

The Company Audit – I

Learning Objectives

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.

Companies Act, 2013 is rule based Act. Sections 138 to 148 of the Companies Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the Act unless otherwise mentioned) deals 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 DEALS WITH PROVISIONS RELATING TO AUDIT OF COMPANIES

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| 138. | Internal Audit. (Separately discussed in Chapter 4) |
| 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. |

7.1 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**:

Provided 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) Rule, 2014 (hereinafter referred as CAAR), the following persons shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor of a company, namely:-

- (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:

Provided that the relative may hold security or interest in the company of face value not exceeding rupees one lakh;

Provided that the condition of rupees one lakh shall, wherever relevant, be also applicable in the case of a company not having share capital or other securities:

Provided further 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 sixty days** of such acquisition or interest.

Examples

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 the 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) 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: Further as per proviso to this Section, the relative of the auditor 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, an auditor), is having securities of ₹ 90,000 face Value in the ABC Pvt. 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: "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 "BC & Co." is qualified from being appointed as an Auditor of "MWF 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: Further as per proviso to this Section, the relative of the auditor may hold the securities or interest in the company of face value not exceeding of ₹ 1,00,000.

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

- (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 rupees five lakh; 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

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Holding or Associate Company or a Subsidiary of such Holding Company, in excess of one lakh rupees;

- (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;

Student 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;
- (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) any person whose subsidiary or associate company or any other form of entity, is engaged as on the date of appointment in consulting and specialized services as provided in section 144.

Section 144 of the Companies Act, 2013 is a new provision which 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;
- (vi) investment banking services;
- (vii) rendering of outsourced financial services;
- (viii) management services; and
- (ix) any other kind of services as may be prescribed.

Provided 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. Further, 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; 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*.

- (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

A, a chartered accountant has been appointed as auditor of Laxman Ltd. In the Annual General Meeting of the company held in September, 2013, which assignment he accepted. Subsequently in January, 2014 he joined 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.

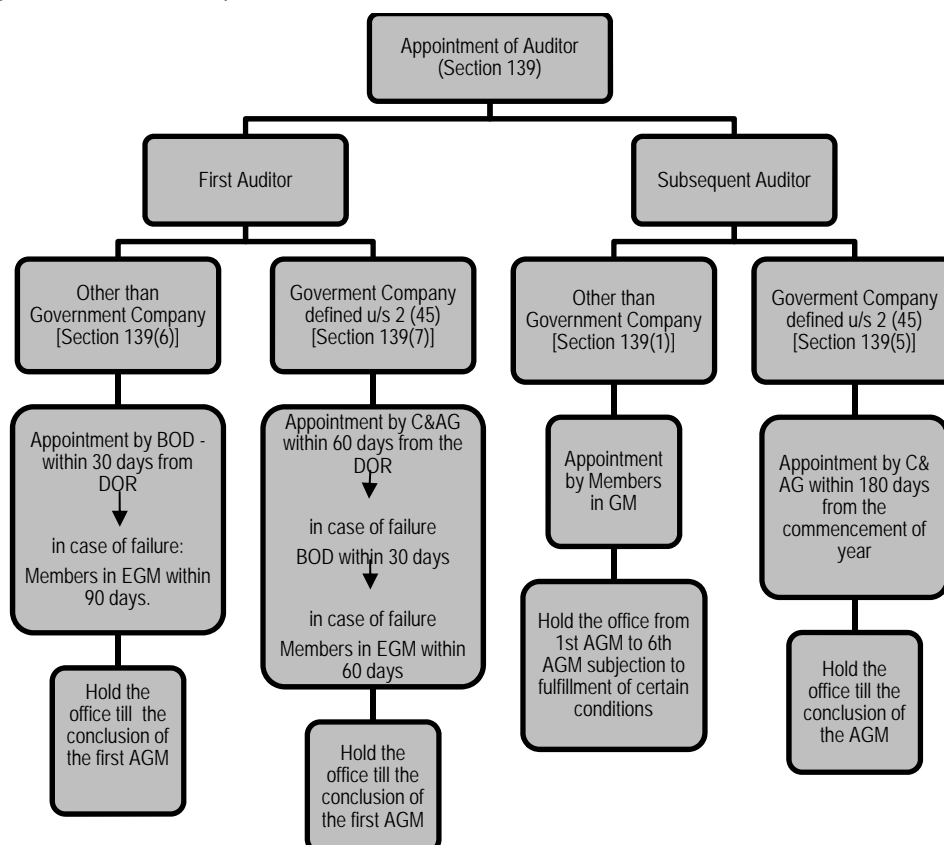
Conclusion: In the present case, A, an auditor of M/s Laxman Ltd., joined as partner with B, who is Manager Finance of M/s Laxman Limited, has attracted clause (3) (c) of Section 141 and, therefore, he shall be deemed to have vacated office of the auditor of M/s Laxman Limited.

