **Principle:** Whistleblowing via lawful channels; transparency vs security; civil disobedience accepts consequences.

1.6 · 2016

New job at a chemical factory (good salary); you discover untreated toxic chemicals are dumped into a river and villagers are falling ill. Speaking up may cost your job; conscience won't rest.

Khemka Sir's Response: Whistleblowing is hard because you act against your own livelihood for a higher motive, but your supreme duty is to bring the pollution to public notice in the larger public interest. There must be a protective law shielding the whistleblower from retaliation.

● **Principle:** Loyalty to public interest > loyalty to employer; whistleblower protection.

1.7 · 2017

Activists misuse RTI to 'dig up graves' and extort officials; many are puppets of land mafia/politicians, and frivolous applications clog administration. How to separate genuine from non-genuine (with pros & cons)?

Khemka Sir's Response: RTI flows from Article 19 free expression, a foremost fundamental right, so curbs must be careful. Use Section 8 / public-interest provisions to refuse where there is no public interest or the intent is to harass, via a brave, reasoned 'speaking order'; appeals and courts remain the safeguard. (Pro: deters blackmail; Con: risk of misuse to deny genuine information — hence reasoned orders and appellate checks.)

● **Principle:** Balance transparency with preventing abuse; reasoned speaking orders; appellate safeguards.

1.7 · 2013

As PIO, a truthful RTI reply will expose a colleague's honest (unintentional) error and may get him severely punished; delaying/wrong reply risks a smaller penalty on you. What advice?

Khemka Sir's Response: Advise the colleague to own up and seek forgiveness — 'to err is human', and genuine mistakes are usually pardoned. Answer the RTI truthfully as per record; never refuse or distort an RTI merely to shield a colleague.

● **Principle:** Transparency over personal loyalty; owning honest mistakes.

1.7 · 2013

In the Finance Ministry, a builder (a favourite of your seniors, with a good track record) wants advance knowledge of an upcoming construction policy before others.

Khemka Sir's Response: Corrupt act — this is insider information leakage akin to insider trading and falls under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Secrecy that benefits one person at the public's cost must never be breached.

● **Principle:** No leakage of privileged information for private gain; equal access.

Theme 2 — Land & Development Projects

2.1 · 2015

A government plot acquired for a school involved irregularities in its purchase; siting the school there would force children to travel a long distance.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Treat as two distinct issues. Investigate and act on the procurement irregularity (rule of law), but separately protect the children's right to education — arrange an accessible interim site/transport so their schooling isn't held hostage to the corruption inquiry.

● **Principle:** Integrity in procurement + the child's best interest; don't let one wrong block a public good.

2.1 · 2016

For mining/dam projects, villagers' land is acquired; the one-time cash soon runs out and they become low-wage labourers in the same factories. Design a better R&R policy.

Khemka Sir's Response: Their income-generating asset is lost, so design rehabilitation that restores livelihoods: (1) a job for one family member in the project; (2) binding employable-skills training for adult/adolescent members; (3) instead of a lump sum, a stake in the project or a lifetime annuity (e.g. pay part in cash, convert the rest to annuity) so families don't end up destitute.

● **Principle:** Rehabilitation must restore livelihoods, not merely compensate.

2.1 · 2018

A minister wants the new highway re-aligned to pass beside his 20-acre farmhouse to raise its real-estate value (and offers you a commission); this means felling much more forest.

Khemka Sir's Response: Unethical and corrupt — refuse. The sound general remedy: when a project will raise nearby land values, the government should acquire that land and capture the appreciation for the public, rather than let officials and politicians profit. Alignment must follow technical and environmental merit, not private gain.

● **Principle:** Without fear or favour; publicly-created value belongs to the public; environmental duty.

2.2 · 2016

A company (given tax breaks) wants a project in 'Vikaspuri'; some locals fear social-economic disruption and want to go to court despite the firm's CSR offers to the displaced. What should the company do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Engage in genuine, prior consultation (FPIC-style), strengthen R&R beyond tokenism, and honour CSR commitments transparently. Respect the locals' right to legal recourse rather than suppressing dissent; sustainable development means carrying the community along, not over-riding it.

● **Principle:** Stakeholder consultation; sustainable development; right to peaceful dissent.

