

THE COMPANY AUDIT



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand qualification and disqualification of an auditor.
- Know the procedures of appointment, reappointment, filling up of the casual vacancies and removal of auditor.
- Understand powers and duties of auditor.
- Understand the provisions relating to rotational retirement.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW



Company Audit

- Appointment of Auditor
- Rotation of Auditor
- Audit Committee
- Auditor's Remuneration
- Removal of Auditor
- Ceiling Limit
- Powers & Duties of Auditor
- Audit Report as per Co., Act 2013
- Joint Audit
- Audit of Branch
- Cost Audit
- Punishment for non-compliance

INTRODUCTION

Companies Act, 2013 is rule based Act. Sections 139 to 148 of the Companies Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the Act unless otherwise mentioned) deal with provisions relating to audit of companies. Therefore, it is quite important to understand these provisions very carefully. You may also study sections 128 to 138 relating to "Accounts" of companies for better understanding of the subject. The provisions relating to 'audit' broadly deal with who can be appointed as an auditor under the Act, i.e., qualifications and disqualifications, the manner of appointment and removal of an auditor and rights and duties of an auditor. A scheme of the provisions of the Act relating to audit is given below for quick reference:

SECTIONS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER

- 139. Appointment of auditors.
- 140. Removal, resignation of auditor and giving of special notice.
- 141. Eligibility, qualifications and disqualifications of auditors.
- 142. Remuneration of auditors.
- 143. Powers and duties of auditors and auditing standards.
- 144. Auditor not to render certain services.
- 145. Auditors to sign audit reports, etc.
- 146. Auditors to attend general meeting.
- 147. Punishment for contravention.
- 148. Central Government to specify audit of items of cost in respect of certain companies.

1. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS OF AN AUDITOR

The provisions relating to eligibility, qualifications and disqualifications of an auditor are governed by **section 141** of the Companies Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred as the Act). The main provisions are stated below:

- (1) A person shall be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company only if he is a chartered accountant.

It may be noted that a firm whereof majority of partners practising in India are qualified for appointment as aforesaid may be appointed by its firm name to be auditor of a company.

- (2) Where a firm including a limited liability partnership is appointed as an auditor of a company, only the partners who are chartered accountants shall be authorised to act and sign on behalf of the firm.
- (3) Under **sub-section (3) of section 141** along with **Rule 10** of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014 (hereinafter referred as CAAR), the following persons shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company, namely-



Fig.: Is the person eligible for appointment as auditor?*

- (a) a body corporate other than a limited liability partnership registered under the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008;
- (b) an officer or employee of the company;
- (c) a person who is a partner, or who is in the employment, of an officer or employee of the company;
- (d) a person who, or his relative or partner -
- (i) is holding any security of or interest in the company or its subsidiary, or of its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company;

It may be noted that the relative may hold security or interest in the company of face value not exceeding ₹ 1,00,000.

It may also be noted that the condition of ₹ 1,00,000 shall, wherever relevant, be also applicable in the case of a company not having share capital or other securities.

Students may also note that in the event of acquiring any security or interest by a relative, above the threshold prescribed, the corrective action to maintain the limits as specified above shall be taken by the auditor **within 60** days of such acquisition or interest.

The following points merit consideration in this regard:

- (i) The value of shares of ₹ 1,00,000 that can be hold by relative is the face value not the market value.

- (ii) The limit of ₹ 1,00,000 would be applicable where the securities are held by the relative of an auditor and not where the securities are held by an auditor himself or his partner. In case of an auditor or his partner, securities of even small value shall be a disqualification.
- (iii) Grace period of 60 days for corrective action shall apply only in respect of securities held by relatives. This would not apply to auditor or his partner.

[The term “**relative**”, as defined under the Companies Act, 2013, means anyone who is related to another as members of a Hindu Undivided Family; husband and wife; Father (including step- father), Mother (including step-mother), Son (including step- son), Son’s wife, Daughter, Daughter’s husband, Brother (including step- brother), Sister (including step-sister).]

Example

Ex 1: Mr. A, a practicing Chartered Accountant, is holding securities of XYZ Ltd. having face value of ₹ 900. Whether Mr. A is qualified for appointment as an auditor of XYZ Ltd.?

As per section 141(3)(d)(i), an auditor is disqualified to be appointed as an auditor if he, or his relative or partner holding any security of or interest in the company or its subsidiary, or of its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company.

In the present case, Mr. A is holding security of ₹ 900 in XYZ Ltd. Therefore, he is not eligible for appointment as an auditor of XYZ Ltd.

Ex 2: Mr. P is a practicing Chartered Accountant and Mr. Q, the relative of Mr. P, is holding securities of ABC Ltd. having face value of ₹ 90,000. Whether Mr. P is qualified from being appointed as an auditor of ABC Ltd.?

As per section 141(3)(d)(i), a person is disqualified to be appointed as an auditor if he, or his relative or partner is holding any security of or interest in the company or its subsidiary, or of its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company. Further, as per proviso to this section, the relative of the person may hold the securities or interest in the company of face value not exceeding of ₹ 1,00,000.

In the present case, Mr. Q. (relative of Mr. P), is having securities of ₹ 90,000 face value in ABC Ltd., which is as per requirement of proviso to section 141(3)(d)(i). Therefore, Mr. P will not be disqualified to be appointed as an auditor of ABC Ltd.

Ex 3: M/s BC & Co. is an Audit Firm having partners Mr. B and Mr. C, and Mr. A the relative of Mr. C, is holding securities of MWF Ltd. having face value of ₹ 1,01,000. Whether M/s BC & Co. is qualified from being appointed as an auditor of MWF Ltd.?

As per section 141(3)(d)(i), a person is disqualified to be appointed as an auditor if he, or his relative or partner is holding any security of or interest in the company or its subsidiary, or of its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company. Further as per proviso to this section, the relative of the person may hold the securities or interest in the company of face value not exceeding of ₹ 1,00,000.

In the instant case, M/s BC & Co, will be disqualified for appointment as an auditor of MWF Ltd. as the relative of Mr. C (i.e. partner of M/s BC & Co.) is holding the securities in MWF Ltd. which is exceeding the limit mentioned in proviso to section 141(3)(d)(i).

Ex 4: M/s RM & Co. is an audit firm having partners CA. R and CA. M. The firm has been offered the appointment as an auditor of Enn Ltd. for the Financial Year 2016-17. Mr. Bee, the relative of CA. R, is holding 5,000 shares (face value of ₹ 10 each) in Enn Ltd. having market value of ₹ 1,50,000. Whether M/s RM & Co. is disqualified to be appointed as auditors of Enn Ltd.?

As per section 141(3)(d)(i), a person shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company, who, or his relative or partner is holding any security of or interest in the company or its subsidiary, or of its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company. However, as per proviso to this section, the relative of the person may hold the securities or interest in the company of face value not exceeding of ₹1,00,000.

In the instant case, M/s RM & Co. is an audit firm having partners CA. R and CA.

M. Mr. Bee is a relative of CA. R and he is holding shares of Enn Ltd. of face value of ₹ 50,000 only (5,000 shares x ₹ 10 per share).

Therefore, M/s RM & Co. is not disqualified for appointment as an auditors of Enn Ltd. as the relative of CA. R (i.e. partner of M/s RM & Co.) is holding the securities in Enn Ltd. which is within the limit mentioned in proviso to section 141(3)(d)(i) of the Companies Act, 2013.

- (ii) is indebted to the company, or its subsidiary, or its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company, in excess of ₹ 5,00,000; or

- (iii) has given a guarantee or provided any security in connection with the indebtedness of any third person to the Company or its Subsidiary, or its Holding or Associate Company or a Subsidiary of such Holding Company, in excess of ₹ 1,00,000.
- (e) a person or a firm who, whether directly or indirectly has business relationship with the Company, or its Subsidiary, or its Holding or Associate Company or Subsidiary of such holding company or associate company, of such nature as may be prescribed;

Students may note that for the purpose of clause (e) above, the term "business relationship" shall be construed as any transaction entered into for a commercial purpose, except –

- (i) commercial transactions which are in the nature of professional services permitted to be rendered by an auditor or audit firm under the Act and the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 and the rules or the regulations made under those Acts;
 - (ii) commercial transactions which are in the ordinary course of business of the company at arm's length price - like sale of products or services to the auditor, as customer, in the ordinary course of business, by companies engaged in the business of telecommunications, airlines, hospitals, hotels and such other similar businesses.
- (f) a person whose relative is a Director or is in the employment of the Company as a director or key Managerial Personnel.
 - (g) a person who is in full time employment elsewhere or a person or a partner of a firm holding appointment as its auditor, if such person or partner is at the date of such appointment or reappointment holding appointment as auditor of more than twenty companies other than one person companies, dormant companies, small companies and private companies having paid-up share capital less than ₹ 100 crore.
 - (h) a person who has been convicted by a Court of an offence involving fraud and a period of ten years has not elapsed from the date of such conviction.
 - (i) **a person who, directly or indirectly, renders any service referred to in section 144 to the company or its holding company or its subsidiary company.**

It may be noted that, for the purposes of this clause, the term "directly or indirectly" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Explanation to section 144, i.e.

In case of auditor being an individual, either himself or through his relative or any other person connected or associated with such individual or through any other entity, whatsoever, in which such individual has significant influence or control, or whose name or trade mark or brand is used by such individual, shall be termed as rendering of services directly or indirectly by the auditor; and

In case of auditor being a firm, either itself or through any of its partners or through its parent, subsidiary or associate entity or through any other entity, whatsoever,

in which the firm or any partner of the firm has significant influence or control, or whose name or trade mark or brand is used by the firm or any of its partners, shall be termed as rendering of services directly or indirectly by the auditor.

Section 144 of the Companies Act, 2013 prescribes certain services not to be rendered by the auditor. An auditor appointed under this Act shall provide to the company only such other services as are approved by the Board of Directors or the audit committee, as the case may be, but which shall not include any of the following services (whether such services are rendered directly or indirectly to the company or its holding company or subsidiary company), namely:



- (i) accounting and book keeping services;
- (ii) internal audit;
- (iii) design and implementation of any financial information system;
- (iv) actuarial services;
- (v) investment advisory services;

Fig.: Auditor restrained from entering into certain services*

- (vi) investment banking services;
- (vii) rendering of outsourced financial services;
- (viii) management services; and

* Source of image: webuildbuzz.com

(ix) any other kind of services as may be prescribed.

It may be noted that an auditor or audit firm who or which has been performing any non-audit services on or before the commencement of this Act shall comply with the provisions of this section before the closure of the first financial year after the date of such commencement.

Example

CA. Poshin is providing the services of investment banking to C Ltd. Later on, he was also offered to be appointed as an auditor of the company for the current financial year. Advise.

Section 141(3)(i) of the Companies Act, 2013 disqualifies a person for appointment as an auditor of a company who, directly or indirectly, renders any service referred to in section 144 to the company or its holding company or its subsidiary company. Section 144 of the Companies Act, 2013 prescribes certain services not to be rendered by the auditor which includes investment banking services.

Therefore, CA. Poshin is advised not to accept the assignment of auditing as the investment banking service is specifically notified in the list of services not to be rendered by him as per section 141(3)(i) read with section 144 of the Companies Act, 2013.

(4) Where a person appointed as an auditor of a company incurs any of the disqualifications mentioned in **sub-section (3)** after his appointment, he shall vacate his office as such auditor and such vacation shall be deemed to be a casual vacancy in the office of the auditor.

CASE STUDY

Facts of the Case: *Mr. A, a chartered accountant, has been appointed as an auditor of Laxman Ltd. in the Annual General Meeting of the company held in September, 2016, which assignment he accepted. Subsequently in January, 2017 he joined Mr. B, another chartered accountant, who is the Manager Finance of Laxman Ltd., as partner.*

Provisions and Explanation: *Section 141(3)(c) of the Companies Act, 2013 prescribes that any person who is a partner or in employment of an officer or employee of the company will be disqualified to act as an auditor of a company. Sub-section (4) of Section 141 provides that an auditor who becomes subject, after his appointment, to any of the disqualifications specified in sub-sections (3) of Section 141, he shall be deemed to have vacated his office as an auditor.*

Conclusion: In the present case, Mr. A, an auditor of Laxman Ltd., joined as partner with Mr. B, who is Manager Finance of Laxman Limited. The given situation has attracted sub-section (3)(c) of Section 141 and, therefore, he shall be deemed to have vacated office of the auditor of Laxman Limited in accordance with sub-section (4) of section 141.

2. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

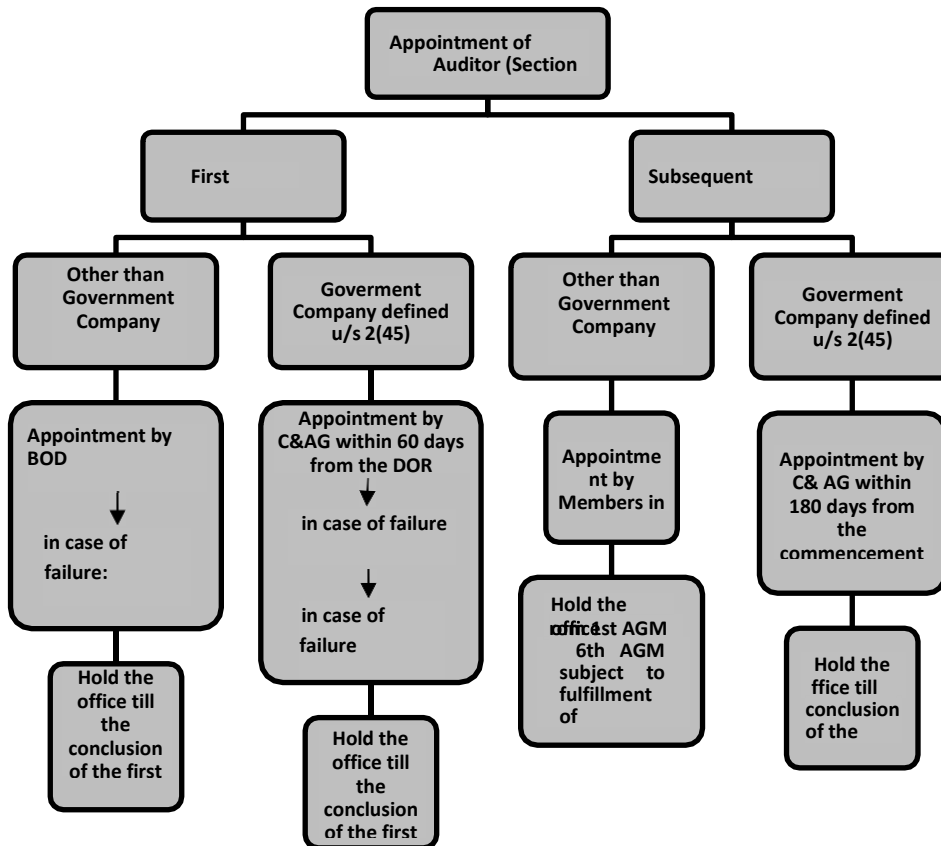
Section 139 of the Companies Act, 2013 contains provisions regarding Appointment of Auditors. Discussion on appointment of auditors may be grouped under two broad headings-

- (I) Appointment of First Auditors.
- (II) Appointment of Subsequent Auditors.



Fig: Meeting for appointment of Auditor*

* Source of image : <http://newhavenscience.org>



2.1 Appointment of First Auditor

2.1.1 Appointment of First Auditors in the case of a company, other than a Government Company

As per **Section 139(6)**, the first auditor of a company, other than a Government company, shall be appointed by the Board of Directors within 30 days from the date of registration of the company.

In the case of failure of the Board to appoint the auditor, it shall inform the members of the company.

The members of the company shall within 90 days at an extraordinary general meeting appoint the auditor. Appointed auditor shall hold office till the conclusion of the first annual general meeting.

CASE STUDY

Facts of the Case: Managing Director of Pigeon Ltd. himself wants to appoint CA. Champ, a practicing Chartered Accountant, as first auditor of the company.

Provisions and Explanation: Section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 lays down that the first auditor of a company shall be appointed by the Board of Directors within 30 days from the date of registration of the company. In the instant case, the proposed appointment of CA. Champ, a practicing Chartered Accountant, as first auditor by the Managing Director of Pigeon Ltd. by himself is in violation of Section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013, which authorizes the Board of Directors to appoint the first auditor of the company.

Conclusion: In view of the above, the Managing Director of Pigeon Ltd. should be advised not to appoint the first auditor of the company.

2.1.2 Appointment of First Auditors in the case of Government Company:

A "Government company" is a company in which not less than 51% of the paid-up share capital is held by the Central Government or by any State Government or Governments or partly by the Central Government and partly by one or more State Governments, and includes a company which is a subsidiary company of such a Government company.

Section 139(7) provides that in the case of a Government company or any other company owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the Central Government, or by any State Government, or Governments, or partly by the Central Government and partly by one or more State Governments, the first auditor shall be appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India within 60 days from the date of registration of the company.

In case the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India does not appoint such auditor within the above said period, the Board of Directors of the company shall appoint such auditor within the next 30 days. Further, in the case of failure of the Board to appoint such auditor within next 30 days, it shall inform the members of the company who shall appoint such auditor within 60 days at an extraordinary general meeting. Auditors shall hold office till the conclusion of the first annual general meeting.

CASE STUDY

Facts of the Case: The first auditor of Bhartiya Petrol Ltd., a Government company, was appointed by the Board of Directors.

Provisions and Explanation: In the case of a Government Company, the appointment of first auditor is governed by the provisions of Section 139(7) of the Companies Act, 2013 which states that in the case of a Government company, the first auditor shall be appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India within 60 days from the

date of registration of the company. Hence, in the case of Bhartiya Petrol Ltd., being a government company, the first auditor shall be appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Conclusion: *Thus, the appointment of first auditor made by the Board of Directors of Bhartiya Petrol Ltd., is null and void.*

2.2 Appointment of Subsequent Auditor/Reappointment of Auditor

2.2.1 Appointment of Subsequent Auditors in case of Non Government Companies:

Section 139(1) of the Companies Act, 2013 provides that every company shall, at the first annual general meeting appoint an individual or a firm as an auditor who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting till the conclusion of its sixth annual general meeting and thereafter till the conclusion of every sixth meeting.

The following points need to be noted in this regard-

- (i) Before such appointment is made, the written consent of the auditor to such appointment, and a certificate from him or it that the appointment, if made, shall be in accordance with the conditions as may be prescribed, shall be obtained from the auditor.
- (ii) The certificate shall also indicate whether the auditor satisfies the criteria provided in **section 141**.
- (iii) The company shall inform the auditor concerned of his or its appointment, and also file a notice of such appointment with the Registrar within 15 days of the meeting in which the auditor is appointed.

2.2.2 Appointment of Subsequent Auditors in case of Government Companies:

As per **section 139(5)**, in the case of a Government company or any other company owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the Central Government, or by any State Government or Governments, or partly by the Central Government and partly by one or more State Governments, the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India shall, in respect of a financial year, appoint an auditor duly qualified to be appointed as an auditor of companies under this Act, within a period of 180 days from the commencement of the financial year, who shall hold office till the conclusion of the annual general meeting.

2.3 Filling of a Casual Vacancy

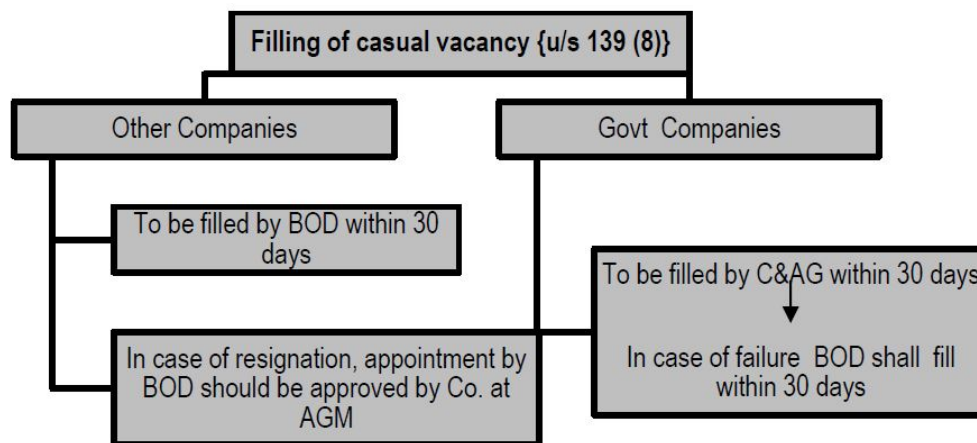
As per **Section 139(8)**, any casual vacancy in the office of an auditor shall-

- (i) **In the case of a company other than a company whose accounts are subject to audit by an auditor appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India**, be filled by the Board of Directors within 30 days.

If such casual vacancy is as a result of the resignation of an auditor, such appointment shall also be approved by the company at a general meeting convened within three months of the recommendation of the Board and he shall hold the office till the conclusion of the next annual general meeting.

- (ii) **In the case of a company whose accounts are subject to audit by an auditor appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India**, be filled by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India within 30 days.

It may be noted that in case the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India does not fill the vacancy within the said period the Board of Directors shall fill the vacancy within next 30 days.



2.3.1 Casual Vacancy by Resignation:

As per section 140(2) of the Act, the auditor who has resigned from the company shall file within a period of 30 days from the date of resignation, a statement in the prescribed Form ADT-3 (as per Rule 8 of CAAR) with the company and the Registrar.

In case of the companies referred to in section 139(5) i.e. Government company, the auditor shall also file such statement with the CAG along with the company and the Registrar.

The auditor shall indicate the reasons and other facts as may be relevant with regard to his resignation.

In case of failure, the auditor shall be liable to a penalty of fifty thousand rupees or the remuneration of the auditor, whichever is less, and in case of continuing failure, with further penalty of five hundred rupees for each day after the first during which such failure continues, subject to a maximum of five lakh rupees as per section 140(3).

CASE STUDY

Facts of the Case: CA. Donald was appointed as the auditor of PS Ltd. at the remuneration of Rs. 30,000. However, after 4 months of continuing his services, he could not continue to hold his office of the auditor as his wife got a government job at a distant place and he needs to shift along with her to the new place. Thus, he resigned from the company and did not perform his responsibilities relating to filing of statement to the company and the registrar indicating the reasons and other facts as may be relevant with regard to his resignation.

How much fine may he be punishable with under section 140(3) for non-compliance of section 140(2) of the Companies Act, 2013?

Provisions and Explanation: For non-compliance of sub-section (2) of section 140 of the Companies Act, 2013, the auditor shall be punishable with fine, which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees or the remuneration of the auditor, whichever is less but which may extend to five lakh rupees, under section 140(3) of the said Act.

Conclusion: Thus, the fine under section 140(3) of the Companies Act, 2013 shall not be less than Rs. 30,000 but which may extend to Rs. 5,00,000 .

Other Important Provisions Regarding Appointment of Auditors

- (1) A retiring auditor may be re-appointed at an annual general meeting, if-
 - (a) he is not disqualified for re-appointment;
 - (b) he has not given the company a notice in writing of his unwillingness to be re - appointed; and
 - (c) a special resolution has not been passed at that meeting appointing some other auditor or providing expressly that he shall not be re-appointed.

- (2) Where at any annual general meeting, no auditor is appointed or re-appointed, the existing auditor shall continue to be the auditor of the company.

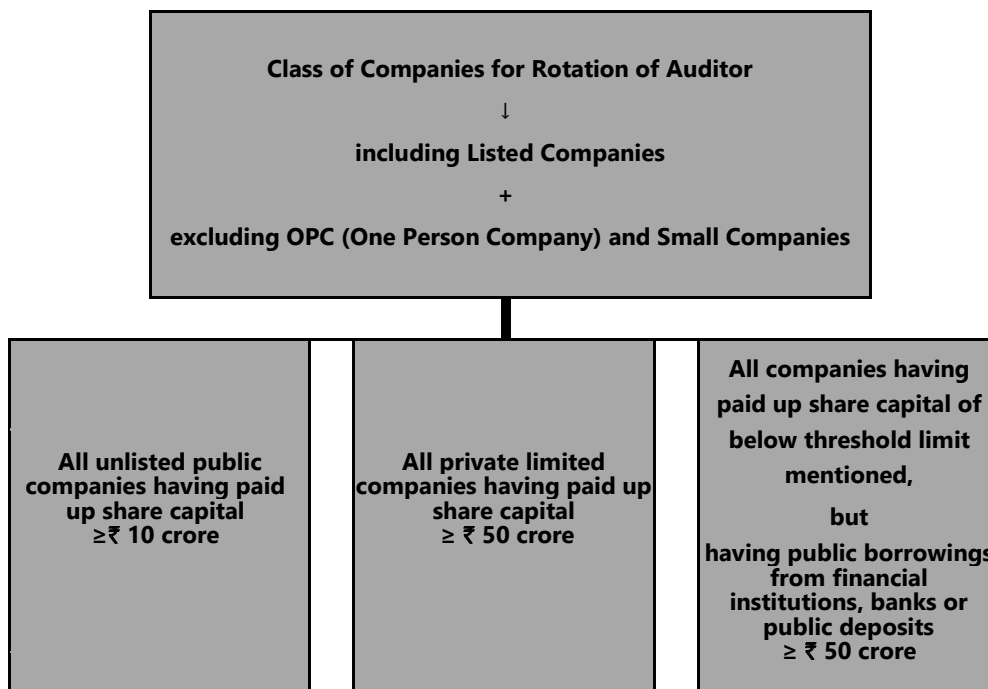
3 ROTATION OF AUDITOR

3.1 Applicability of Section 139(2) Rotation of Auditor:

As per rules prescribed in Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014, for applicability of section 139(2) the **class of companies** shall mean the following classes of companies excluding one person companies and small companies-



Fig: Rotation of Auditors*



- (i) all unlisted public companies having paid up share capital of rupees ten crore or more;
- (ii) all private limited companies having paid up share capital of rupees fifty crore or more;

* Source of image: the hindu business line.com

- (iii) all companies having paid up share capital of below threshold limit mentioned above, but having public borrowings from financial institutions, banks or public deposits of rupees fifty crores or more.

