

Secretarial Practice

Class-11

Chapter-1

Secretary

Origin of Secretary:

1. The Latin words 'Secretum' or 'Sectreus' means secrets.
2. The word Secretary is derived from the Latin word 'Secretarius' which means someone who works for a person of great importance.
3. In ancient Indian history, Secretary was referred to as Amatya, Sachiva or Chitnis, which means a person who does secretarial work.

Meaning and definition:

1. The Oxford Dictionary defines a Secretary as ‘A person whose work is to write for others, especially one who is employed to conduct correspondence, keep records and to transact various other businesses for another person or for a society, corporation or public body.’
2. According to Companies Act 2013 section 2(24) “Company Secretary or Secretary means a Company Secretary as defined in Clause (c) of Sub-section (i) of Section 2 of the Company Secretaries Act 1980 who is appointed by a company to perform the function of a Company Secretary under this Act.”
3. The Company Secretaries Act, 1980 defines Company Secretary as a “person who is a member of Institute of Company Secretaries of India.”

Features of Secretary:

1. **Individual:** Only an individual alone can be appointed as a secretary and not a firm, or a corporate body or an institution etc.
2. **Duties:** A Secretary has to perform duties such as correspondence, conducting meetings, maintaining records and providing information. He also fulfills the routine day to day duties of employer such as clerical work, recording, fixing appointments, giving reminders, replying to other employees queries etc.

3. **Qualification:** A secretary must possess specific qualities and qualifications. For eg, Company Secretary of public or private Limited company must have a qualification as per the Companies Act, 2013 and Secretary of Government Department must have the qualifications according to the rules and regulations of the Government.
4. **Appointment:** A Secretary can be appointed by individuals, professionals, society, corporation, government, public organization, Joint stock companies etc.
5. **Paid Employee:** A Secretary is a paid employee of any organization. He either receives a salary or an honorarium. A Secretary holds very important position in the organization.

6. **Confidential Officer:** A Secretary is custodian of secret and confidential information of the organization. He is closely connected to the top management and can be involved in policy decisions.
7. **Representative:** A Secretary is a representative of the organization. There are two types of Secretary: a) personal and b) institutional. Secretaries appointed by individuals are known as Personal Secretaries. Institutional Secretaries are appointed by societies, government departments, companies.
8. **Qualities:** A Secretary must have qualities such as concentration, intelligence, tact, loyalty, co-operation, courtesy, leadership, orderliness and knowledge seeking quality. These qualities help him in smooth and efficient working of the organization.

Importance of Secretary:

1. ***Expert advice and guidance***: The Secretary advises the top management on various important issues and assists to take final decision. His views and opinions are considered valuable.
2. ***Administrator***: A secretary handles the routine office administration as well as the executive duties of the organization such as office management, documentation of important issues, attending visitors, assisting policy formulation, preparation of plans, supervision on plan execution etc.

3. ***Custodian of secret information:*** The Secretary has access to confidential and crucial information relating to the organization. He guards the secrets of the organization and does not disclose the same so he is a 'confidential officer'.
4. ***Correspondent:*** The Secretary is a correspondent of the organization and so responsible for inward and outward correspondence. It includes correspondence with members, directors, banks, Registrar, Government authorities, customers etc.
5. ***Legal compliance officer:*** The Secretary has to ensure timely and proper legal compliances in all activities of the organization. The secretary maintains books, registrars etc prescribed by Companies Act, 2013 and also files returns, documents with proper authorities within the stipulated time.

6. **Conducting meetings:** The Secretary conducts the various meetings and performs the duties needed to be undertaken the before, during and after the meeting.
7. **Link between management and staff:** A Secretary is link between the management and the staff of the organization and helps in effective communication.
8. **Fulfillment of Secretarial Standards and Secretarial Audits:** Secretarial Standards and Audits aim at checking whether the company is adhering to the legal and procedural requirements.

Types of Secretary:

a) Personal Secretary:

- **Appointment:** The individuals who are busy appoint secretaries to look after other work so that they can concentrate on their primary work. Eg, doctors, lawyers, engineers, CA, actors, politicians, leaders, ministers etc.
- **Qualification:** A personal secretary needs no such specific qualifications. But basic graduation, degree, good command over the language is necessary. He should have computer and internet knowledge as now a days it is necessary. So, the qualification depends upon the requirement of employer's profession.

b) Institutional Secretary :

- **Secretary of Non-profit Association**: This means organizations formed to provide services such as social, educational, cultural, arts, sports activities and not to earn profit.
- **Appointment**: Management Committee looks after the non-profit organization. The Secretary may be part time or full time working on salary or honorarium basis. For eg, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Sports Club, Chamber of Commerce etc.
- **Qualification**: There is no specific qualification for this type of Secretary as such. He should have the basic knowledge of functioning and objects of the organization. He should also have basic computer knowledge, filing and correspondence knowledge etc.

- **Secretary of a Co-operative society:** It is an association formed voluntarily by minimum 10 members or more. Its main objective is to provide services to its members. Eg, Co-operative banks, Co-operative housing societies, Consumer co-operative stores etc.
- **Appointment:** The members elect their representatives called as Management Committee. One of the members of the management committee is appointed as Secretary. Generally, such Secretary works on honorary basis. For large scale co-operative organization, Secretary may be appointed as full time employee on salary basis.
- **Qualification:** In this type, the Secretary as such does not have any specific qualification. Secretary should have good knowledge of Co-operative Societies Act and should be at least graduate.