Theme 3 — Municipal Administration

3.1 · 2013 / 2021

A bridge is incomplete; intense public pressure to open it; your boss/minister scolds you and wants an early ribbon-cutting.

Khemka Sir's Response: Do not fast-forward at the cost of construction quality (natural processes like cement curing have their own time), and never open an unsafe structure for an occasion. But there is no justification for delay either — delay causes huge cost escalation; timely completion (à la DMRC under Sreedharan) is the goal.

● **Principle:** Quality must not be compromised; but no avoidable delay either.

3.1 · 2020

As Municipal Commissioner, an under-construction mall collapses, killing four workers; the inquiry reveals your own juniors gave illegal permission for a second basement. You are pressured to slow the inquiry, or a false PoSH/caste complaint will be filed against you.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Accountability for four deaths is paramount: run a fair, thorough and timely inquiry and let the guilty juniors face due process — do not shield them. Treat the threat of a false complaint as intimidation; act without fear or favour, document everything, inform superiors/vigilance, and proceed.

● **Principle:** Accountability for loss of life; moral courage; without fear or favour.

3.1 · 2017

Why are illegal/unsafe buildings constructed in urban areas, causing deaths of workers and residents, and how to prevent it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Two root causes: developers' greed / quick-money syndrome leading to unauthorised, unsafe construction without precautions (barricading, signage, illumination), and poor, often compromised, regulation. Fix both — strict, technology-aided enforcement of building and safety norms, and accountable regulators.

● **Principle:** Avoidable disasters stem from greed + weak regulation; enforce both.

Theme 4 — Corruption (General)

4.1 · 2014

Rameshwar cracks UPSC but within months is demoralised by pervasive corruption and wants to resign. What do you advise?

Khemka Sir's Response: Don't surrender the field to the corrupt by quitting — that hands them victory. The honest are not a helpless 10%; if even 20-30 in 100 push back, corruption cannot persist. Stay, build a clean record, use the Sunshine Test, and remember the easier option usually slides toward corruption while the harder one is ethical.

● **Principle:** Inaction by the good enables evil; resistance works; persevere.

4.1 · 2017

'If 90% of the system is corrupt, the honest 10% make no difference; petty gifts and small corruption as the oil that keeps the engine efficient are fine.' Your view?

Khemka Sir's Response: Reject the premise — the system is not 90% corrupt, and there is no big vs small corruption: corruption is corruption. The 'efficient corruption' argument is a rationalisation. But avoid rigid rule-bound conduct (lakeer ka fakeer); judge by your larger intent using the Sunshine Test.

● **Principle:** No big/small corruption; reject 'efficient corruption'; Sunshine Test.

4.2 · 2016

Saraswati returns from the US to start an NGO but, frustrated by corrupt and apathetic officials denying clearances, abandons the project and leaves. Regulation is needed, but should there be a middle path so honest social workers aren't discouraged?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Yes — governance should enable, not harass, honest citizens. Keep oversight (FCRA, audit, transparency) to prevent misuse, but make it a middle path: single-window, time-bound, online clearances with clear criteria and accountability for delay. A system that drives away the well-meaning fails its own purpose.

● **Principle:** Enabling, citizen-centric governance; balanced regulation; accountability for delay.

Theme 5 — Medical, Public Health & Disaster

5.1 · 2023

A landslide blocks the road; a woman in childbirth is bleeding heavily and the blood bank is far. A colleague will donate, but there's no time for HIV/other tests — only a group match. Allow the transfusion?

Khemka Sir's Response: Choose the lesser of two evils — allow it. Without blood she faces serious risk of death; the chance of infected blood is low and even HIV is now treatable. Save the life first.

● **Principle:** Lesser-evil reasoning; right to life prioritised under genuine emergency.

5.1 · 2018

A service-minded doctor with a small clinic wants to build the area's only big hospital. As an Income-Tax officer you find minor, inadvertent discrepancies in his TDS/tax papers that could stall the project. Ignore them, or be a stickler?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Neither extreme. Apply the law proportionately: allow rectification of bona fide, minor and inadvertent errors (most tax statutes permit this) rather than weaponising technicalities to block a genuine public-good project — but never grant an illegitimate favour or overlook real evasion.