Example

Rano Pvt. Ltd. is a private limited Company, having paid up share capital of ₹42 crore but having public borrowing from nationalized banks and financial institutions of ₹72 crore, manner of rotation of auditor will be applicable.

As per **section 139(2)**, no listed company or a company belonging to such class or classes of companies as mentioned above, shall appoint or re-appoint-

- (a) an individual as auditor for more than one term of five consecutive years; and
- (b) an audit firm as auditor for more than two terms of five consecutive years. Provided that -
- (i) an individual auditor who has completed his term under clause (a) shall not be eligible for re-appointment as auditor in the same company for five years from the completion of his term;
- (ii) an audit firm which has completed its term under clause (b), shall not be eligible for re-appointment as auditor in the same company for five years from the completion of such term.

Example

Jolly Ltd., a listed company, appointed M/s Polly & Co., a Chartered Accountant firm, as the statutory auditor in its AGM held at the end of September, 2016 for 11 years. Here, the appointment of M/s Polly & Co. is not valid as the appointment can be made only for one term of five consecutive years and then another one more term of five consecutive years. It can't be appointed for two terms in one AGM only. Further, a cooling period of five years from the completion of term is required i.e. the firm can't be re-appointed for further 5 years after completion of two terms of five consecutive years.

The following points merit consideration in this regard-

- (1) As on the date of appointment, no audit firm having a common partner or partners to the other audit firm, whose tenure has expired in a company immediately preceding the financial year, shall be appointed as auditor of the same company for a period of five years.

Example

M/s XYZ & Co., is an audit firm having partner Mrs. X, Mr. Y and Mr. Z, whose tenure has expired in the company immediately preceding the financial year. M/s ABZ & Co., another audit firm in which Mr. Z is a common partner, will also be disqualified for the same company along with M/S XYZ & Co. for the period of five years.

- (2) Every company, existing on or before the commencement of this Act which is required to comply with provisions of this sub-section, shall comply with the requirements of this sub-section within a period which shall not be later than the date of the first annual general meeting of the company held, within the period specified under sub-section (1) of section 96, after three years from the date of commencement of this Act.

Examples

Ex 1: *Mr. Raj, a Chartered Accountant, is an individual auditor of Binaca Limited for last 5 years as on March, 2013 (i.e. existing on or before the date of Commencement of Companies Act, 2013). Keeping in view the transition period as stated in the Companies Act, 2013, Mr. Raj can continue the audit of Binaca Ltd. upto the first annual general meeting to be held after three years from the date of commencement of the Act.*

Ex 2: *M/s Raj & Associates, a Chartered Accountants Audit Firm, is doing audit of Binaca Limited for last 11 years as on March, 2013 (i.e. existing on or before the date of Commencement of Companies Act, 2013). Keeping in view the transition period as stated in the Companies Act, 2013, M/s Raj Associates can continue the audit of Binaca Ltd. upto the first annual general meeting to be held after three years from the date of commencement of the Act.*

Students may interlink the above example with Illustrative table explaining rotation in case of individual auditor as well as audit firm which has been given after the 3.2 i.e. Manner of rotation of Auditors by the Companies on Expiry of their Term.*

- (3) It has also been provided that right of the company to remove an auditor or the right of the auditor to resign from such office of the company shall not be prejudiced.
- (4) Subject to the provisions of this Act, members of a company may resolve to provide that -

- (a) in the audit firm appointed by it, the auditing partner and his team shall be rotated at such intervals as may be resolved by members; or
 - (b) the audit shall be conducted by more than one auditor.
- (5) The Central Government may, by rules, prescribe the manner in which the companies shall rotate their auditors.

3.2 Manner of Rotation of Auditors by the Companies on Expiry of their Term:

Rule 6 of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014 prescribes the manner of rotation of auditors on expiry of their term which is given below-

- (1) The Audit Committee shall recommend to the Board, the name of an individual auditor or of an audit firm who may replace the incumbent auditor on expiry of the term of such incumbent.
- (2) Where a company is required to constitute an Audit Committee, the Board shall consider the recommendation of such committee, and in other cases, the Board shall itself consider the matter of rotation of auditors and make its recommendation for appointment of the next auditor by the members in annual general meeting.
- (3) For the purpose of the rotation of auditors-
 - (i) in case of an auditor (whether an individual or audit firm), the period for which the individual or the firm has held office as auditor prior to the commencement of the Act shall be taken into account for calculating the period of five consecutive years or ten consecutive years, as the case may be;
 - (ii) the incoming auditor or audit firm shall not be eligible if such auditor or audit firm is associated with the outgoing auditor or audit firm under the same network of audit firms.

Explanation I - For the purposes of these rules the term "same network" includes the firms operating or functioning, hitherto or in future, under the same brand name, trade name or common control.

Explanation II - For the purpose of rotation of auditors,

- (a) a break in the term for a continuous period of five years shall be considered as fulfilling the requirement of rotation;

- (b) if a partner, who is in charge of an audit firm and also certifies the financial statements of the company, retires from the said firm and joins another firm of chartered accountants, such other firm shall also be ineligible to be appointed for a period of five years.

***Illustration explaining rotation in case of individual auditor**

Number of consecutive years for which an individual auditor has been functioning as auditor in the same company [in the first AGM held after the commencement of provisions of section 139(2)]	Maximum number of consecutive years for which he may be appointed in the same company (including transitional period)	Aggregate period which the auditor would complete in the same company in view of column I and II
I	II	III
5 Years (or more than 5 years)	3 years	8 years or more
4 years	3 years	7 years
3 years	3 years	6 years
2 years	3 years	5 years
1 year	4 years	5 years

Note:

- (1) Individual auditor shall include other individuals or firms whose name or trade mark or brand is used by such individual, if any.
- (2) Consecutive years shall mean all the preceding financial years for which the individual auditor has been the auditor until there has been a break by five years or more.

***Illustration explaining rotation in case of audit firm**

Number of consecutive years for which an audit firm has been functioning as auditor in the same company [in the first AGM held after the commencement of provisions of section 139(2)]	Maximum number of consecutive years for which the firm may be appointed in the same company (including transitional period)	Aggregate period which the firm would complete in the same company in view of column I and II
I	II	III
10 Years (or more than 10years)	3 years	13 years or more
9 years	3 years	12 years
8 years	3 years	11 years
7 years	3 years	10 years
6 year	4 years	10 years
5 years	5 years	10 years
4 years	6 years	10 years
3 year	7 years	10 years
2 years	8 years	10 years
1 years	9 years	10 years

Note:

- (i) Audit Firm shall include other firms whose name or trade mark or brand is used by the firm or any of its partners.
 - (ii) Consecutive years shall mean all the preceding financial years for which the firm has been the auditor until there has been a break by five years or more.
- (4) Where a company has appointed two or more individuals or firms or a combination thereof as joint auditors, the company may follow the rotation of auditors in such a manner that both or all of the joint auditors, as the case may be, do not complete their term in the same year.

4 PROVISIONS RELATING TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

4.1 Applicability of section 177 i.e. Constitution of Audit Committee:

Where a company is required to constitute an Audit Committee under section 177, all appointments, including the filling of a casual vacancy of an auditor under this section shall be made after taking into account the recommendations of such committee.

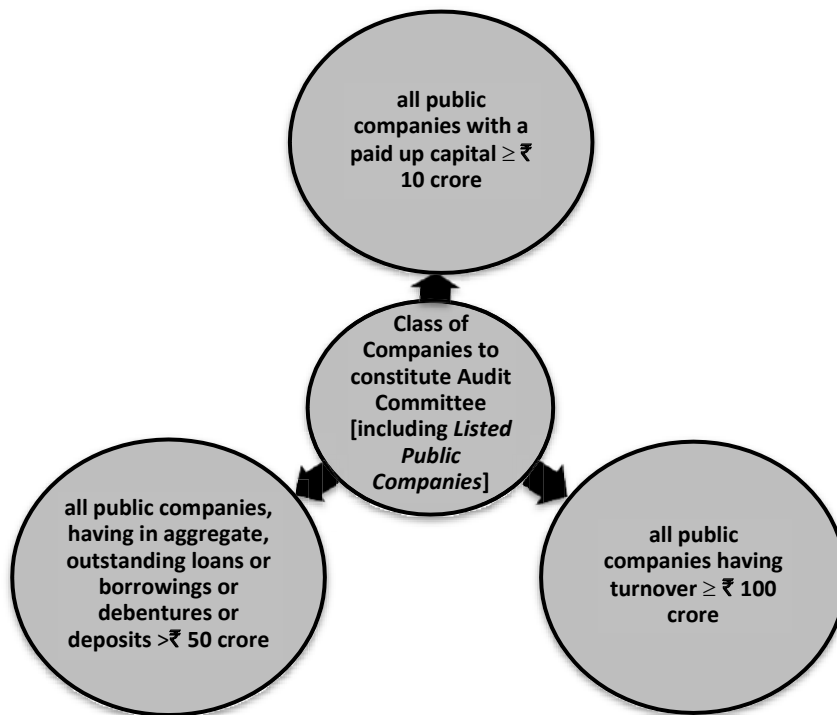


Diagram showing class of companies to constitute Audit Committee

It is important to know that in addition to **listed public companies**, following classes of companies shall constitute an Audit Committee -

- (i) all public companies with a paid up capital of ten crore rupees or more;
- (ii) all public companies having turnover of one hundred crore rupees or more;
- (iii) all public companies, having in aggregate, outstanding loans or borrowings or debentures or deposits exceeding fifty crore rupees or more.

Explanation: The paid up share capital or turnover or outstanding loans, or borrowings or debentures or deposits, as the case may be, as existing on the date of last audited Financial Statements shall be taken into account for the purposes of this rule.

Example

XYZ Ltd., a public company having paid up capital of ₹9 crore but having turnover of ₹150 crore, will be required to constitute an Audit Committee under section 177 because the requirement for constitution of Audit Committee arises if the company falls into any of the prescribed category.

4.2 Manner and procedure of selection and appointment of auditors

Rule 3 of CAAR, 2014 prescribes the following manner and procedure of selection and appointment of auditors-

- (1) In case of a company that is required to constitute an Audit Committee under section 177, the committee, and, in cases where such a committee is not required to be constituted, the Board, shall take into consideration the qualifications and experience of the individual or the firm proposed to be considered for appointment as auditor and whether such qualifications and experience are commensurate with the size and requirements of the company.

It may be noted that while considering the appointment, the Audit Committee or the Board, as the case may be, shall have regard to any order or pending proceeding relating to professional matters of conduct against the proposed auditor before the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India or any competent authority or any Court.

- (2) The Audit Committee or the Board, as the case may be, may call for such other information from the proposed auditor as it may deem fit.
- (3) Subject to the provisions of sub-rule (1), where a company is required to constitute the Audit Committee, the committee shall recommend the name of an individual or a firm as auditor to the Board for consideration and in other cases, the Board shall consider and recommend an individual or a firm as auditor to the members in the annual general meeting for appointment.
- (4) If the Board agrees with the recommendation of the Audit Committee, it shall further recommend the appointment of an individual or a firm as auditor to the members in the annual general meeting.

- (5) If the Board disagrees with the recommendation of the Audit Committee, it shall refer back the recommendation to the committee for reconsideration citing reasons for such disagreement.
- (6) If the Audit Committee, after considering the reasons given by the Board, decides not to reconsider its original recommendation, the Board shall record reasons for its disagreement with the committee and send its own recommendation for consideration of the members in the annual general meeting; and if the Board agrees with the recommendations of the Audit Committee, it shall place the matter for consideration by members in the annual general meeting.
- (7) The auditor appointed in the annual general meeting shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting till the conclusion of the sixth annual general meeting, with the meeting wherein such appointment has been made being counted as the first meeting.

5 AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

As per section 142 of the Act, the remuneration of the auditor of a company shall be fixed in its general meeting or in such manner as may be determined therein. However, board may fix remuneration of the first auditor appointed by it.