7.2 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



7.2.1 Appointment of First Auditor

7.2.1.1 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

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.

Provisions and Explanation: Section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 (the Act) 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 Ganpati, 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.

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

7.2.1.2 Appointment of First Auditors in the case of 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

The first auditor of M/s Healthy Wealthy Ltd., a Government company, was appointed by the Board of Directors.

Provisions and Explanation: Section 139(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 (the Act) 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”. Thus, the first auditor of a company can be appointed by the Board of Directors within 30 days from the date of registration of the company. However, 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. Hence in the case of M/s Healthy Wealthy Ltd., being a government company, the first auditors shall be appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Conclusion : Thus, the appointment of first auditors made by the Board of Directors of M/s Healthy Wealthy Ltd., is null and void.

7.2.2 Appointment of Subsequent Auditor/Reappointment of Auditor

7.2.2.1 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) The company shall place the matter relating to such appointment of ratification by member at every Annual General Meeting.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) The certificate shall also indicate whether the auditor satisfies the criteria provided in section 141.
- (iv) 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.

7.2.2.2 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.

7.2.3 Filling of a Casual Vacancy

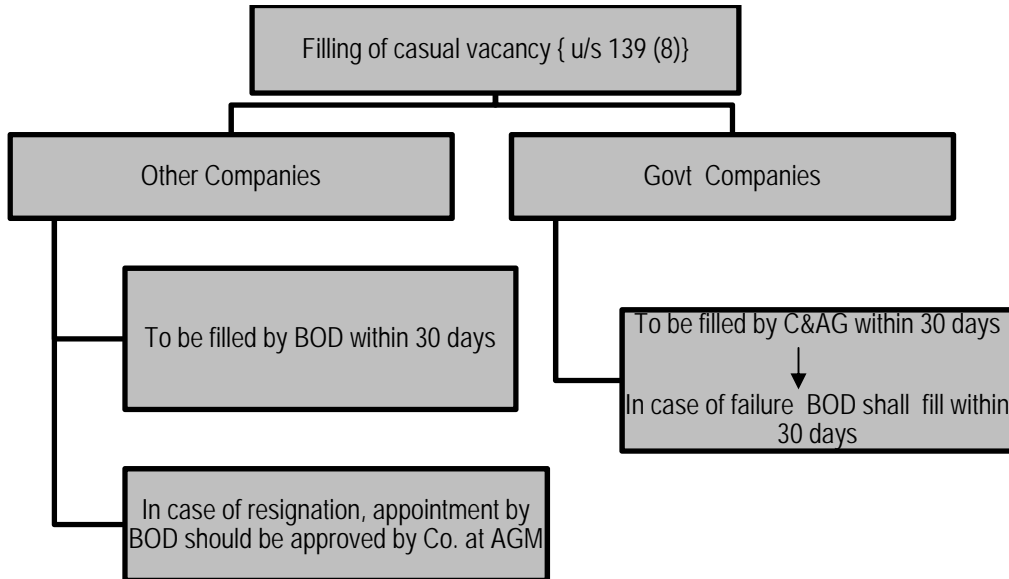
As per Section 139(8), any casual vacancy in the office of an auditor shall-

- (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 thirty 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 thirty 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 thirty days.



7.2.3.1 Casual Vacancy by Resignation: As per section 140 (2) the auditor who has resigned from the company shall file within a period of thirty 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, and in case of the companies referred to in section 139(5) i.e. subsequent auditor of Government company, the auditor shall also file such statement with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, indicating the reasons and other facts as may be relevant with regard to his resignation. In case of failure the auditor shall be punishable with fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees as per section 140 (3).

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.

7.3 Rotation of Auditor

7.3.1 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:-

- (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 twenty crore or more;
- (III) all companies having paid up share capital of below threshold limit mentioned in (a) and (b) above, but having public borrowings from financial institutions, banks or public deposits of rupees fifty crores or more.

Example : Rano Ltd. is a private limited Company, having paid up share capital of rupees 18 crore but having public borrowing from nationalized banks and financial institutions of rupees 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.

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., is 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. the period of ten years i.e. 2 terms.

