

Q1. A flagship government project being headed by you has encountered a tricky problem. The project requires a cloud based server that would cost at least ten crores. The tendering process would take at least three months and the final procurement won't finalise before 6 months. The project is being monitored by the PMO and you are under a lot of pressure to deliver the project in a time bound manner. The only way to adhere to the timeline is to do away with the tendering process. But to do that, you will be required to create some fake documents to prove that the procurement is too urgent to wait for the tendering process and that doing away with the tendering process is necessary. Your colleagues and seniors tell you that such things are common and you should not hesitate in taking the alternate route.

What would you do in this case? Would you go ahead and create the fake documents? Substantiate your response.

Approach - It expects students to write about the given case and the ethical dilemma faced, mention the options available with their merits and demerits and mention a course of action with explanation.

Introduction

The given case tests the ability of a person to stick to the right means even in difficult administrative circumstances. This poses a challenge between maintaining status quo and to bring a change with transparency in procurement policy.

Body

Values involved:

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Moral righteousness
- Courage
- Objectivity
- Professionalism
- Fairness

Stakeholders involved:

- PMO
- Seniors and colleagues
- Myself
- Beneficiary of projects
- Bidders- start-up's and companies

Ethical and moral dilemma involved:

- Organisational Goals v/s Personal Ethics
- Organisational benefit v/s organisational ethics

- Following Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)v/s unfair means
- Means v/s End

Options available:

1. Start work as per seniors and colleagues advise to create fake documents:

Merits:

- Completing the task in time bound period which will help maintain the organisation image.
- Following advice of seniors will also help in losing the pressure and stress related to task.
- This option allows me to fulfil my duty and following the seniors and administrative orders try to be in good books.

Demerits:

- But it violates the virtue of objective in professional duty.
- Setting wrong precedent for the future become habitual of others also and can transform into larger scams.
- Risk of further information leakage it can jeopardise such ICT projects in digital India programmes.
- It will go against principle and agenda of good governance with lack of transparency in governance and important government's projects.
- Bypassing professional ethics and an established procedure raises doubts on integrity.
- These may include vested interests of different colleague as the project covers 10 crore budget and can lead to corruption.

2. Going against advice of alternate route and making efforts for efficient SOP.

Merits:

- Upholding my personal moral conscience will make me more productive at work.
- In the long run ethical conduct always helps in achieving life's larger goals, such as mental peace, clear conscience, strength of character and brings harmony and balance in life.
- Using pressure in more objective direction and setting resilient accountability and setting example for all colleagues without fake documents task can be done in time bound period.
- It may imbibe confidence in work culture that we can finish task without unfair means.

Demerits:

- Can take more time with SOP and taking confidence of colleagues to do it in fair manner.
- Can hamper relation with the colleagues and senior in office and can strain the working environment.

Course of action with following steps:

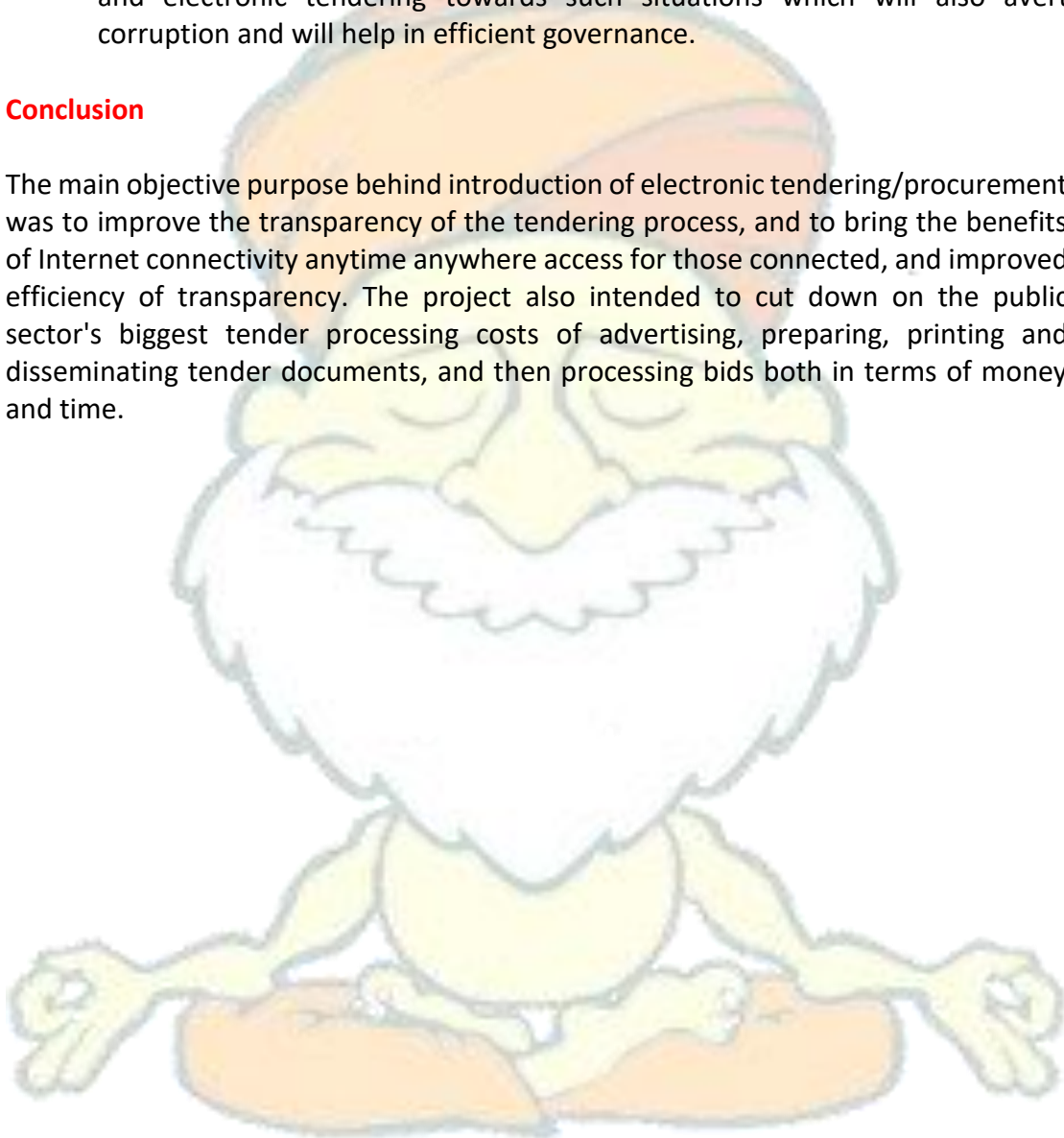
1. E-Procurement system calling various budding start-up and encouraging them to complete it in time bound manner. It will turn paper based administration

to web based administration will help bring procurement cost low by which we can provide incentives for finishing the task in time. It will provide across India bidding chance by which we pick most efficient company for task.

2. Using confidence building measures and trust with help of senior authorities at PMO with explaining the whole scenario and asking more time in the project so that new SOP can be created for e-Procurement in such scenarios.
3. Attitudinal change and moral suasion of colleagues to help in completing the task in time and bring change in department with opting the ICT technology and electronic tendering towards such situations which will also avert corruption and will help in efficient governance.

Conclusion

The main objective purpose behind introduction of electronic tendering/procurement was to improve the transparency of the tendering process, and to bring the benefits of Internet connectivity anytime anywhere access for those connected, and improved efficiency of transparency. The project also intended to cut down on the public sector's biggest tender processing costs of advertising, preparing, printing and disseminating tender documents, and then processing bids both in terms of money and time.



Q2. You are working in a big media house. The channels owned by the house have wide reach across the country. The new CEO of the media house is showing signs of allegiance towards the ruling party of a particular state. You are able to gauge his inclinations by the fact that there is hardly any news item being shown which criticise the action or inaction of the government. You are perturbed by this as you feel that free, independent and unbiased media is the lifeline of a vibrant democracy. Yet you are silent on this issue as your bread and butter is dependent on this job. You can't offend your boss after all. However, one day the limit is breached when the CEO calls you and directs you to stage a false sting operation against the opposition party's leader. You are also given monetary inducements to follow his directions. When you oppose, he tells you to either do the job or quit the company.

What options do you have in this situation? Which one will you follow? Why?

Approach - To solve these kind of case studies, it is necessary to adopt a stakeholder's approach. As an ethical dilemma is presented where qualities of professional ethics, integrity are tested with his/her interpersonal relations. After adopting this approach candidate needs to enlist available options and then choose the best available option.

Introduction

The above case presents a grim picture of one of the media house on one side and on the other side presents the cynical approach of those who ignore their corrupt practices in the process. This also raises concern of vulnerability, harassment, getting trapped in vicious cycle of falsehood.