Further, the remuneration, in addition to the fee payable to an auditor, include the expenses, if any, incurred by the auditor in connection with the audit of the company and any facility extended to him but does not include any remuneration paid to him for any other service rendered by him at the request of the company. Therefore, it has been clarified that the remuneration to Auditor shall also include any facility provided to him.

6 REMOVAL OF AUDITORS

6.1 Removal of Auditor Before Expiry of Term



Fig: Auditor leaving office of the auditor*

According to **Section 140(1)**, the auditor appointed under section 139 may be removed from his office before the expiry of his term only by a special resolution of the company, after obtaining the previous approval of the Central Government in that behalf as per **Rule 7 of CAAR, 2014-**

- (1) The application to the Central Government for removal of auditor shall be made in **Form ADT-2** and shall be accompanied with fees as provided for this purpose under the Companies (Registration Offices and Fees) Rules, 2014.
- (2) The application shall be made to the Central Government within 30 days of the resolution passed by the Board.
- (3) The company shall hold the general meeting within 60 days of receipt of approval of the Central Government for passing the special resolution.

It is important to note that before taking any action for removal before expiry of terms, the auditor concerned shall be given a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

Direction by Tribunal in case Auditor acted in a Fraudulent Manner:

As per sub-section (5) of the section 140, the Tribunal either *suo motu* or on an application made to it by the Central Government or by any person concerned, if it is satisfied that the auditor of a company has, whether directly or indirectly, acted in a fraudulent manner or abetted or colluded in any fraud by, or in relation to, the company or its directors or officers, it may, by order, direct the company to change its auditors.

However, if the application is made by the Central Government and the Tribunal is satisfied that any change of the auditor is required, it shall within fifteen days of receipt of such application, make an order that he shall not function as an auditor and the Central Government may appoint another auditor in his place.

It may be noted that an auditor, whether individual or firm, against whom final order has been passed by the Tribunal under this section shall not be eligible to be appointed as an auditor of any company for a period of five years from the date of passing of the order and the auditor shall also be liable for action under section 447.

It is hereby clarified that in the case of a firm, the liability shall be of the firm and that of every partner or partners who acted in a fraudulent manner or abetted or colluded in any fraud by, or in relation to, the company or its director or officers.

6.2 Appointment of Auditor Other Than Retiring Auditor

Section 140(4) lays down procedure to appoint an auditor other than retiring auditor who was removed-

- (1) Special notice shall be required for a resolution at an annual general meeting appointing as auditor a person other than a retiring auditor, or providing

expressly that a retiring auditor shall not be re-appointed, except where the retiring auditor has completed a consecutive tenure of five years or as the case may be, ten years, as provided under **sub-section (2) of section 139**.

- (2) On receipt of notice of such a resolution, the company shall forthwith send a copy thereof to the retiring auditor.
- (3) Where notice is given of such a resolution and the retiring auditor makes with respect thereto representation in writing to the company (not exceeding a reasonable length) and requests its notification to members of the company, the company shall, unless the representation is received by it too late for it to do so,-
 - (a) in any notice of the resolution given to members of the company, state the fact of the representation having been made; and
 - (b) send a copy of the representation to every member of the company to whom notice of the meeting is sent, whether before or after the receipt of the representation by the company. and if a copy of the representation is not sent as aforesaid because it was received too late or because of the company's default, the auditor may (without prejudice to his right to be heard orally) require that the representation shall be read out at the meeting.

Students may note that if a copy of representation is not sent as aforesaid, a copy thereof shall be filed with the Registrar.

Curtailing right of the auditor regarding circulation of copy of representation in the case of appointment of auditor other than retiring auditor under section 140(4) of the companies act, 2013:

If the Tribunal is satisfied on an application either of the company or of any other aggrieved person that the rights conferred by **section 140(4)** of the Companies Act, 2013 are being abused by the auditor, then, the copy of the representation may not be sent and the representation need not be read out at the meeting.



7. CEILING ON NUMBER OF AUDITS

It has been mentioned earlier that before appointment is given to any auditor, the company must obtain a certificate from him to the effect that the appointment, if made, will not result in an excess holding of company audit by the auditor concerned over the limit laid down in **section 141(3)(g)** of the Companies Act, 2013 which prescribes that a person who is in full time employment elsewhere or a

person or a partner of a firm holding appointment as its auditor, if such person or partner is at the date of such appointment or reappointment holding appointment as auditor of more than **twenty companies** other than one person companies, dormant companies, small companies and private companies having paid-up share capital less than ₹ 100 crore, shall not be eligible for appointment as an Auditor of a Company.

In the case of a firm of auditors, it has been further provided that 'specified number of companies' shall be construed as the number of companies specified for every partner of the firm who is not in full time employment elsewhere.

This limit of 20 company audits is per person. In the case of an audit firm having 3 partners, the overall ceiling will be $3 \times 20 = 60$ company audits. Sometimes, a chartered accountant is a partner in a number of auditing firms. In such a case, all the firms in which he is partner or proprietor will be together entitled to 20 company audits on his account. Subject to the overall ceiling of company audits, how they allocate the 20 audits between themselves is their affairs.

CASE STUDY

"ABC & Co." is an Audit Firm having partners "Mr. A", "Mr. B" and "Mr. C", Chartered Accountants. "Mr. A", "Mr. B" and "Mr. C" are holding appointment as an Auditor in 4, 6 and 10 Companies respectively.

- (i) *Provide the maximum number of Audits remaining in the name of "ABC & Co."*
- (ii) *Provide the maximum number of Audits remaining in the name of individual partner i.e. Mr. A, Mr. B and Mr. C.*
- (iii) *Can ABC & Co. accept the appointment as an auditor in 60 private companies having paid-up share capital less than ₹ 100 crore, 2 small companies and 1 dormant company?*
- (iv) *Would your answer be different, if out of those 60 private companies, 45 companies are having paid-up share capital of ₹ 110 crore each?*

Fact of the Case: *In the instant case, Mr. A is holding appointment in 4 companies, whereas Mr. B is having appointment in 6 Companies and Mr. C is having appointment in 10 Companies. In aggregate all three partners are having 20 audits.*

Provisions and Explanations: *Section 141(3)(g) of the Companies Act, 2013 states that the following persons shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company i.e. a person who is in full time employment elsewhere; or a person, or a partner of a firm holding appointment as its auditor, if such person, or partner is at the date of such appointment, or reappointment holding appointment as auditor of*

more than twenty companies other than one person companies, dormant companies, small companies and private companies having paid-up share capital less than ₹ 100 crore.

As per section 141(3)(g), this limit of 20 company audits is per person. In the case of an audit firm having 3 partners, the overall ceiling will be $3 \times 20 = 60$ company audits. Sometimes, a chartered accountant is a partner in a number of auditing firms. In such a case, all the firms in which he is partner or proprietor will be together entitled to 20 company audits on his account.

Conclusion:

- (i) Therefore, ABC & Co. can hold appointment as an auditor of 40 more companies:

Total Number of Audits available to the Firm Number = $20 \times 3 = 60$
of Audits already taken by all the partners

In their individual capacity = $4 + 6 + 10 = 20$

Remaining number of Audits available to the Firm = 40

- (ii) With reference to above provisions an auditor can hold more appointment as auditor = ceiling limit as per section 141(3)(g)- already holding appointments as an auditor. Hence (1) Mr. A can hold: $20 - 4 = 16$ more audits. (2) Mr. B can hold $20 - 6 = 14$ more audits and (3) Mr. C can hold $20 - 10 = 10$ more audits.

- (iii) In view of above discussed provisions, ABC & Co. can hold appointment as an auditor in all the 60 private companies having paid-up share capital less than ₹ 100 crore, 2 small companies and 1 dormant company as these are excluded from the ceiling limit of company audits given under section 141(3)(g) of the Companies Act, 2013.

- (iv) As per fact of the case, ABC & Co. is already having 20 company audits and they can also accept 40 more company audits. In addition they can also conduct the audit of one person companies, small companies, dormant companies and private companies having paid up share capital less than ₹ 100 crores. In the given case, out of the 60 private companies, ABC & Co. is offered 45 companies having paid-up share capital of ₹ 110 crore each.

Therefore, ABC & Co. can also accept the appointment as an auditor for 2 small companies, 1 dormant company, 15 private companies having paid-up share capital less than ₹ 100 crore and 40 private companies having paid-up share capital of ₹ 110 crore each in addition to above 20 company audits already holding.

Council General Guidelines, 2008 (Chapter VIII): In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (ii) of Part II of the Second Schedule to the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India hereby specifies that a member of the Institute in practice shall be deemed to be guilty of professional misconduct, if he holds at any time appointment of more than the "specified number of audit assignments of the companies under Section 224 and /or Section 226 of the Companies Act, 1956 (now section 141(3)(g) of the Companies Act, 2013).

It may be noted that in the case of a firm of chartered accountants in practice, the specified number of audit assignments shall be construed as the specified number of audit assignments for every partner of the firm.

It may also be noted that where any partner of the firm of chartered accountants in practice is also a partner of any other firm or firms of chartered accountants in practice, the number of audit assignments which may be taken for all the firms together in relation to such partner shall not exceed the specified number of audit assignments in the aggregate.

It is further provided that where any partner of a firm or firms of chartered accountants in practice accepts one or more audit assignments in his individual capacity, or in the name of his proprietary firm, the total number of such assignment which may be accepted by all firms in relation to such chartered accountant and by him shall not exceed the specified number of audit assignments in the aggregate.

- (1) In computing the specified number of audit assignments-
 - (a) the number of such assignments, which he or any partner of his firm has accepted whether singly or in combination with any other chartered accountant in practice or firm of such chartered accountants, shall be taken into account.
 - (b) the number of partners of a firm on the date of acceptance of audit assignment shall be taken into account.
 - (c) a chartered accountant in full time employment elsewhere shall not be taken into account.
- (2) A chartered accountant in practice as well as firm of chartered accountants in practice shall maintain a record of the audit assignments accepted by him or by the firm of chartered accountants, or by any of the partner of the firm in his individual name or as a partner of any other firm as far as possible, in the prescribed manner.

Ceiling on Tax Audit Assignments: The specified number of tax audit assignments that an auditor, as an individual or as a partner of a firm, can accept is **60 numbers**. ICAI has notified that a chartered accountant in practice shall be deemed to be guilty of professional misconduct, if he accepts in a financial year, more than the specified number of tax audit assignments u/s 44AB.

8. POWERS/RIGHTS OF AUDITORS

The auditor has the following powers/rights while conducting an audit:

(a) Right of access to books, etc. – Section 143(1) of the Act provides that the auditor of a company, at all times, shall have a right of access to the books of account and vouchers of the company, whether kept at the registered office of the company or at any other place and he is entitled to require from the officers of the company such information and explanation as he may consider necessary for the performance of his duties as auditor.

It may be noted that according to **section 2(59)** of the Act, the term 'officer' includes any director, manager or key managerial personnel or any person in accordance with whose directions or instructions the Board of Directors or any one or more of the directors is or are accustomed to act;

The phrase 'books, accounts and vouchers' includes all books which have any bearing, or are likely to have any bearing on the accounts, whether these be the usual financial books or the statutory or statistical books; memoranda books, *e.g.*, inventory books, costing records and the like may also be inspected by the auditor. Similarly the term 'voucher' includes all or any of the correspondence which may in any way serve to vouch for the accuracy of the accounts. Thus, the right of access is not restricted to books of account alone and it is for the auditor to determine what record or document is necessary for the purpose of the audit.

The right of access is not limited to those books and records maintained at the registered or head office so that in the case of a company with branches, the right also extends to the branch records, if the auditor considers it necessary to have access thereto as per **Section 143(8)**.

Example

X Ltd. restrains its company auditor from visiting another branch at different location and having access to the inventory records maintained at that branch because the branch is already audited by another auditor and the report has been received. Here, it may be noted that the company auditor has right to visit the branch, even if the

branch accounts are audited by another auditor, if he considers it necessary to do so for the performance of his duties as auditor.

(b) Right to obtain information and explanation from officers - This right of the auditor to obtain from the officers of the company such information and explanations as he may think necessary for the performance of his duties as auditor is a wide and important power. In the absence of such power, the auditor would not be able to obtain details of amount collected by the directors, etc. from any other company, firm or person as well as of any benefits in kind derived by the directors from the company, which may not be known from an examination of the books. It is for the auditor to decide the matters in respect of which information and explanations are required by him. When the auditor is not provided the information required by him or is denied access to books, etc., his only remedy would be to report to the members that he could not obtain all the information and explanations he had required or considered necessary for the performance of his duties as auditors.

(c) Right to receive notices and to attend general meeting – The auditors of a company are entitled to attend any general meeting of the company (the right is not restricted to those at which the accounts audited by them are to be discussed); also to receive all the notices and other communications relating to the general meetings, which members are entitled to receive and to be heard at any general meeting in any part of the business of the meeting which concerns them as auditors.