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 three years from the date of commencement of this Act:

Example 1 : Mr Raj, a Chartered Accountant, is an individual auditor of M/s. Binaca Limited by last 5 years as on March, 2013 (i.e. existing on or before the date of Commencement of Companies Act, 2013), here a break in the term for a continuous period of five years will not be considered as fulfilling the requirement of rotation, Thus, Mr Raj can continue the audit of M/s. Binaca Ltd. for another 3 years due to transitional effect, i.e. aggregate period in the same company will be 8 years.

Example 2 : M/s Raj Associates, a Chartered Accountants Audit Firm, is doing audit of M/s. Binaca Limited by last 11 years as on March, 2013 (i.e. existing on or before the date of Commencement of Companies Act, 2013), here a break in the term for a continuous period of two terms of five consecutive years will not be considered as fulfilling the requirement of rotation, Thus, M/s Raj Associates can continue the audit of M/s. Binaca Ltd. for another 3 years due to transitional effect, i.e. aggregate period in the same company will be 14 years.

Student 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 7.3.2 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.

7.3.2 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

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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:

- Individual auditor shall include other individuals or firms whose name or trade mark or brand is used by such individual, if any.
- 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 10 years)	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:

1. Audit Firm shall include other firms whose name or trade mark or brand is used by the firm or any of its partners.
 2. 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.

7.4 Provisions relating to Audit Committee

7.4.1 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

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recommendations of such committee.

It is important to know that in addition to **listed 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.

7.4.2 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:

Provided 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:

Provided that such appointment shall be subject to ratification in every annual general meeting till the sixth such meeting by way of passing of an ordinary resolution.

Explanation.- For the purposes of this rule, it is hereby clarified that, if the appointment is not ratified by the members of the company, the Board of Directors shall appoint another individual or firm as its auditor or auditors after following the procedure laid down in this behalf under the Act.

7.5 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.

7.6 Removal of Auditors

7.6.1 Removal of Auditor before Expiry of Term: 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 thirty days of the resolution passed by the Board.

(3) The company shall hold the general meeting within sixty 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.

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7.6.2 Appointment of Auditor other than retiring Auditor: Section 140 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:

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

7.7 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;

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.*

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 : As per section 141(3)(g) of the Companies Act, 2013, a person shall not be eligible for appointment as an auditor if he 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;

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 = $20 \times 3 = 60$

Number 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.*

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

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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 (Section 141(3)(g) of the Companies Act, 2013).

Provided 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.

Provided further 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.

Provided further 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. The ceiling limit was increased from 45 to 60 numbers in the year 2014. 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.

7.8 Powers and Duties of Auditors

7.8.1 Powers / Rights of Auditors:

- (a) **Right of access to books, etc.** – 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. [Section 143(1)].

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. [Section 143(8)]

Further, the auditor of a company which is a holding company shall also have the right of access to the records of all its subsidiaries in so far as it relates to the consolidation of its financial statements with that of its subsidiaries. [Section 143(1)]

Case Study

While conducting the audit of a limited company for the year ended 31st March, 2014, the auditor wanted to refer to the Minute Books. The Board of Directors refused to show the Minute Books to the auditor.

Provisions and Explanation: Section 143 of the Companies Act, 2013 grants powers to the auditor that every auditor has a right of access, at all times, to the books and account including all statutory records such as minute books, fixed assets register, etc. of the company for conducting the audit. In order to verify actions of the company and to vouch and verify some of the transactions of the company, it is necessary for the auditor to refer to the decisions of the shareholders and/or the directors of the company.

It is, therefore, essential for the auditor to refer to the Minute Books. In the absence of the Minute Books, the auditor may not be able to vouch/verify certain transactions of the company.

Conclusion: In case the directors have refused to produce the Minute Books, the auditor may consider extending the audit procedure as also consider qualifying his report in any appropriate manner.

- (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).

The right of the auditor is to attend any general meeting and to be heard there is only permissive. It is not his duty to attend or to take part in the discussion, further such a right extends only to meeting of the members and not to the meeting of directors. As a rule, it is not necessary for the auditor to exercise his right save in exceptional circumstance, *e.g.*, where he has reason to believe that the directors are concealing deliberately a serious state of affairs from the shareholders or are likely to misinterpret to them some remarks in the audit report. Likewise, it may be advisable for the auditor to attend the meeting with a view to bring to the notice of the shareholders any matter which has come to his knowledge subsequent to his signing the report and if it had been known to him at the time of writing his audit report, he would have drawn up the report differently; or where the accounts have been altered after the report was appended to the accounts. But it should be borne in mind that the auditor cannot escape responsibility for any omission in his report or any inaccuracy in the accounts merely by making an oral statement or giving explanation to members at the annual general meeting. His audit report by itself should be clear, unambiguous and complete.