● **Principle:** Proportionality; rule of law without rigidity; serve public interest, not technicality.

5.1 · 2017

You are heading to your UPSC interview when you witness a road accident and no one is helping. What do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Practically: dial 112/100 and report it, then proceed. But the highest ethical conduct is to get the victim to hospital within the golden hour yourself and request UPSC to reschedule — a request the Commission should accommodate.

● **Principle:** Golden-hour duty vs realistic action; honesty about the gap between the two.

5.1 · 2024

As a senior pharma scientist, hiding select negative clinical-trial data would win fast approval for a drug against a rapidly spreading new virus and could save many lives. Do it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Absolutely not — it is unethical. A molecule may enter clinical use only after complete testing and clearance by an independent regulator, without fudging data; belief or urgency is no substitute for evidence. Follow the entire procedure.

● **Principle:** Scientific integrity; no fudging of clinical data, even to save lives.

5.1 · 2015

A drug your firm makes for animals could, with more research, cure a human liver disease — but that disease afflicts only poor tribal communities, so even after spending Rs 50 crore you would never profit. Pursue it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Pursue the research — the right to health and corporate ethics outweigh pure profit, especially for a neglected, marginalised group. Profit is not the only metric: seek government, CSR, PPP, philanthropic or orphan-drug funding to make it viable. Abandoning a possible cure purely because the sufferers are poor is ethically indefensible.

● **Principle:** Right to health; beneficence over profit; equity for the marginalised.

5.2 · 2020

Covid lockdown: migrant workers have no food, money or transport home. As District Magistrate, how do you manage the mass?

Khemka Sir's Response: The migrant worker is the most destitute, ignored by both home and host states. First secure food, medicine and shelter so they need not leave; then arrange trains/buses for a dignified journey home. Forcing them to walk highways in harsh weather without resources was deeply inhuman.

● **Principle:** Security of basic needs + dignity; humane crisis administration.

5.2 · 2021

As administrator of a government hospital at the very first arrival of Covid (lethality unknown), hundreds of patients pour in daily and staff face uncertain, possibly fatal infection risk. Your decision — and would it differ in a private hospital?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: You cannot abandon patients — that is the core duty of a public health institution. Treat them, while owing a parallel duty of care to staff: provide PPE, protocols, rotation, rest, insurance and incentives, and informed consent. The duty would be the same in a private hospital, but a public institution carries a higher, non-discretionary obligation to serve.

● **Principle:** Twin duty of care (patients and staff); public duty over self-interest.

5.2 · 2019

After a landslide your relief team arrives very late; angry villagers scuffle with and assault your colleagues, who now say these people 'don't deserve our help' and want to leave.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Acknowledge the villagers' genuine anguish and your team's lapse, but never abandon relief out of ego or anger — their suffering does not make them unworthy. De-escalate, ensure team safety, apologise for the delay, and resume work; public service is measured precisely in such moments.

● **Principle:** Empathy and perseverance; public service above ego; impartial duty.

5.2 · 2015

A cloudburst has stranded many pilgrims and local residents. How do you evacuate them?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Run textbook disaster management: triage and prioritise by vulnerability (injured, elderly, women, children), coordinate NDRF/state forces and resources, set up relief camps with food/medicine/communication, and treat pilgrims and locals impartially. Restore links and account for the missing.

● **Principle:** Prioritisation by need; impartiality; coordinated disaster response.

Theme 6 — Empathy for the Weaker Sections

6.1 · 2018

A very poor, gravely ill elderly man can get free treatment under a government scheme only if he belongs to a reservation category. As District Magistrate, what do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Do not let a category technicality cost a life. Treat first, then explore every alternative — BPL/economically-weaker provisions, Ayushman Bharat (PMJAY), CM/PM relief funds, hospital welfare or your discretionary powers. The spirit of welfare schemes is to reach the needy, not to exclude on a technical bar.

● **Principle:** Right to life/health; compassionate administration beyond the letter of the rule.

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6.1 · 2016

A very poor elderly woman has no documents to prove her eligibility for any scheme. As DM, what do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Get her documents made on priority — Aadhaar (now near-universal) and ration card; once identity is established, all benefits flow. Giving a poor person her identity papers is the greatest single service you can render.