Section 146 of the Companies Act, 2013 discusses right as well as duty of the auditor. According to the section 146:

“all notices of, and other communications relating to, any general meeting shall be forwarded to the auditor of the company, and the auditor shall, unless otherwise exempted by the company, attend either by himself or through his authorised representative, who shall also be qualified to be an auditor, any general meeting and shall have right to be heard at such meeting on any part of the business which concerns him as the auditor.”

Thus, it is right of the auditor to receive notices and other communications relating to any general meeting and to be heard at such meeting, relating to the matter of his concern, however, it is duty of the auditor to attend the same or through his authorised representative unless otherwise exempted.

(d) Right to report to the members of the company on the accounts examined by him – The auditor shall make a report to the members of the

company on the accounts examined by him and on every financial statements which are required by or under this Act to be laid before the company in general meeting and the report shall after taking into account the provisions of this Act, the accounting and auditing standards and matters which are required to be included in the audit report under the provisions of this Act or any rules made there under or under any order made under this section and to the best of his information and knowledge, the said accounts, financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the company' s affairs as at the end of its financial year and profit or loss and cash flow for the year and such other matters as may be prescribed.

(e) Right to Lien – In terms of the general principles of law, any person having the lawful possession of somebody else's property, on which he has worked, may retain the property for non-payment of his dues on account of the work done on the property. On this premise, auditor can exercise lien on books and documents placed at his possession by the client for non payment of fees, for work done on the books and documents. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales has expressed a similar view on the following conditions:

- (i) Documents retained must belong to the client who owes the money.
- (ii) Documents must have come into possession of the auditor on the authority of the client. They must not have been received through irregular or illegal means. In case of a company client, they must be received on the authority of the Board of Directors.
- (iii) The auditor can retain the documents only if he has done work on the documents assigned to him.
- (iv) Such of the documents can be retained which are connected with the work on which fees have not been paid.

Under **section 128** of the Act, books of account of a company must be kept at the registered office. These provisions ordinarily make it impracticable for the auditor to have possession of the books and documents. The company provides reasonable facility to auditor for inspection of the books of account by directors and others authorised to inspect under the Act. Taking an overall view of the matter, it seems that though legally, auditor may exercise right of lien in cases of companies, it is mostly impracticable for legal and practicable constraints. His working papers being his own property, the question of lien, on them does not arise.

SA 230 issued by ICAI on Audit Documentation (explanatory text, A- 25), "Standard on Quality Control (SQC) 1, "Quality Control for Firms that Perform Audits and Reviews of Historical Financial Information, and Other Assurance and Related

Services Engagements”, issued by the Institute, provides that, unless otherwise specified by law or regulation, audit documentation is the property of the auditor. He may at his discretion, make portions of, or extracts from, audit documentation available to clients, provided such disclosure does not undermine the validity of the work performed, or, in the case of assurance engagements, the independence of the auditor or of his personnel.”

9. DUTIES OF AUDITORS

Sections 143 of the Companies Act, 2013 specifies the duties of an auditor of a company in a quite comprehensive manner. It is noteworthy that scope of duties of an auditor has generally been extending over all these years.

(1) Duty of Auditor to Inquire on certain matters: It is the duty of auditor to inquire into the following matters-

- (a) whether loans and advances made by the company on the basis of security have been properly secured and whether the terms on which they have been made are prejudicial to the interests of the company or its members;
- (b) whether transactions of the company which are represented merely by book entries are prejudicial to the interests of the company;
- (c) where the company not being an investment company or a banking company, whether so much of the assets of the company as consist of shares, debentures and other securities have been sold at a price less than that at which they were purchased by the company;
- (d) whether loans and advances made by the company have been shown as deposits;
- (e) whether personal expenses have been charged to revenue account;
- (f) where it is stated in the books and documents of the company that any shares have been allotted for cash, whether cash has actually been received in respect of such allotment, and if no cash has actually been so received, whether the position as stated in the account books and the balance sheet is correct, regular and not misleading.

The opinion of the Research Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India on section 143(1) is reproduced below:

“The auditor is not required to report on the matters specified in sub-section (1) unless he has any special comments to make on any of the items referred to therein. If he is satisfied as a result of the inquiries, he has no further duty to report that he is so satisfied. In such a case, the content of the Auditor’s Report will remain exactly the same as the auditor has to inquire and apply his mind to the information elicited by the enquiry, in deciding whether or not any reference needs to be made in his report. In our opinion, it is in this light that

the auditor has to consider his duties under section 143(1).”

Therefore, it could be said that the auditor should make a report to the members in case he finds answer to any of these matters in adverse.

- (2) **Duty to Sign the Audit Report:** As per **section 145** of the Companies Act, 2013, the person appointed as an auditor of the company shall sign the auditor's report or sign or certify any other document of the company, in accordance with the provisions of **section 141(2)**.

Section 141(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 states that where a firm including a limited liability partnership is appointed as an auditor of a company, only the partners who are chartered accountants shall be authorised to act and sign on behalf of the firm.

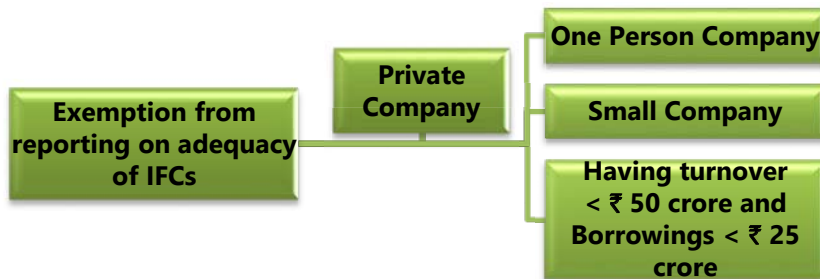
The qualifications, observations or comments on financial transactions or matters, which have any adverse effect on the functioning of the company mentioned in the auditor's report shall be read before the company in general meeting.

- (3) **Duty to comply with Auditing Standards:** As per **section 143(9)** of the Companies Act, 2013, every auditor shall comply with the auditing standards. Further, as per **section 143(10)** of the Act, the Central Government may prescribe the standards of auditing as recommended by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, in consultation with and after examination of the recommendations made by the National Financial Reporting Authority.
- (4) **Duty to report:** As per **section 143(3)**, the auditor’s report shall also state–
- (a) whether he has sought and obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of his knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of his audit and if not, the details thereof and the effect of such information on the financial statements;

- (b) whether, in his opinion, proper books of account as required by law have been kept by the company so far as appears from his examination of those books and proper returns adequate for the purposes of his audit have been received from branches not visited by him;
- (c) whether the report on the accounts of any branch office of the company audited under sub-section (8) by a person other than the company's auditors has been sent to him under the proviso to that sub-section and the manner in which he has dealt with it in preparing his report;
- (d) whether the company's balance sheet and profit and loss account dealt with in the report are in agreement with the books of account and returns;
- (e) whether, in his opinion, the financial statements comply with the accounting standards;
- (f) the observations or comments of the auditors on financial transactions or matters which have any adverse effect on the functioning of the company;
- (g) whether any director is disqualified from being appointed as a director under sub-section (2) of the section 164;
- (h) any qualification, reservation or adverse remark relating to the maintenance of accounts and other matters connected therewith;
- (i) whether the company has adequate internal financial controls **with reference to financial statements** in place and the operating effectiveness of such controls;

However, it may be noted that the reporting requirement on adequacy of internal financial controls (IFCs) with reference to financial statements shall not be applicable to a private company which is a–

- (i) One person company; or**
- (ii) Small company; or**
- (iii) Company having turnover less than ₹ 50 crore as per latest audited financial statement and having aggregate borrowings from banks or financial institutions or any body corporate at any point of time during the financial year less than ₹ 25 crore.**



- (j) such other matters as may be prescribed. Rule 11 of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014 prescribes the other matters to be included in auditor's report. The auditor's report shall also include their views and comments on the following matters, namely:-
- (i) whether the company has disclosed the impact, if any, of pending litigations on its financial position in its financial statement;
 - (ii) whether the company has made provision, as required under any law or accounting standards, for material foreseeable losses, if any, on long term contracts including derivative contracts;
 - (iii) whether there has been any delay in transferring amounts, required to be transferred, to the Investor Education and Protection Fund by the company.

[Notes: (1) Students may note that the auditor is also required to report on certain additional matters specified under CARO, 2016 which is discussed later under Para 10 Reporting under Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016.

(2) Students are also required to refer Guidance note on Reporting under section 143(3)(f) and (h) of the Companies Act, 2013.]

(5) Duty to report on frauds:

- A. Reporting to the Central Government-** As per **section 143(12)** of the Companies Act, 2013 read with **Rule 13** of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014, if an auditor of a company in the course of the performance of his duties as auditor, has reason to believe that an offence of fraud, which involves or is expected to involve individually an amount of ₹ 1 crore or above, is being or has been committed in the company by its officers or employees, the auditor shall report the matter to the Central Government within such time and in such manner as prescribed.

- B. Reporting to the Audit Committee or Board-** In case of a fraud involving lesser than the specified amount [i.e. less than ₹ 1 crore], the auditor shall report the matter to the audit committee constituted under section 177 or to the Board in other cases within such time and in such manner as prescribed.
- C. Disclosure in the Board's Report:** The companies, whose auditors have reported frauds under this sub-section (12) to the audit committee or the Board, but not reported to the Central Government, shall disclose the details about such frauds in the Board's report in such manner as prescribed.

Sub-section (13) of section 143 of the Companies Act, 2013 safeguards the act of fraud reporting by the auditor if it is done in good faith. It states that no duty to which an auditor of a company may be subject to shall be regarded as having been contravened by reason of his reporting the matter above if it is done in good faith.

It is very important to note that the provisions regarding fraud reporting shall also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to a cost auditor and a secretarial auditor during the performance of his duties under section 148 and section 204 respectively. If any auditor, cost accountant or company secretary in practice do not comply with the provisions of sub-section (12) of section 143, he shall be punishable with fine which shall not be less than ₹ 1 lakh but which may extend to ₹ 25 lakh.

The auditor is also required to report under **clause (x) of paragraph 3 of Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016 [CARO, 2016]**, whether any fraud by the company or any fraud on the Company by its officers or employees has been noticed or reported during the year. If yes, the nature and the amount involved is to be indicated.

[Notes: For detailed provisions of CARO, 2016, students may refer Para 10 Reporting under Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016]

Example

The head accountant of a company entered fake invoices of credit purchases in the books of account aggregate of ₹ 50 lakh and cleared all the payments to such bogus creditor. Here, the auditor of the company is required to report the fraudulent activity to the Board or Audit Committee (as the case may be) within 2 days of his knowledge of fraud. Further, the company is also required to disclose the same in Board's Report.

It may be noted that the auditor need not to report the central government as the amount of fraud involved is less than ₹1 crore, however, reporting under CARO, 2016 is required.

- (6) **Duty to report on any other matter specified by Central Government:** The Central Government may, in consultation with the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), by general or special order, direct, in respect of such class or description of companies, as may be specified in the order, that the auditor's report shall also include a statement on such matters as may be specified therein.

However, as per the notification dated 29.03.2016, till the time NFRA is constituted, the Central Government may hold consultation required under this sub-section with the Committee chaired by an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary or equivalent in the MCA and the Committee shall have the representatives from the ICAI and Industry Chambers and also special invitees from the National Advisory Committee on Accounting Standards (NACAS) and the office of the C&AG.

[Note: Students may note that Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016 has been notified in this perspective which is discussed later under Para 10 Reporting under Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016]

- (7) **Duties and powers of the company's auditor with reference to the audit of the branch and the branch auditor are discussed separately in the chapter under heading 13 branch audit.**
- (8) **Duty to state the reason for qualification or negative report:** As per **section 143(4)**, where any of the matters required to be included in the audit report is answered in the negative or with a qualification, the report shall state the reasons there for.



10. REPORTING UNDER COMPANIES (AUDITOR'S REPORT ORDER, 2016) [CARO, 2016]

The Central Government, after consultation with the committee constituted under proviso to **section 143(11)** of the Companies Act, 2013, and in supersession of the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2015 dated the 10th April, 2015, has issued the Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 2016, (CARO, 2016) under section 143(11) of the Companies Act, 2013, dated 29th March, 2016. The requirements of the Order

are supplemental to the existing provisions of section 143 of the Act regarding the auditor's report.