- (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."

7.8.2. Powers / Rights of Comptroller and Auditor-General of India: In the case of a Government company, the comptroller and Auditor-General of India shall appoint the auditor under sub-section (5) or sub-section (7) of section 139 i.e. appointment of First Auditor or Subsequent Auditor (discuss in the beginning of the chapter)and direct such auditor the manner in which the accounts of the Government company are required to be audited and thereupon the auditor so appointed shall submit a copy of the audit report to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India which, among other things, include the directions, if any, issued by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, the action taken thereon and its impact on

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the accounts and financial statement of the company.

The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India shall within sixty days from the date of receipt of the audit report have a right to,

(a) **conduct a supplementary audit** of the financial statement of the company by such person or persons as he may authorize in this behalf; and for the purposes of such audit, require information or additional information to be furnished to any person or persons, so authorised, on such matters, by such person or persons, and in such form, as the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India may direct; and

(b) **comment upon or supplement such audit report:**

Provided that any comments given by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India upon, or supplement to, the audit report shall be sent by the company to every person entitled to copies of audited financial statements under sub-section (1) of section 136 i.e. every member of the company, to every trustee for the debenture-holder of any debentures issued by the company, and to all persons other than such member or trustee, being the person so entitled and also be placed before the annual general meeting of the company at the same time and in the same manner as the audit report.

Test Audit : Further, without prejudice to the provisions relating to audit and auditor, the Comptroller and Auditor- General of India may, in case of any company covered under sub-section (5) or sub-section (7) of section 139, if he considers necessary, by an order, cause test audit to be conducted of the accounts of such company and the provisions of section 19A of the Comptroller and Auditor-General's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971, shall apply to the report of such test audit. '

7.9 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** : 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 sub-section (2) of section 141 and 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 and shall be open to inspection by any member of the company.
3. **Duty to comply with Auditing Standards** : As per sub section 9 of section 143 of the Companies Act, 2013, every auditor shall comply with the auditing standards. Further as per sub section 10 of section 143 of the Act, the Central Government may prescribe the standards of auditing or any addendum thereto, as recommended by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, constituted under section 3 of the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, in consultation with and after examination of the recommendations made by the National Financial Reporting Authority:

Provided that until any auditing standards are notified, any standard, or standards of auditing specified by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India shall be deemed to be the auditing standards.
4. **Duty to audit report** : As per sub section 3 of section 143, the auditor’s report shall also state –
 - (a) whether he has sought and obtained all the information and explanations which to

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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 system in place and the operating effectiveness of such controls;
 - (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 auditors 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.
5. **Duty to report on frauds:** As per sub section 12 of section 143 of the Companies Act, 2013, if an auditor of a company, in the course of the performance of his duties as auditor, has reason to believe that an offence involving fraud is being or has been

committed against the company by officers or employees of the company, he shall immediately report the matter to the Central Government within such time and in such manner prescribed in rule 13.

Rules 13 of the Companies (Audit and Auditors) Rules, 2014, prescribes that in case the auditor has sufficient reason to believe that an offence involving fraud, is being or has been committed against the company by officers or employees of the company, he shall report the matter to the Central Government immediately but not later than sixty days of his knowledge and after following the procedure indicated herein below:

- (i) auditor shall forward his report to the Board or the Audit Committee, as the case may be, immediately after he comes to knowledge of the fraud, seeking their reply or observations within forty-five days;
- (ii) on receipt of such reply or observations the auditor shall forward his report and the reply or observations of the Board or the Audit Committee alongwith his comments (on such reply or observations of the Board or the Audit Committee) to the Central Government within fifteen days of receipt of such reply or observations;
- (iii) in case the auditor fails to get any reply or observations from the Board or the Audit Committee within the stipulated period of forty-five days, he shall forward his report to the Central Government alongwith a note containing the details of his report that was earlier forwarded to the Board or the Audit Committee for which he failed to receive any reply or observations within the stipulated time.

Further, the report shall be sent to the Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs in a sealed cover by Registered Post with Acknowledgement Due or by Speed post followed by an e-mail in confirmation of the same. This report shall be on the letter-head of the auditor containing postal address, e-mail address and contact number and be signed by the auditor with his seal and shall indicate his Membership Number. The report shall be in the form of a statement as specified in Form ADT-4.