● **Principle:** Identity documents as the gateway to entitlements; proactive administration.

6.2 · 2020

Children work in cotton fields, harming their schooling and health; their poor parents need the income and the local NGO is inactive. As District Development Officer, what can you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Rescue the children (child labour is illegal and harms their future) while tackling the root cause: link parents to livelihood/MGNREGA/SHG schemes so the family doesn't depend on child income, enrol children with mid-day meals and scholarships, and activate or replace the inactive NGO with monitoring.

● **Principle:** Child rights; address root causes; holistic, sustainable rehabilitation.

6.2 · 2013

A Sivakasi firecracker factory owner uses child labour; on a raid he produces papers claiming the children are relatives doing 'a little housework', not factory work.

Khemka Sir's Response: It is not credible that 10-20 'relatives' happen to be present; in such hazardous occupations the presumption runs against the owner — he must prove the children are relatives there for non-work purposes. Send the children to the Social Welfare Board and act against the owner.

● **Principle:** Presumption against the owner in hazardous child labour; child protection.

Theme 7 — Education

7.1 · 2023

As an IAS officer you counsel the classmates bullying your son; mischief-makers post a video/clip on social media falsely claiming you threatened the children.

Khemka Sir's Response: Distinguish your duty as a father from your official role: go in a private capacity (own vehicle, no insignia) to counsel the children. Against the false propaganda, take lawful action — ask for removal, then pursue legal remedy and action against those spreading the falsehood. Don't abandon a genuine family need merely to protect your image.

● **Principle:** Separate official from private role; lawful remedy against misinformation.

7.1 · 2015

Villagers stop sending children (girls) to school because some loiterers harass them on the way. As the officer, what do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Safety is the precondition for education. Ensure safe passage — police patrolling on the route, community-volunteer escorts, a complaint mechanism — and act firmly against the harassers under law. Engage parents and the community so children, especially girls, return to school.

● **Principle:** Safety + right to education; gender sensitivity; community engagement.

7.1 · 2015

As village sarpanch, a Dalit cook is appointed for the mid-day meal; some parents stop sending their children to school over it.

Khemka Sir's Response: Untouchability is a constitutional offence — the Dalit cook stays and cannot be wronged or removed. The only real solution is sustained Information-Education-Communication (IEC) to dismantle the prejudice; leaders may publicly share the meal to set an example, but persistence is key, since caste is a man-made construct, not God-given.

● **Principle:** Untouchability is an offence; persuade via IEC; never appease prejudice.

7.2 · 2021

As college Vice-Principal, a surprise exam check catches a lecturer helping a local leader's daughter cheat. You act; trustees pressure you to hush it up (with an instant promotion), while student leaders threaten agitation unless strict action is taken.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Academic integrity is paramount: proceed against both the lecturer and the candidate strictly per rules. Resist the trustees' inducement — a promotion bought by burying malpractice is corruption; and a transparent, rule-bound process is exactly what will satisfy the agitating students too. Act without fear or favour.

● **Principle:** Academic integrity; courage against inducement; transparency; without fear or favour.

Theme 8 — Environment

8.1 · 2024

Amid severe water scarcity all borewells are banned; farmers protest that a nearby factory runs its borewells day and night, and demand you stop it — but closing the factory would render many local youth unemployed.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: The rule must apply equally — there cannot be one rule for farmers and another for the factory. Audit the factory's water use, enforce the ban or a fair, metered allocation, and invest in sustainable solutions (recharge, recycling, efficiency). Weigh employment honestly, but equity in a scarce common resource comes first.

● **Principle:** Equity in common resources; rule of law applied uniformly; sustainability.

8.1 · 2022

As a Pollution Control Board officer you tighten enforcement on polluting small industries; they pressure you, warning of unemployment if shut, and their workers protest — but the local NGO backs you.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Enforcing environmental norms is your statutory duty (polluter-pays, precautionary principle). Pursue a 'just transition': time-bound, phased compliance with support for cleaner technology and worker re-skilling, rather than abrupt closure or surrender. Use the NGO's support to build community consensus.

● **Principle:** Environmental duty; polluter pays; just transition protecting workers.

8.1 · 2018

You shut a polluting factory; many lost jobs, and downstream factories that used its chemical as input also stalled. How do you solve this?