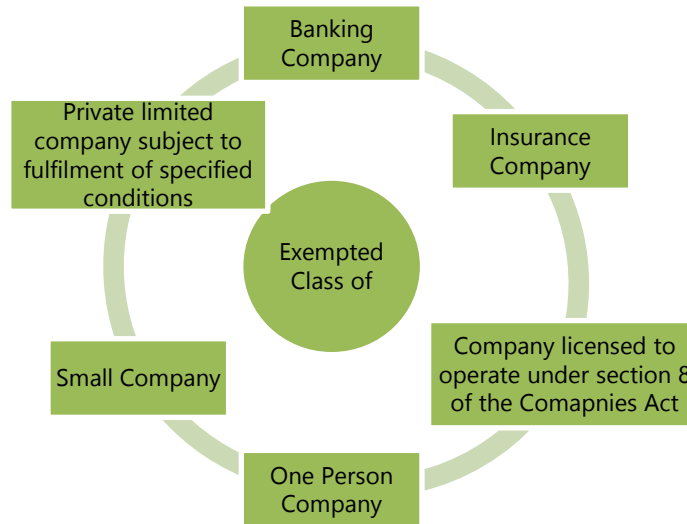
The Order is not intended to limit the duties and responsibilities of auditors but only requires a statement to be included in the audit report in respect of the matters specified therein.

Applicability of the Order: The CARO, 2016 is an additional reporting requirement Order. The order applies to every company including a foreign company as defined in clause (42) of section 2 of the Companies Act, 2013.

However, the Order specifically **exempts** the following class of companies-

- (i) a banking company as defined in clause (c) of section 5 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949;
- (ii) an insurance company as defined under the Insurance Act, 1938;
- (iii) a company licensed to operate under section 8 of the Companies Act;
- (iv) a One Person Company as defined under clause (62) of section 2 of the Companies Act;
- (v) a small company as defined under clause (85) of section 2 of the Companies Act; and
- (vi) a private limited company, not being a subsidiary or holding company of a public company, having a paid up capital and reserves and surplus not more than ₹ 1 crore as on the balance sheet date and which does not have total borrowings exceeding ₹ 1 crore from any bank or financial institution at any point of time during the financial year and which does not have a total revenue as disclosed in Scheduled III to the Companies Act, 2013 (including revenue from discontinuing operations) exceeding ₹ 10 crore during the financial year as per the financial statements.

It may be noted that the Order shall not be applicable to the auditor's report on consolidated financial statements.



Example

Ex. 1: 'Educating Child' is a limited company registered under section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013.

In the given case, 'Educating Child' is licensed to operate under section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. Therefore, CARO, 2016 shall not be applicable to 'Educating Child' accordingly.

Ex. 2: Ashu Pvt. Ltd. has fully paid capital and reserves of ₹ 50 lakh. During the year, the company had borrowed ₹ 70 lakh each from a bank and a financial institution independently. It has the turnover of ₹ 900 lakh.

In the given case of Ashu Pvt. Ltd., it has paid capital and reserves of ₹ 50 lakh i.e. less than

₹ 1 crore, turnover of ₹ 9 crore i.e. less than ₹ 10 crore. However, it has maximum outstanding borrowings of ₹ 1.40 crore (₹ 70 lakh + ₹ 70 lakh) collectively from bank and financial institution.

Therefore, it fails to fulfill the condition relating to borrowings. Thus, CARO, 2016 shall be applicable to Ashu Pvt. Ltd. accordingly.

Matters to be included in the Auditor's Report: Paragraph 3 of the Order requires the auditor to include a statement in the auditor's report on the following matters, namely -

- (i) (a) whether the company is maintaining proper records showing full

- particulars, including quantitative details and situation of fixed assets;
- (b) whether these fixed assets have been physically verified by the management at reasonable intervals; whether any material discrepancies were noticed on such verification and if so, whether the same have been properly dealt with in the books of account;
 - (c) whether the title deeds of immovable properties are held in the name of the company. If not, provide the details thereof;
- (ii) whether physical verification of inventory has been conducted at reasonable intervals by the management and whether any material discrepancies were noticed and if so, whether they have been properly dealt with in the books of account;
 - (iii) whether the company has granted any loans, secured or unsecured to companies, firms, Limited Liability Partnerships or other parties covered in the register maintained under section 189 of the Companies Act, 2013. If so,
 - (a) whether the terms and conditions of the grant of such loans are not prejudicial to the company's interest;
 - (b) whether the schedule of repayment of principal and payment of interest has been stipulated and whether the repayments or receipts are regular;
 - (c) if the amount is overdue, state the total amount overdue for more than ninety days, and whether reasonable steps have been taken by the company for recovery of the principal and interest;
 - (iv) in respect of loans, investments, guarantees, and security whether provisions of section 185 and 186 of the Companies Act, 2013 have been complied with. If not, provide the details thereof.
 - (v) in case the company has accepted deposits, whether the directives issued by the Reserve Bank of India and the provisions of sections 73 to 76 or any other relevant provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and the rules framed there under, where applicable, have been complied with? If not, the nature of such contraventions be stated; If an order has been passed by Company Law Board or National Company Law Tribunal or Reserve Bank of India or any court or any other tribunal, whether the same has been complied with or not?
 - (vi) where maintenance of cost records has been specified by the Central Government under sub-section (1) of section 148 of the Companies Act, 2013 and whether such accounts and records have been so made and maintained.

- (vii) (a) whether the company is regular in depositing undisputed statutory dues including provident fund, employees' state insurance, income-tax, sales-tax, service tax, duty of customs, duty of excise, value added tax, cess and any other statutory dues with the appropriate authorities and if not, the extent of the arrears of outstanding statutory dues as at the last day of the financial year concerned for a period of more than six months from the date they became payable, shall be indicated;
- (b) where dues of income tax or sales tax or service tax or duty of customs or duty of excise or value added tax have not been deposited on account of any dispute, then the amounts involved and the forum where dispute is pending shall be mentioned. (A mere representation to the concerned Department shall not constitute a dispute).
- (viii) whether the company has defaulted in repayment of loans or borrowing to a financial institution, bank, Government or dues to debenture holders? If yes, the period and the amount of default to be reported (in case of defaults to banks, financial institutions, and Government, lender wise details to be provided).
- (ix) whether moneys raised by way of initial public offer or further public offer (including debt instruments) and term loans were applied for the purposes for which those are raised. If not, the details together with delays or default and subsequent rectification, if any, as may be applicable, be reported;
- (x) whether any fraud by the company or any fraud on the Company by its officers or employees has been noticed or reported during the year; If yes, the nature and the amount involved is to be indicated;
- (xi) whether managerial remuneration has been paid or provided in accordance with the requisite approvals mandated by the provisions of section 197 read with Schedule V to the Companies Act, 2013? If not, state the amount involved and steps taken by the company for securing refund of the same;
- (xii) whether the Nidhi Company has complied with the Net Owned Funds to Deposits in the ratio of 1:20 to meet out the liability and whether the Nidhi Company is maintaining ten per cent unencumbered term deposits as specified in the Nidhi Rules, 2014 to meet out the liability;
- (xiii) whether all transactions with the related parties are in compliance with sections 177 and 188 of Companies Act, 2013 where applicable and the details have been disclosed in the Financial Statements etc., as required by the applicable accounting standards;

- (xiv) whether the company has made any preferential allotment or private placement of shares or fully or partly convertible debentures during the year under review and if so, as to whether the requirement of section 42 of the Companies Act, 2013 have been complied with and the amount raised have been used for the purposes for which the funds were raised. If not, provide the details in respect of the amount involved and nature of non-compliance;
- (xv) whether the company has entered into any non-cash transactions with directors or persons connected with him and if so, whether the provisions of section 192 of Companies Act, 2013 have been complied with;
- (xvi) whether the company is required to be registered under section 45 -IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and if so, whether the registration has been obtained.

Reasons to be Stated for Unfavourable or Qualified Answers: Where the answer to any of the questions referred to in **paragraph 3 of the Order** is unfavourable or qualified, in the auditor's report, the auditor shall also state the basis for such unfavourable or qualified answer, as the case may be.

Further, where the auditor is unable to express any opinion on any specified matter, his report shall indicate such fact together with the reasons why it is not possible for him to give his opinion on the same.

Example

The company has dispensed with the practice of taking inventory of their inventories at the year-end as in their opinion the exercise is redundant, time consuming and intrusion to normal functioning of the operations. Explain reporting requirement under CARO, 2016.

Reporting for Physical Verification of Inventory: *Clause (ii) of Para 3 of CARO, 2016, requires the auditor to report whether physical verification of inventory has been conducted at reasonable intervals by the management and whether any material discrepancies were noticed and if so, whether they have been properly dealt with in the books of account.*

The physical verification of inventory is the responsibility of the management of the company which should verify all material items at least once in a year and more often in appropriate cases.

In the given case, the above requirement of physical verification of inventory by the management has not been taken place and therefore the auditor should point out the same under CARO, 2016. He may consider the impact on financial statement and report accordingly.



11. DISCLOSURE IN THE AUDITOR'S REPORT

The following paragraphs deal with the manner of qualification and the manner of disclosure, if any, to be made in the auditor's report.

AS-1 – Disclosure of Accounting Policies

In the case of a company, members should qualify their audit reports in case –

- (a) accounting policies required to be disclosed under Schedule III or any other provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 have not been disclosed, or
- (b) accounts have not been prepared on accrual basis, or
- (c) the fundamental accounting assumption of going concern has not been followed and this fact has not been disclosed in the financial statements, or
- (d) proper disclosures regarding changes in the accounting policies have not been made.

Where a company has been given a specific exemption regarding any of the matters stated above but the fact of such exemption has not been adequately disclosed in the accounts, the member should mention the fact of exemption in his audit report without necessarily making it a subject matter of audit qualification.

In view of the above, the auditor will have to consider different circumstances whether the audit report has to be qualified or only disclosures have to be given.

In the case of enterprises not governed by the Companies Act, the member should examine the relevant statute and make suitable qualification in his audit report in case adequate disclosures regarding accounting policies have not been made as per the statutory requirements. Similarly, the member should examine if the fundamental accounting assumptions have been followed in preparing the financial statements or not. In appropriate cases, he should consider whether, keeping in view the requirements of the applicable laws, a qualification in his report is necessary.

In the event of non-compliance by enterprises not governed by the Companies Act, in situations where the relevant statute does not require such disclosures to be made, the member should make adequate disclosure in his audit report without necessarily making it a subject matter of audit qualification.

In making a qualification / disclosure in the audit report, the auditor should consider the materiality of the relevant item. Thus, the auditor need not make qualification / disclosure in respect of items which, in his judgement, are not material.

A disclosure, which is not a subject matter of audit qualification, should be made in the auditor's report in a manner that it is clear to the reader that the disclosure does not constitute an audit qualification. The paragraph containing the auditor's opinion on true and fair view should not include a reference to the paragraph containing the aforesaid disclosure.

12. JOINT AUDIT

The practice of appointing Chartered Accountants as joint auditors is quite widespread in big companies and corporations. Joint audit basically implies pooling together the resources and expertise of more than one firm of auditors to render an expert job in a given time period which may be difficult to accomplish acting individually. It essentially involves sharing of the total work. This is by itself a great advantage.

In specific terms the **advantages** that flow may be the following:

- (i) Sharing of expertise.
- (ii) Advantage of mutual consultation.
- (iii) Lower workload.
- (iv) Better quality of performance.
- (v) Improved service to the client.
- (vi) Displacement of the auditor of the company taken over in a take - over often obviated.
- (vii) In respect of multi-national companies, the work can be spread using the expertise of the local firms which are in a better position to deal with detailed work and the local laws and regulations.
- (viii) Lower staff development costs.
- (ix) Lower costs to carry out the work.
- (x) A sense of healthy competition towards a better performance.

The general **disadvantages** may be the following:

- (i) The fees being shared.
- (ii) Psychological problem where firms of different standing are associated in the joint audit.
- (iii) General superiority complexes of some auditors.

- (iv) Problems of co-ordination of the work.
- (v) Areas of work of common concern being neglected.
- (vi) Uncertainty about the liability for the work done.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India has issued Standard on Auditing (SA) 299 (Revised), "Joint Audit of Financial Statements" which lays down the principles for effective conduct of joint audit to achieve the overall objectives of the auditor as laid down in SA 200 "Overall Objectives of the Independent Auditor and the conduct of an audit in accordance with Standards on Auditing". This Standard deals with the special considerations in carrying out audit by joint auditors. It requires that–

- (i) *the engagement partner and other key members of the engagement team from each of the joint auditors should be involved in planning the audit.***
- (ii) *the joint auditors should jointly establish an overall audit strategy which sets the scope, timing and direction of the audit, and also guides the development of the audit plan.***
- (iii) *before the commencement of the audit, the joint auditors should discuss and develop a joint audit plan. In developing the joint audit plan, the joint auditors should:***
 - (a) *identify division of audit areas and common audit areas;***
 - (b) *ascertain the reporting objectives of the engagement;***
 - (c) *consider and communicate among all joint auditors the factors that are significant***
 - (d) *in directing the engagement team's efforts;***
 - (e) *consider the results of preliminary engagement activities, or similar engagements performed earlier.***
 - (f) *ascertain the nature, timing and extent of resources necessary to accomplish the engagement.***
- (iv) *each of the joint auditors should consider and assess the risks of material misstatement and communicate to other joint auditors.***
- (v) *the joint auditors should discuss and document the nature, timing, and the extent of the audit procedures for (I) common and (II) specific allotted areas of audit to be performed.***

- (vi) ***the joint auditors should obtain common engagement letter and common management representation letter.***
- (vii) ***the work allocation document should be signed by all the joint auditors and communicated to*** those charged with governance.