Body

Stakeholders in this case:

- Media house (New CEO)
- Society at large
- Ruling party
- Opposition party
- Me as employee of firm

Dilemmas in this question:

- Professional ethics Vs. personal ethics
- Integrity Vs. partisanship
- Freedom of information Vs. corrupt nexus of political and media
- Independence of journalism Vs. partisan boss

Options available before me:

Option one: As per the direction from the CEO, will do the false sting operation against opposition party's leader and take monetary inducements as per the offer. If I follow this option these are following pros and cons are there:

Pros:

- I will get the monetary benefit and it is good for government and our company.
- I will save my job as I am completely depending on it for my bread and butter.
- I will satisfy my boss and this will help me in promoting my position as well as I will get more monetary benefits if I continue to follow my boss orders.
- I will be getting any future political favours, if needed.

Cons:

- This is completely against my personal ethics and it is against the journalism ethics as well, this will lead to dishonesty to my job, and I will be part of that media and political nexus.
- It will definitely hamper my conscience along with that I may save my job, but every day I will go through mental trauma for doing the things which are against my principles.
- These kinds of acts are like slippery slope once if we get used to it, we will lose our conscience and after some time, it feels like we are not doing wrong at all, which I am aware of, so I don't want to lose my character just for meagre material benefits.
- This is more about short term gain VS long term pain, by opting for this option, I will be doing negative ethics of my profession and this act is against the freedom of information.

Option two: As the question clearly stated that the CEO has ordered to follow the orders or else I have to quit my job, and it is the question of bread and butter. If I opt for this option, there are following pros and cons are there:

Pros:

- I might leave my job to uphold personal ethics, and will be satisfied with the act I have done as I strongly feel that doing unethical things is the worst form of corruption.
- It will satisfy the ego of the CEO as well, and he will get his work done with other person smoothly as he understood that I am not the right person to do this job.

Cons:

- If I quit the job, that doesn't mean that the false sting operation won't happen, I have saved myself from doing wrong, however, now someone else will do that job which is against the freedom of information as it will promote the corrupt nexus between politics and media.
- This will lead to curb in the independence of journalism and also the CEO who has this biasedness, will dominate the field which is dangerous for the democratic values as well as accountability in the society.
- But the crisis will remain in the media and especially in my company, which I have first-hand experienced.
- Boss might think that he can pressurize anyone who doesn't listen to him, I will set the wrong precedence in the company itself.

Option three: If I have experienced that biasedness, there must be other people who must have felt the same and as I am working in that media house before the CEO, I must have good knowledge about the people who will stand for the democracy and freedom of information and without any biasedness.

I will reach them and will try to escalate the issue to the board members and also will try to resolve through internal mechanism as there must be some mechanism to solve the crisis like these. I can be a whistle blower from the institute, and I can register a complaint to press clubs, board of directors regarding the CEO, etc., if I opt for this option, there will be following pros and cons:

Pros:

- This will restore the peoples' faith in the media as these days, most of the people lost their faith in the media, due to lots of scams as well as news itself shows that biasedness.
- This will not cost my job, as it will also raise the consciousness of the media, if something is going wrong in other companies, they might introspect and some people who are under pressure due to the bosses and their hierarchical heads can now come out and raise the issues going on within their companies.
- This way my integrity and also my personal ethics will be upheld, which also means personal and professional satisfaction for staying for the truth and honesty.
- By opting this option, I can curb the nexus between media corporates and politicians.
- This will help our company to remain neutral and also this will improve our company's image in the public.

Cons:

- Unnecessary rivalries in the company and also people who are supporting the CEO of that company.
- He might target me again and again for no reason, if board of directors and some of the staff have already known and they are getting some favours and monetary benefits.

In this situation my options will be:

- I will opt for the third option as it is my duty to restore the public faith in the media and also by doing this, sometimes it might cost my job.
- But that won't be a big issue, as I have already worked and I have the experience to get into another job role or other company, as these days most of the companies are looking for persons who are ethical as well as professional.
- The Public trust in media to hold government accountable is the most important function as a journalist.
- My efforts are to preserve that trust and adhere to the ethical norms of the media profession, which I might be able to do it.

Conclusion

Indira Gandhi once said, People tend to forget their duties but remember their right. Thus it is our duty to not let any wrong intentional people to influence media which is lifeline for our democracy.