Khemka Sir's Response: Think in systems — closure had ripple effects. The answer is not no-action but a holistic, sustainable design: cluster-level common effluent-treatment plants and shared facilities, cleaner-tech upgrades, and phased compliance, so environment and economy are reconciled rather than traded off bluntly.

● **Principle:** Systems thinking; sustainable industrial policy; phased compliance.

8.2 · 2021

Posting amid a powerful mining mafia that stalks/harasses your wife and children and murdered the previous officer 10 years ago; locals work in the mines and won't complain, and some of your own staff take commissions.

Khemka Sir's Response: Hardest of tasks, but the only answer is to act against the illegal mining. If you surrender, the mafia thrives; if you resist — even at personal risk — their wrongdoing shrinks (100 becomes 60, then 50). Secure your family, build clean intelligence, weed out compromised staff, use higher authorities and the courts, and never give up against injustice.

● **Principle:** Resistance reduces injustice; courage; never surrender to mafias.

8.3 · 2024

As CEO of an AI company whose data servers have raised greenhouse-gas emissions 50% in five years, investing in solar etc. cuts profit and angers shareholders, while rivals racing ahead ignore such 'idealism'.

Khemka Sir's Response: Environmental sustainability is supreme over profitability — climate change is scientifically proven, and you cannot do wrong merely because others do. Set a clear renewable-energy target and move toward it. Work on two levers: reduce consumption (Gandhian restraint) and make production efficient via green technology.

● **Principle:** Sustainability over profit; 'others do wrong' is no licence; clear green targets.

Theme 9 — Policing & Internal Security

9.1 · 2019

Posted in a border state where a drug mafia is nexused with local politicians (opium cultivation, arms smuggling, trafficking of minors); locals get employment from it and no one complains.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Combine firm policing of the mafia and its political nexus with addressing the root cause — alternative, legal livelihoods and development — so locals stop depending on crime. Build community trust and protected intelligence/witness mechanisms, and show courage against the political nexus while acting strictly within the law.

● **Principle:** Rule of law + development; courage against nexus; community policing.

9.1 · 2018

In a prohibition state your raids and arrests don't stop illegal liquor; the area lacks irrigation, education and industry, so jobless, dejected people seek solace in drink.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Enforcement alone fails without tackling demand and despair. Pair supply-side action with development (livelihoods, irrigation, education), de-addiction and rehabilitation, and community awareness. Treat addiction as a public-health and socio-economic problem, not merely a law-and-order one.

● **Principle:** Root-cause, holistic governance; demand + supply side; public-health lens.

9.1 · 2024

As DIG you find most local youth unemployed and being radicalised online by terror groups; even those who don't join spend the day denouncing government policy.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Counter-radicalisation works on roots: create employment/skilling and engagement, run credible counter-narratives and community outreach, and de-radicalisation programmes. Monitor online incitement, but protect lawful free speech and civil liberties — over-reach itself fuels alienation. Mere criticism of policy is not a crime.

● **Principle:** Counter-radicalisation via root causes; balance security with civil liberties.

9.1 · 2024

During a raid on Naxals they push rural women forward as human shields and fire at you indiscriminately; with no network you cannot summon backup. Do you return fire or not?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Do not fire indiscriminately — the lives of the innocent human shields are paramount and cannot be sacrificed. Apply the principles of distinction and proportionality: hold position, take cover, attempt to retreat or negotiate, and avoid any action that would harm the women, even at tactical cost. Restraint here is the ethical and lawful course.

● **Principle:** Protection of innocents; distinction and proportionality; restraint.

9.1 · 2022

Posted in the Home Ministry, you report illegal cross-border entry and fake Aadhaar racket; your boss tells you to withdraw it (to avoid embarrassing the government) or face a distant transfer — even as your mother's treatment is ongoing in the city and your promotion is at stake.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: National security and integrity outweigh career and personal pressure: do not withdraw a truthful report. Document it, route it through proper channels (and, if needed, higher/oversight authorities), and stand by the facts. Address your mother's care separately rather than letting it coerce a dishonest act.

● **Principle:** Integrity and national interest over self-interest; moral courage.

Theme 10 — Private Sector, Favoritism & Conflict of Interest

10.1 · 2013

As college Dean during a professor recruitment, the minister's PA calls: select our relative and your institute's pending funding will be cleared fast.

