

Group 1

Ethics Case study

Problem statement

- You are working as an Executive Engineer in the construction cell of a Cantonment Board and are presently in-charge of the construction of a bridge. There are two Junior Engineers under you who have the responsibility of day-to-day inspection of the site and are reporting to you, while you are finally reporting to the Chief Engineer who heads the construction wing. While the construction is heading towards completion, the Junior Engineer have been regularly reporting that all construction is taking place as per design specifications. However, in one of your surprise inspections, you have noticed some serious deviations and lacunae which, in your opinion, are likely to affect the safety of the flyover. Rectification of these lacunae at this stage would require a substantial amount of demolition and rework which will cause a tangible loss to the contractor and will also delay completion. There is a lot of public pressure on the board to get this construction completed because of heavy traffic congestion in the area. When you brought this matter to the notice of the Chief Engineer, he advised you that in his opinion it is not a very serious lapse and may be ignored. He advised for further expediting the project for completion in time. However, you are convinced that this was a serious matter which might affect public safety and should not be left unaddressed.

Stakeholders:

1. Executive engineer
2. Junior Engineers
3. Contractor
4. Chief Engineer
5. Superior Officials
5. Public

Ethical Dilemma:

- Duty bound v/s Conscience
- Financial Issue v/s Human Life
- Individual v/s community
- Short term v/s Long term

Values

- Integrity
- Accountability for your work
- Probity
- Empathy
- Impartiality
- Objectivity
- Dedication

Evaluating Options:

- **Option 1:** Follow the advice of the Chief Engineer and go ahead.
 - It would be unethical to follow. Although it is in compliance with the norms of the organizational structure, but it violates the ethical principles. Since the project has been observed for severe lapses in quality, it is unwise to carry forward with it.

- **Option 2:** Make an exhaustive report of the situation bringing out all facts and analysis along with your own viewpoints stated clearly and seek for written orders from the Chief Engineer.
- It might be appropriate from a formal perspective, as it would make sure that the Chief Engineer has noticed the lacunae in the project, and still is ordering to carry on with it. This would save the concerned Executive Engineer from any implications. However, from an ethical point of view, it is highly unwise to carry on with the project.

- **Option 3:** Call for explanation from the Junior Engineer and issue orders to the contractor for necessary correction within targeted time.
- It is a plausible option, as the Junior Engineers, directing in-charge of the project should be called for explanation for the lapses in the project. Also, all possible moves shall be made to make sure that the project is completed in a stipulated timeframe. The contractor should also be dealt with strictly, and held answerable for the shortcomings in the quality standards.

- **Option 4:** Highlight the issue so that it reaches the superiors above the Chief Engineer.
- It might be resorted in case the Chief Engineer is adamant about going on with the project. Since there would be no option left, if the Chief Engineer is adamant about his decision, the Executive Engineer would have to approach the superiors with a detailed report.

- **Option 5:** Considering the rigid attitude of the Chief Engineer, seek transfer from the project or report.
- It would be an attempt to escape from the problem, while ignoring one's moral responsibility. Thus, it would be unethical on the part of the Executive Engineer to run away from his duty.

Group Recommendation:

- An ethical, and required course of action would be to halt the project immediately, and make the preparations for the re-work. Since the matter involves public safety, it cannot be left to chances. Any outburst from the public shall be dealt appropriate. Also, those responsible for the lapses in the project shall be dealt strictly.