It further states that, in respect of audit work divided among the joint auditors, each joint auditor shall be responsible only for the work allocated to such joint auditor including proper execution of the audit procedures. On the other hand, all the joint auditors shall be jointly and severally responsible for:

- (i) ***the audit work which is not divided among the joint auditors and is carried out by all joint auditors;***
- (ii) ***decisions taken by all the joint auditors under audit planning in respect of common audit areas;***
- (iii) ***matters which are brought to the notice of the joint auditors by any one of them and there is an agreement among the joint auditors on such matters;***
- (iv) ***examining that the financial statements of the entity comply with the requirements of therelevant statutes;***
- (v) ***presentation and disclosure of the financial statements as required by the applicable financial reporting framework;***
- (vi) ***ensuring that the audit report complies with the requirements of the relevant statutes, applicable Standards on Auditing and other relevant pronouncements issued by ICAI.***

In case a joint auditor comes across matters which are relevant to the areas of responsibility of other joint auditors and which deserve their attention, or which require disclosure or require discussion with, or application of judgment by other joint auditors, the said joint auditor shall communicate the same to all the other joint auditors in writing prior to the completion of the audit.

It may be noted that the joint auditors are required to issue common audit report. However, where the joint auditors are in disagreement with regard to the opinion or any matters to be covered by the audit report, they shall express their opinion in a separate audit report. In such circumstances, the audit report(s) issued by the joint auditor(s) shall make a reference to each other's audit report(s).

[Note: Student may refer SA 299 (revised) "Joint Audit of Financial Statements" reproduced in "Auditing Pronouncements" for comprehensive knowledge.]



13. AUDIT OF BRANCH OFFICE ACCOUNTS

As per **section 128(1)** of the Companies Act, 2013, every company shall prepare and keep at its registered office books of account and other relevant books and papers and financial statement for every financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the company, including that of its branch office or offices, if any, and explain the transactions effected both at the registered office and its branches and such books shall be kept on accrual basis and according to the double entry system of accounting.

It may be noted that all or any of the books of account aforesaid and other relevant papers may be kept at such other place in India as the Board of Directors may decide and where such a decision is taken, the company shall, within 7 days thereof, file with the Registrar a notice in writing giving the full address of that other place.

Students may also note that the company may keep such books of account or other relevant papers in electronic mode in such manner as may be prescribed.

Sub-section (2) provides that where a company has a branch office in India or outside India, it shall be deemed to have complied with the provisions of sub-section (1), if proper books of account relating to the transactions effected at the branch office are kept at that office and proper summarised returns periodically are sent by the branch office to the company at its registered office or the other place referred in (1).

Further, sub-section (8) of section 143 of the Companies Act, 2013, prescribes the duties and powers of the company's auditor with reference to the audit of the branch and the branch auditor. Where a company has a branch office, the accounts of that office shall be audited either by the auditor appointed for the company (herein referred to as the company's auditor) under this Act or by any other person qualified for appointment as an auditor of the company under this Act and appointed as such under section 139, or where the branch office is situated in a country outside India, the accounts of the branch office shall be audited either by the company's auditor or by an accountant or by any other person duly qualified to act as an auditor of the accounts of the branch office in accordance with the laws of that country and the duties and powers of the company's auditor with reference to the audit of the branch and the branch auditor, if any, shall be such as may be prescribed:

It may be noted that the branch auditor shall prepare a report on the accounts of the branch examined by him and send it to the auditor of the company who shall deal with it in his report in such manner as he considers necessary.

Further as per **rule 12 of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014**, the branch auditor shall submit his report to the company's auditor and reporting of fraud by the auditor shall also extend to such branch auditor to the extent it relates to the concerned branch.

Using the Work of another Auditor: When the accounts of the branch are audited by a person other than the company's auditor, there is need for a clear understanding of the role of such auditor and the company's auditor in relation to the audit of the accounts of the branch and the audit of the company as a whole; also, there is great necessity for a proper rapport between these two auditors for the purpose of an effective audit. In recognition of these needs, the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India has dealt with these issues in **SA 600, "Using the Work of another Auditor"**. It makes clear that in certain situations, the statute governing the entity may confer a right on the principal auditor to visit a component and examine the books of account and other records of the said component, if he thinks it necessary to do so. Where another auditor has been appointed for the component, the principal auditor would normally be entitled to rely upon the work of such auditor unless there are special circumstances to make it essential for him to visit the component and/or to examine the books of account and other records of the said component. Further, it requires that the principal auditor should perform procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence, that the work of the other auditor is adequate for the principal auditor's purposes, in the context of the specific assignment. When using the work of another auditor, the principal auditor should ordinarily perform the following procedures:

- (a) advise the other auditor of the use that is to be made of the other auditor's work and report and make sufficient arrangements for co-ordination of their efforts at the planning stage of the audit. The principal auditor would inform the other auditor of matters such as are as requiring special consideration, procedures for the identification of inter -component transactions that may require disclosure and the time-table for completion of audit; and
- (b) advise the other auditor of the significant accounting, auditing and reporting requirements and obtain representation as to compliance with them.

The principal auditor might discuss with the other auditor the audit procedures applied or review a written summary of the other auditor's procedures and findings which may be in the form of a completed questionnaire or check-list. The principal auditor may also wish to visit the other auditor. The nature, timing and extent of procedures will depend on the circumstances of the engagement and the principal auditor's knowledge of the professional competence of the other auditor. This

knowledge may have been enhanced from the review of the previous audit work of the other auditor.

14. COST AUDIT

Cost Audit is an audit process for verifying the cost of manufacture or production of any article, on the basis of accounts as regards utilisation of material or labour or other items of costs, maintained by the company.

It is covered by **Section 148** of the Companies Act, 2013. The audit conducted under this section shall be in addition to the audit conducted under section 143.

As per section 148 the Central Government may by order specify audit of items of cost in respect of certain companies.

Further, the Central Government may, by order, in respect of such class of companies engaged in the production of such goods or providing such services as may be prescribed, direct that particulars relating to the utilisation of material or labour or to other items of cost as may be prescribed shall also be included in the books of account kept by that class of companies.

In this regard, the Central Government has notified the Companies (Cost Records and Audit) Rules, 2014 which prescribes the classes of companies required to include cost records in their books of account, applicability of cost audit, maintenance of records etc.

Applicability for Maintenance of Cost Records: Rule 3 of the Companies (Cost Records and Audit) Rules, 2014 provides the classes of companies, engaged in the production of goods or providing services, having an overall turnover from all its products and services of ₹ 35 crore or more during the immediately preceding financial year, required to include cost records in their books of account. These companies include Foreign Companies defined in sub-section (42) of section 2 of the Act, but exclude a company classified as a Micro enterprise or a Small enterprise including as per the turnover criteria provided under Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006. The said rule has divided the list of companies into (A) Regulated sectors and (B) Non-regulated sectors.

Maintenance of Cost Records: As per Rule 5 of the Companies (Cost Records and Audit) Rules, 2014, every company under these rules including all units and branches thereof, shall, in respect of each of its financial year, is required to maintain cost records in Form CRA-1. The cost records shall be maintained on regular basis in such manner as to facilitate calculation of per unit cost of production or cost of operations, cost of sales and margin for each of its products

and activities for every financial year on monthly or quarterly or half-yearly or annual basis.

Additionally, as per **clause (vi) to Paragraph 3 of the CARO, 2016**, the auditor has to report whether maintenance of cost records has been specified by the Central Government under section 148(1) of the Companies Act, 2013 and whether such accounts and records have been so made and maintained.

Applicability of Cost Audit: Rule 4 of the Companies (Cost Records and Audit) Rules, 2014 states the provisions related to the applicability of cost audit depending on the turnover of the company as follows-

- (i) Classes of companies specified under item (A) "Regulated Sectors" are required to get its cost records audited if the overall annual turnover of the company from all its products and services during the immediately preceding financial year is ₹ 50 crore or more and the aggregate turnover of the individual product(s) or service(s) for which cost records are required to be maintained under rule 3 is ₹ 25 crore or more.
- (ii) Classes of companies specified under item (B) "Non-Regulated Sectors" are required to get its cost records audited if the overall annual turnover of the company from all its products and services during the immediately preceding financial year is ₹ 100 crore or more and the aggregate turnover of the individual product(s) or service(s) for which cost records are required to be maintained under rule 3 is ₹ 35 crore or more.

Who can be Cost Auditor: The audit shall be conducted by a Cost Accountant who shall be appointed by the Board of such remuneration as may be determined by the members in such manner as may be prescribed.

It may be noted that no person appointed under section 139 as an auditor of the company shall be appointed for conducting the audit of cost records.

It may also be noted that the auditor conducting the cost audit shall comply with the cost auditing standards ("cost auditing standards" mean such standards as are issued by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India, constituted under the Cost and Works Accountants Act, 1959, with the approval of the Central Government).

Appointment of Cost Auditor: Rule 6 of the Companies (Cost Records and Audit) Rules, 2014 requires the companies prescribed under the said Rules to appoint an Auditor within 180 days of the commencement of every financial year. However, before such appointment is made, the written consent of the cost auditor to such appointment and a certificate from him or it shall be obtained.

The certificate to be obtained from the cost auditor shall certify that the-

- (a) the individual or the firm, as the case may be, is eligible for appointment and is not disqualified for appointment under the Companies Act, 2013, the Cost and Works Accountants Act, 1959 and the rules or regulations made thereunder;
- (b) the individual or the firm, as the case may be, satisfies the criteria provided in section 141 of the Companies Act, 2013 so far as may be applicable;
- (c) the proposed appointment is within the limits laid down by or under the authority of the Companies Act, 2013; and
- (d) the list of proceedings against the cost auditor or audit firm or any partner of the audit firm pending with respect to professional matters of conduct, as disclosed in the certificate, is true and correct.

Every referred company shall inform the cost auditor concerned of his or its appointment as such and file a notice of such appointment with the Central Government within a period of 30 days of the Board meeting in which such appointment is made or within a period of 180 days of the commencement of the financial year, whichever is earlier, through electronic mode, in Form CRA-2, along with the fee as specified in Companies (Registration Offices and Fees) Rules, 2014.

The cost auditor appointed as such shall continue in such capacity till the expiry of 180 days from the closure of the financial year or till he submits the cost audit report, for the financial year for which he has been appointed.

Removal of Cost Auditor: The cost auditor may be removed from his office before the expiry of his term, through a board resolution after giving a reasonable opportunity of being heard to the cost auditor and recording the reasons for such removal in writing.

It may be noted that the Form CRA-2 to be filed with the Central Government for intimating appointment of another cost auditor shall enclose the relevant Board Resolution to the effect.

It may further be noted that the above provisions shall not prejudice the right of the cost auditor to resign from such office of the company.

Casual Vacancy in the Office of a Cost Auditor: Any casual vacancy in the office of a Cost Auditor, whether due to resignation, death or removal, shall be filled by the Board of Directors within 30 days of occurrence of such vacancy and the company shall inform the central government in Form CRA-2 within 30 days of such appointment of cost auditor.

Remuneration of Cost Auditor: As per rule 14 of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014-

- (a) in the case of companies which are required to constitute an audit committee-
 - (i) the Board shall appoint an individual, who is a cost accountant, or a firm of cost accountants in practice, as cost auditor on the recommendations of the Audit committee, which shall also recommend remuneration for such cost auditor;
 - (ii) the remuneration recommended by the Audit Committee under (i) shall be considered and approved by the Board of Directors and ratified subsequently by the shareholders;
- (b) in the case of other companies which are not required to constitute an audit committee, the Board shall appoint an individual who is a cost accountant or a firm of cost accountants in practice as cost auditor and the remuneration of such cost auditor shall be ratified by shareholders subsequently.

Qualification, Disqualification, Rights, Duties and Obligations of Cost Auditor:

The qualifications, disqualifications, rights, duties and obligations applicable to auditors under this Chapter shall, so far as may be applicable, apply to a cost auditor appointed under this section and it shall be the duty of the company to give all assistance and facilities to the cost auditor appointed under this section for auditing the cost records of the company.