Khemka Sir's Response: Never do it — act strictly on merit. This is plain bribery; the 'greater good' justification fails because the briber never pays more than the favour is worth, so it is never a genuine donation.

● **Principle:** Merit only; quid-pro-quo is bribery whatever the framing.

10.1 · 2024

As manager of a private hospital buying new X-ray machines, your own brother — a known supplier in financial difficulty — has bid; a big order would rescue him, but selecting him risks a nepotism charge. The trustees say they'll back any decision you make.

Khemka Sir's Response: Recuse yourself. Where a close relative is involved, deciding for him invites a nepotism charge and against him invites family resentment — 'justice must not only be done but be seen to be done'. Disclose the conflict to the trustees/top management; only if they still entrust you after full disclosure may you proceed, strictly impartially.

● **Principle:** Recusal; disclosure of conflict; justice must be seen to be done.

10.2 · 2022

A government bus driver dies in a roadside scuffle after an accident; the transport department decides to deny his family compensation, and all drivers strike demanding both compensation and a job for the family.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: The dependants are innocent and the driver died in connection with his duty — compensation is just on humanitarian grounds, and a compassionate-grounds appointment should be considered per policy if eligible. Engage the union, examine facts fairly, and resolve through dialogue rather than a blanket denial.

● **Principle:** Welfare of innocent dependants; compassion; fair dialogue with the union.

10.2 · 2017

As HR chief of a private firm, a worker dies through his own negligence after coming to work drunk; other workers strike demanding compensation for his family.

Khemka Sir's Response: Pay the compensation. Even if he was at fault, the family he left behind committed no wrong and cannot be punished; he died on your premises and your duty (dharma) is to support the family. The agitation is justified.

- **Principle:** Employer/labour-welfare duty to the innocent family.

10.2 · 2023

As MD of a road-transport corporation, the chairman is corrupt (takes a cut on everything down to bus tyres). Some board members will help you expose him — but from political ambition (they'll gain power, and reward you); if the campaign fails, you may be transferred far away.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Act against corruption on the strength of evidence and lawful process, not as an instrument of anyone's political game. Build a clean, documented case through audit/vigilance/CVC channels; accept the board members' factual help but keep your motives and methods above the politics, and bear the transfer risk with courage.

- **Principle:** Integrity; without fear or favour; refuse to be instrumentalised.

10.3 · 2022

As quality-control officer in a shoe company, a consignment rejected for poor quality in Europe is sent back; owners want you to sign off so it can be sold to local Indian buyers, hinting you'll be sacked if you refuse.

Khemka Sir's Response: Foreign standards are often higher than India's, so if the goods genuinely meet Indian quality standards you may certify and sell them domestically. But if the only way to pass is to manipulate or manage the Indian test, refuse — selling sub-standard goods by manipulation is unethical and illegal, and a job threat doesn't change that.

- **Principle:** Meet the applicable standard honestly; no manipulation of certification.

10.3 · 2021

A food company sent good-quality samples to the food-safety regulator but actually sells inferior goods in the market. What should the government do — and, after being penalised, how should the firm recover its damaged brand?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: This is fraud on the regulator and consumers: the government must penalise it (FSSAI action), recall products and publicise the finding to protect public health. The firm recovers its brand only through genuine reform — accountable leadership, a real quality overhaul, third-party audits and transparency — not PR spin.

- **Principle:** Consumer rights; deterrent action; authentic reform over image-management.

10.4 · 2022

As CEO of a loss-making weapons firm under a board ultimatum, a rival's manager offers you secret tender/insider information in exchange for a job — a 'Mir Jafar'. Hire him?

Khemka Sir's Response: No. It is an unethical act, and a Mir Jafar will betray you too at the next better offer. This isn't whistleblowing (which serves the public interest) — he serves only private interest. Beat the rival ethically, through better quality and lower prices, not betrayal.

● **Principle:** Reject betrayal-based gains; compete ethically; integrity over short-term profit.

10.5 · 2017

A major client drove you home fast after a party and caused an accident through his own fault; you are the sole eyewitness. Truthful testimony jails him and may hurt your company's business. Do you testify truthfully?

