Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Pawan is working as an officer in the State Government for the last ten years. As a part of routine transfer, he was posted to another department. He joined in a new office along with five other colleagues. The head of the office was a senior officer conversant with the functioning of the office. As a part of general inquiry, Pawan gathered that his senior officer carries the reputation of being difficult and insensitive person having his own disturbed family life. Initially, all seem to go well. However, after some time Pawan felt that the senior officer was belittling him and at times unreasonable. Whatever suggestions given or views expressed by Pawan in the meetings were summarily rejected and the senior officer would express displeasure in the presence of others. It became a pattern of boss's style of functioning to show him in bad light highlighting his shortcomings and humiliating publically. It became apparent that though there are no serious work-related problems/shortcomings, the senior officer was always on one pretext or the other and would scold and shout at him. The continuous harassment and public criticism of Pawan resulted in loss of confidence, self-esteem and equanimity. Pawan realized that his relations with his senior officer are becoming more toxic and due to this, he felt perpetually tensed, anxious and stressed. His mind was occupied with negativity and caused him mental torture, anguish and agony. Eventually, it badly affected his personal and family

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life. He was no longer joyous, happy and contented even t home. Rather without any reason he would loose his temper with his wife and other family members. The family environment was no longer pleasant and congenial. His wife who was always supportive to him also became a victim of his negativity and hostile behaviour. Due to harassment and humiliation suffering by him in the office, comfort and happiness virtually vanished from his life. Thus it damaged his physical and mental health.

1. **What are the options available with Pawan to cope with the situation?**
2. **What approach Pawan should adopt for bringing peace, tranquillity and congenial environment in the office and home?**
3. **As an outsider, what are your Suggestions for both boss and subordinate to overcome this situation and for improving the work performance, mental and emotional hygiene?**
4. **In the above scenario, what type of training would you suggest for at various levels in the government offices?**

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EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Workplace dignity, emotional intelligence, abusive supervision, stress management, communication, conflict resolution, grievance redressal, professional conduct, mental well-being, family relationships,

leadership training, counselling, organisational ethics

Model Answer

Introduction

Pawan is experiencing persistent workplace humiliation that is damaging his mental well-being, professional confidence and family relationships. He must respond constructively while protecting his dignity and maintaining professional standards.

Options Available to Pawan

- **Calm communication:** Request a private meeting with the senior officer and seek specific, work-related feedback.
- **Maintain documentation:** Record incidents, dates and witnesses objectively.
- **Seek institutional support:** Consult an appropriate grievance mechanism, human resources authority or higher official if the behaviour continues.
- **Access counselling:** Seek professional support to manage stress and prevent its spillover into family life.
- **Transfer as a last resort:** Consider a transfer if the environment remains harmful despite reasonable efforts and formal remedies.

Approach for Peace at Work and Home

Pawan should distinguish legitimate criticism from humiliation, respond professionally and avoid retaliatory behaviour. At home, he should communicate honestly with his family, apologise for displaced anger and establish routines that support emotional recovery.

The senior officer should provide specific, respectful feedback, listen to alternative views and avoid public humiliation. Both should agree on clear work expectations and review progress objectively.

Suggestions as an Outsider

The department should provide confidential grievance redressal, mediation where appropriate, protection against retaliation and access to counselling. Persistent bullying should be investigated fairly rather than dismissed as a personality conflict.

Training Required

- Emotional intelligence and stress management.

- Communication, conflict resolution and respectful feedback.
- Leadership, mentoring and team management for senior officers.
- Workplace dignity, anti-harassment standards and grievance procedures.
- Mental-health awareness and access to professional counselling.

Conclusion

A healthy workplace requires accountability as well as empathy. Pawan should seek constructive resolution and appropriate support, while the department must ensure that authority is exercised professionally and without humiliation.

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