Submission of Cost Audit Report:

(i) To the Board of Directors of the Company- The cost auditor shall submit the cost audit report along with his reservations or qualifications or observations or suggestions, if any, in Form CRA-3. He shall forward his report to the Board of Directors of the company within a period of 180 days from the closure of the financial year to which the report relates and the Board of Directors shall consider and examine such report particularly any reservation or qualification contained therein.

(ii) To the Central Government- The company shall within 30 days from the date of receipt of a copy of the cost audit report prepared (in pursuance of a direction issued by Central Government) furnish the Central Government with such report along with full information and explanation on every reservation or qualification contained therein in Form CRA-4 in Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) format in the manner as specified in the Companies (Filing of Documents and Forms in Extensible Business Reporting language) Rules, 2015 along with fees specified in the Companies (Registration Offices and Fees) Rules, 2014.

Provided that the companies which have got extension of time of holding AGM under section 96 (1) of the Companies Act, 2013, may file form CRA-4 within resultant extended period of filing financial statements under section 137 of the Companies Act, 2013.

If, after considering the cost audit report and the information and explanation furnished by the company as above, the Central Government is of the opinion, that any further information or explanation is necessary, it may call for such further information and explanation and the company shall furnish the same within such time as may be specified by that Government.

Duty to Report on Fraud: The provisions of **section 143(12)** of the Companies Act, 2013 and the relevant rules on duty to report on fraud shall apply mutatis mutandis to a cost auditor during performance of his functions under section 148 of the Act and these rules.

Cost Audit Rules Not to Apply in Certain Cases: The requirement for cost audit under these rules shall not be applicable to a company which is covered under Rule 3, and,

- (i) whose revenue from exports, in foreign exchange, exceeds 75% of its total revenue; or
- (ii) which is operating from a special economic zone.
- (iii) which is engaged in generation of electricity for captive consumption through Captive Generating Plant.

Penal Provisions in Case of Default: If any default is made in complying with the provisions of this section,

- (a) the company and every officer of the company who is in default shall be punishable in the manner as provided in sub-section (1) of section 147;
- (b) the cost auditor of the company who is in default shall be punishable in the manner as provided in sub-sections (2) to (4) of section 147.



15. PUNISHMENT FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

Section 147 of the Companies Act, 2013 prescribes following punishments for contravention:

- (1) If any of the provisions of sections 139 to 146 (both inclusive) is contravened, the company shall be punishable with fine which shall not be less than twenty-five thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees and every officer of the company who is in default shall be punishable with

imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees but which may extend to one lakh rupees, or with both.

- (2) If an auditor of a company contravenes any of the provisions of section 139 section 143, section 144 or section 145, the auditor shall be punishable with fine which shall not be less than twenty-five thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees or four times the remuneration of the auditor, whichever is less.

It may be noted that if an auditor has contravened such provisions knowingly or willfully with the intention to deceive the company or its shareholders or creditors or tax authorities, he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year and with fine which shall not be less than **fifty thousand** rupees but which may extend to twenty-five lakh rupees **or eight times the remuneration of the auditor, whichever is less** .

- (3) Where an auditor has been convicted under sub-section (2), he shall be liable to-
- (i) refund the remuneration received by him to the company;
 - (ii) and pay for damages to the company statutory bodies or authorities or to **members or creditors of the company** for loss arising out of incorrect or misleading statements of particulars made in his audit report.
- (4) The Central Government shall, by notification, specify any statutory body or authority of an officer for ensuring prompt payment of damages to the company or the persons under clause (ii) of sub-section (3) and such body, authority or officer shall after payment of damages the such company or persons file a report with the Central Government in respect of making such damages in such manner as may be specified in the said notification.
- (5) Where, in case of audit of a company being conducted by an audit firm, it is proved that the partner or partners of the audit firm has or have acted in a fraudulent manner or abetted or colluded in an fraud by, or in relation to or by, the company or its directors or officers, the liability, whether civil or criminal as provided in this Act or in any other law for the time being in force, for such act shall be of the partner or partners concerned of the audit firm and of the firm jointly and severally.

It may be noted that in case of criminal liability of an audit firm, in respect of liability other than fine, the concerned partner(s), who acted in a fraudulent manner or abetted or, as the case may be, colluded in any fraud shall only be liable.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Correct/Incorrect:

State with reasons (in short) whether the following statements are correct or incorrect:

- (i) The first auditor of a Government company was appointed by the Board in its meeting after 10 days from the date of registration.
- (ii) Director's relative can act as an auditor of the company.
- (iii) If an LLP (Limited Liability Partnership Firm) is appointed as an auditor of a company, every partner of a firm shall be authorized to act as an auditor.
- (iv) AB & Co. is an audit firm having partners Mr. A and Mr. B. Mr. C, the relative of Mr. B is holding securities having face value of ₹ 2,00,000 in XYZ Ltd. AB & Co. is qualified for being appointed as an auditor of XYZ Ltd.
- (v) The auditor of a Ltd. Company wanted to refer to the minute books during audit but board of directors refused to show the minute books to the auditors.
- (vi) Manner of rotation of auditor will not be applicable to company A, which is having paid up share capital of ₹ 15 crores and having public borrowing from nationalized bank of ₹ 50 crore because it is a Private Limited Company.
- (vii) The auditor should study the Memorandum and Articles of Association to see the validity of his appointment.
- (viii) Managing director of A Ltd. himself appointed the first auditor of the company.
- (ix) A Chartered Accountant holding securities of S Ltd. having face value of ₹ 950 is qualified for appointment as an auditor of S Ltd.
- (x) Mr. N, a member of the Institute of Company Secretary of India, is qualified to be appointed as auditor of XYZ Limited.

Theoretical Questions

1. An auditor purchased goods worth ₹ 501,500 on credit from a company being audited by him. The company allowed him one month's credit, which it normally allowed to all known customers. Comment.
2. (a) Ram and Hanuman Associates, Chartered Accountants in practice have been appointed as Statutory Auditor of Krishna Ltd. for the accounting year 2017-2018. Mr. Hanuman holds 100 equity shares of Shiva Ltd., a subsidiary company of Krishna Ltd. Comment.

- (b) Managing Director of PQR Ltd. himself wants to appoint Shri Ganpati, a practicing Chartered Accountant, as first auditor of the company. Comment on the proposed action of the Managing Director.
3. Under what circumstances the retiring Auditor cannot be reappointed?
4. Discuss the following:
- (a) Ceiling on number of audits in a company to be accepted by an auditor.
- (b) Filling of a casual vacancy of auditor in respect of a company audit.
- (c) In Joint Audit, "Each Joint Auditor is responsible only for the work allocated to him".

ANSWER

Answers to Correct/Incorrect

- (i) **Incorrect:** According to section 139(7) of the Companies Act, 2013, in the case of a Government company, the first auditor shall be appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor- General of India within 60 days from the date of registration of the company. If CAG fails to make the appointment within 60 days, the Board shall appoint in next 30 days.
- (ii) **Incorrect:** As per section 141(3) of the Companies Act, 2013, a person shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company whose relative is a Director or is in the employment of the Company as a director or key Managerial Personnel.
- (iii) **Incorrect:** As per section 141(2) of the Companies Act, 2013, where a firm including a limited liability partnership (LLP) is appointed as an auditor of a company, only the partners who are Chartered Accountants shall be authorised to act and sign on behalf of the firm.
- (iv) **Incorrect:** As per the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, a person is disqualified to be appointed as an auditor of a company if his relative is holding any security of or interest in the company of face value exceeding ₹ 1 lakh.

Therefore, AB & Co. shall be disqualified for being appointed as an auditor of XYZ Ltd. as Mr. C, the relative of Mr. B who is a partner in AB & Co., is holding securities in XYZ Ltd. having face value of ₹ 2 lakh.

(v) **Incorrect:** The provisions of Companies Act, 2013 grant rights to the auditor to access books of account and vouchers of the company. He is also entitled to require information and explanations from the company. Therefore, he has a statutory right to inspect the minute book.

(vi) **Incorrect:** According to section 139 of the Companies Act, 2013, the provisions related to rotation of auditor are applicable to all private limited companies having paid up share capital of ₹ 20 crore or more; and all companies having paid up share capital of below threshold limit mentioned above, but having public borrowings from financial institutions, banks or public deposits of ₹ 50 crore or more.

Although company A is a private limited company yet it is having public borrowings from nationalized bank of ₹ 50 crores, therefore it would be governed by provisions of rotation of auditor.

(vii) **Incorrect:** The auditor should study the Memorandum of Association to check the objective of the company to be carried on, amount of authorized share capital etc. and Articles of Association to check the internal rules, regulations and ensuring the validity of transactions relating to accounts of the company.

To see the validity of appointment, the auditor should ensure the compliance of the provisions of section 139, 140 and 141 of the Companies Act, 2013.

In addition, the auditor should study the appointment letter & the prescribed Form submitted to the Registrar of the Companies to see the validity of his appointment.

(viii) **Incorrect:** As per section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013, the first auditor of a company, other than a government company, shall be appointed by the Board of directors within 30 days from the date of registration of the company.

Therefore, the appointment of first auditor made by the managing director of A Ltd. is in violation of the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013.

(ix) **Incorrect:** As per the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, a person is disqualified to be appointed as an auditor of a company if he is holding any security of or interest in the company.

As the chartered accountant is holding securities of S Ltd. having face value of ₹ 950, he is not eligible for appointment as an auditor of S Ltd.

- (x) **Incorrect:** As per section 141 of the Companies Act, 2013, a person shall be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company only if he is a chartered accountant.

Thus, Mr. N is disqualified to be appointed as an auditor of XYZ Limited.

Answers to Theoretical Questions

1. **Purchase of Goods on Credit by the Auditor:** Section 141(3)(d)(ii) of the Companies Act, 2013 specifies that a person shall be disqualified to act as an auditor if he is indebted to the company for an amount exceeding five lakh rupees.

Where an auditor purchases goods or services from a company audited by him on credit, he is definitely indebted to the company and if the amount outstanding exceeds rupees five lakh, he is disqualified for appointment as an auditor of the company.

It will not make any difference if the company allows him the same period of credit as it allows to other customers on the normal terms and conditions of the business. The auditor cannot argue that he is enjoying only the normal credit period allowed to other customers. In fact, in such a case he has become indebted to the company and consequently he is deemed to have vacated his office.

2. (a) **Auditor Holding Securities of a Company:** As per sub-section (3)(d)(i) of Section 141 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rule, 2014, a person shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company, who, or his relative or partner is holding any security of or interest in the company or its subsidiary, or of its holding or associate company or a subsidiary of such holding company. However, the relative may hold security or interest in the company of face value not exceeding ₹ 1 lakh.

Also, as per sub-section 4 of Section 141 of the Companies Act, 2013, where a person appointed as an auditor of a company incurs any of the disqualifications mentioned in sub-section (3) after his appointment, he shall vacate his office as such auditor and such vacation shall be deemed to be a casual vacancy in the office of the auditor.

In the present case, Mr. Hanuman, Chartered Accountant, a partner of M/s Ram and Hanuman Associates, holds 100 equity shares of Shiva Ltd. which is a subsidiary of Krishna Ltd. Therefore, the firm, M/s Ram and Hanuman Associates would be disqualified to be appointed as statutory

auditor of Krishna Ltd., which is the holding company of Shiva Ltd., because one of the partners Mr. Hanuman is holding equity shares of its subsidiary.

- (b) Appointment of First Auditor of Company:** Section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 lays down that the first auditor or auditors of a company shall be appointed by the Board of directors within 30 days from the date of registration of the company.

In the instant case, the appointment of Shri Ganapati, a practicing Chartered Accountant as first auditors by the Managing Director of PQR Ltd. by himself is in violation of Section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013, which authorizes the Board of Directors to appoint the first auditor of the company within 30 days of registration of the company.

In view of the above, the Managing Director of PQR Ltd. should be advised not to appoint the first auditor of the company.

- 3. Circumstances where Retiring Auditor Cannot be Reappointed:** In the following circumstances, the retiring auditor cannot be reappointed-

- (i) A specific resolution has not been passed to reappoint the retiring auditor.
- (ii) The auditor proposed to be reappointed does not possess the qualification prescribed under section 141 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- (iii) The proposed auditor suffers from the disqualifications under section 141(3), 141(4) and 144 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- (iv) He has given to the company notice in writing of his unwillingness to be reappointed.
- (v) A resolution has been passed in AGM appointing somebody else or providing expressly that the retiring auditor shall not be reappointed.
- (vi) A written certificate has not been obtained from the proposed auditor to the effect that the appointment or reappointment, if made, will be in accordance within the limits specified under section 141(3)(g) of the Companies Act, 2013.

- 4. Hints:**

- (a) Refer Para 7 Ceiling on number of Audits.**
- (b) Refer Para 2.3 Filling of a Casual Vacancy**
- (c) Refer Para 12 Joint Audit.**