Khemka Sir's Response: Clear answer — truthful testimony is the ethical act; withholding or giving false testimony is a corrupt act. The line is sharp here: truth may cost you, falsehood may profit you — choose truth.

● **Principle:** Honesty in testimony; a clear ethical-vs-corrupt line; rule of law.

10.6 · 2014

As CEO of an electronics firm with superior products, a government official demands a bribe to clear your tender; losing it may shut a unit and cost many jobs. Pay the bribe?

Khemka Sir's Response: Paying to win the tender is a corrupt act. From an armchair it's easy to say 'refuse', but it is genuinely difficult; remember that of two choices the harder one is usually ethical. The choice — and how much loss you will bear — is yours; maximum sacrifice of unfair gain is the most ethical conduct. Pursue lawful remedies (vigilance, complaint, appeal) instead.

● **Principle:** Difficult-choice rule; ethical conduct = sacrifice accepted; lawful remedy.

10.7 · 2015

As a company owner, ~40 local political-party workers gherao you demanding jobs — really a monthly 'goonda tax' — and the police/municipality stay indifferent because you don't gift them at festivals.

Khemka Sir's Response: Never pay the goonda tax — it is the easy, fearful option and clearly unethical; act 'without fear or favour'. Build genuine community goodwill through CSR (the mandatory 2% under the Companies Act), pursue lawful protection persistently, and don't normalise either extortion or festival 'gifting' of officials.

● **Principle:** Without fear or favour; build legitimate goodwill via CSR; no normalising bribery.

11 · 2020

Is it ethically right or wrong for the Government of India to sell some of its weapons to friendly nations?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Present both sides. For: a sovereign right that supports strategic autonomy, the defence-industrial base and jobs, and helps allies meet legitimate defence needs and regional stability. Against: arms can fuel conflict, be misused or diverted, and raise human-rights concerns. The ethical position is responsible transfer — strong end-use monitoring, no sales to aggressors or rights-violators, and compliance with international law — rather than a blanket yes or no.

● **Principle:** Responsible arms transfer; strategic autonomy balanced with do-no-harm and end-use control.

One-Page Revision Sheet

Quotable lines & maxims

- When two options exist, the more difficult one is usually the ethical one.
- Sunshine Test: do only what you could state openly and still feel proud of.
- Public interest is supreme; a public servant can never sacrifice it for private gain.
- There is no big or small corruption — corruption is corruption.
- Act without fear or favour.
- Justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done.
- Justice delayed is justice denied — but justice hurried is justice buried.
- Whistleblowing is loyalty to the company vs the larger loyalty to the public (a private-sector concept; in the public sector it is simply duty).
- Dignity cannot be exchanged for profit.
- Evil triumphs because the good do nothing — resistance, even in defeat, shrinks the wrongdoer's power.
- Ends do not justify the means; a compassionate motive cannot legitimise an illegal act.

Keyword toolkit for answers

Recusal • conflict of interest • PoSH / Internal Complaints Committee • whistleblower protection • insider information • presumption against the owner (hazardous child labour) • golden-hour duty • Ayushman Bharat / PMJAY • CSR (2% under Companies Act) • lesser of two evils • proportionality (employment-intensity vs resource depletion) • just transition • polluter-pays & precautionary principle • IEC (Information–Education–Communication) • rehabilitation = job + skilling + annuity/stake • reasoned 'speaking order' (RTI Section 8 public-interest) • Article 19 free expression • untouchability as a constitutional offence • distinction & proportionality (use of force) • end-use monitoring (arms transfer) • distributive / Rawlsian justice • environmental sustainability over profitability.

The five-step answer skeleton

Stakeholders: list everyone affected.

Ethical conflict: name the clash (private vs public interest, profit vs dignity, loyalty vs law, security vs liberty).

Decision: state your clear choice up front.

Justification: anchor it to a principle from Part A and a relevant provision/keyword.

Trade-off: acknowledge the cost you accept — that honesty is itself ethical maturity.

Khemka Sir's closing words to aspirants

These armchair answers are theoretical; in real life you must bear the cost. Ethics is like cricket — easy to comment from the stands, hard on the crease. The more you practise the ethical act, the stronger you become. The ethical path is always the difficult path — and that difficulty is the point.



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