- **Secretary of Joint Stock Company:** A Joint Stock Company is that form of an organization which is most suitable one for organizing business on large scale. In this form, the Secretary has very much importance.
- **Appointment:** in this form of organization, a Secretary is appointed at the time of the formation of the company. He works under the control of Board of Directors.
The appointment of the Secretary is as per the Companies Act, 2013. The Secretary is included in the definition of KMP i.e. Key Management Personnel which is introduced in the Companies Act, 2013.
- **Qualification:** As per Companies Act, 2013 the Company Secretary must be the member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI).

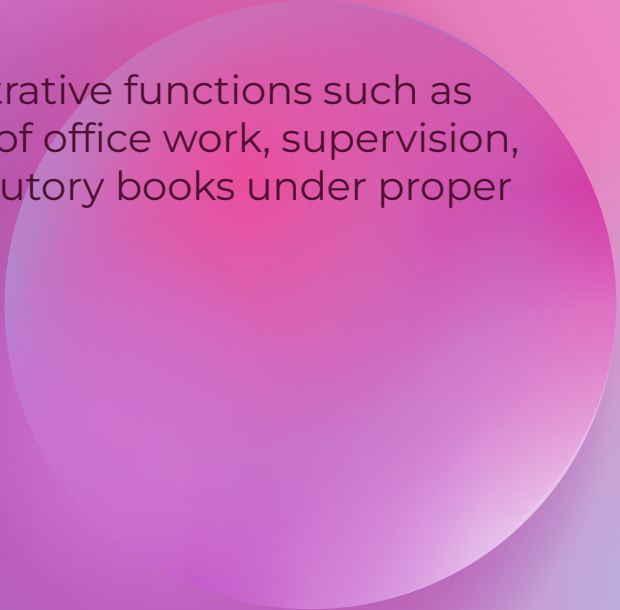
- **Secretary of Government Department:** Government Departments are the different departments work under the various ministers of the State and Central Government.
- **Appointment:** A Secretary is the administrative head of a Ministry or Department in the functioning of Government of India and State Government. In the Union and State Governments, the Secretary is the head of the department such as Finance Secretary, Defence Secretary, Home Secretary etc.
- **Qualification:** The Secretary must have graduation degree. Also. the Secretary should pass the Civil Services Examination conducted by the Public Service Commission and should be in Indian Administrative Services (IAS).

Functions of a Secretary:

The Secretary performs various functions such as clerical functions, office responsibilities, department or individual etc.

1. **Correspondence**: Inward- outward mails, replying to queries from outsiders, government department, and other stakeholders. Also includes to look after the record of the organization.
2. **Office Management**: Supervision and control the staff, to look after the activities of the association. Guidance and control to the staff for smooth functioning of the organization, looking after the training, promotion and transfer of the office staff.
3. **Reception Function**: To attend the phone calls and visitors, to attend the inquiries, fixing appointments etc.

4. **Financial Functions**: To handle banking transactions, to maintain proper books of accounts, to keep watch on receipts and payments, to provide necessary information to employer, management, banks and government.
5. **Arranging Meetings**: To arrange the meetings between the employer and other parties. Also to arrange meetings of the Board, general meetings, meetings of the managing committee as per the provisions of the Act. To draft notices, agenda and minutes of the meeting.
6. **Statutory Functions**: To comply with all the provisions of the Acts applicable to the organization such as Income Tax Act, Stamp Act, Goods and Services Act etc.
7. **Assistance in formulating policies**: To collect the statistical data and information to assist the management in formulating the policy.

8. **Providing Information**: To provide the accurate information related to various departments in the organization to the management, banks, government departments, shareholders and employees.
 9. **Administrative Functions**: To perform administrative functions such as assisting in appointing employees, distribution of office work, supervision, training, promotion etc. Also to maintain all statutory books under proper custody.
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Qualities of a Secretary:

The Secretary should have certain qualities apart from academic qualification.

1. **Accuracy**: A Secretary must be accurate in his work such as drafting letters, recording minutes, maintaining records.
2. **Adaptability**: It means to adjust oneself as per the changing situations. Situations change due to changes in government policies, management policies etc.
3. **Cooperativeness**: It means the willingness of the Secretary to assist others in achieving the objectives of the organization. It helps in developing team spirit and a sense of togetherness.

4. **Courtesy**: It refers to politeness and kindness. A Secretary should be courteous while dealing with the people. It creates the positive impression about the employer and the organization.
5. **Initiative**: It refers to the take an effort voluntarily while accomplish the task. A Secretary should have the ability to take the initiative to take decisions on behalf of the employers if they are not present.
6. **Leadership**: A leadership skills of Secretary helps to create team spirit. So he should have the ability to guide, advise, inspire and motivate the subordinates.
7. **Loyalty**: Loyalty refers to faithfulness. The work of Secretary is of a confidential nature. Being a confidential officer, he is not supposed to disclose matters of secrecy to anyone. He should give priority only to organizational goals and objectives.

8. **Orderliness**: It means to do the work in systematic manner. It helps the Secretary to complete the work in order and in time.
9. **Pleasing Personality**: The personality of a Secretary should be pleasing. It includes the way of talking, mannerism, good temper, confidential approach, and willingness to accept challenges and situation in a calm way.
10. **Knowledge Seeker**: A Secretary should update his knowledge as required to enable him to perform statutory functions.

11. **Punctuality**: It means time sense and to do the things in time. Lack of punctuality creates bad impression about the organization. The Secretary should possess good time management.
12. **Sound Judgement**: A secretary should have a sense to judge the situation and to take the decision accordingly. He should also be able to judge the effectiveness and performance of his subordinates.
13. **Tactfulness**: This refers to the ability of a person to handle a situation in a right manner. A secretary deals with different persons and situations therefore this quality helps him to act and react in a wise and sensible way.

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