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 provision of this rule 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 one lakh rupees but which may extend to twenty-five lakh rupees)

6. **Duty to report on any other matter specified by Central Government:** The Central Government may, in consultation with the National Financial Reporting Authority, 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.

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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 7.14 branch audit.
8. Duty to state the reason for qualification or negative report: As per sub section 4 of section 143, 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.

7.10 Audit Report

Auditor's Report - An audit report should be clear, specific and complete, in order that anyone who has an occasion to read it may know exactly what is wrong with the company. An Auditor who gives the shareholders "the means of information" in respect of company's financial position, does so, at his peril and runs the serious risk of being held judicially to have failed to discharge his duty (Lindley L.J in Re London and General Bank).

The auditor should review and assess the conclusions drawn from the audit evidence obtained as the basis for the expression of an opinion on the financial statements. This review and assessment involves considering whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with an acceptable financial reporting framework applicable to the entity under audit. It is also necessary to consider whether the financial statements comply with the relevant statutory requirements.

The auditor's report should contain a clear written expression of opinion on the financial statements taken as a whole.

Basic Elements of the Auditor's Report: As per SA 700 "Forming an opinion and reporting on financial statements", the auditor's report includes the following basic elements, ordinarily, in the following layout:

1. **Title** : The auditor's report shall have a title that clearly indicates that it is the report of an independent auditor.
2. **Addressee** : The auditor's report shall be addressed as required by the circumstances of the engagement.
3. **Introductory Paragraph** : The introductory paragraph in the auditor's report shall:
 - (a) Identify the entity whose financial statements have been audited;
 - (b) State that the financial statements have been audited;
 - (c) Identify the title of each statement that comprises the financial statements;
 - (d) Refer to the summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information; and
 - (e) Specify the date or period covered by each financial statement comprising the financial statements.

4. **Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements:**

- (a) This section of the auditor's report describes the responsibilities of those in the organisation that are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The auditor's report need not refer specifically to "management", but shall use the term that is appropriate in the context of the legal and/or regulatory framework applicable to the entity. In case of some entities, the appropriate reference may be to those charged with governance.
- (b) The auditor's report shall include a section with the heading "Management's [or other appropriate term] Responsibility for the Financial Statements".
- (c) The auditor's report shall describe management's responsibility for the preparation of the financial statements in the manner in which that responsibility is described in the terms of the audit engagement. The description shall include an explanation that management is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework; this responsibility includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- (d) Where the financial statements are prepared in accordance with a fair presentation framework, the explanation of management's responsibility for the financial statements in the auditor's report shall refer to "the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements" or "the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view", as appropriate in the circumstances.

5. **Auditor's Responsibility :** The auditor's report shall include a section with the heading "Auditor's Responsibility".

The auditor's report shall state that the responsibility of the auditor is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on the audit.

The auditor's report shall state that the audit was conducted in accordance with Standards on Auditing issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. The auditor's report shall also explain that those Standards require that the auditor comply with ethical requirements and that the auditor plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

The auditor's report shall describe an audit by stating that:

- (a) An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements;

- (b) The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. In circumstances when the auditor also has a responsibility to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control in conjunction with the audit of the financial statements, the auditor shall omit the phrase that the auditor's consideration of internal control is not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control; and
- (c) An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as the overall presentation of the financial statements.

Where the financial statements are prepared in accordance with a fair presentation framework, the description of the audit in the auditor's report shall refer to "the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements" or "the entity's preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view", as appropriate in the circumstances.

The auditor's report shall state whether the auditor believes that the audit evidence the auditor has obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for the auditor's opinion.

6. **Auditor's Opinion:** The auditor's report shall include a section with the heading "Opinion".

[I] When expressing an unmodified opinion on financial statements prepared in accordance with a fair presentation framework, the auditor's opinion shall, unless otherwise required by law or regulation, use one of the following phrases, which are regarded as being equivalent:

- (a) The financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with [the applicable financial reporting framework]; or
- (b) The financial statements give a true and fair view of in accordance with [the applicable financial reporting framework].

[II] When expressing an unmodified opinion on financial statements prepared in accordance with a compliance framework, the auditor's opinion shall be that the financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with [the applicable financial reporting framework].

If the reference to the applicable financial reporting framework, in the auditor's opinion, is not to the Accounting Standards promulgated by the Accounting Standards Board (ASB) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) or Accounting Standards, notified

by the Central Government by publishing the same as the Companies (Accounting Standards) Rules, 2006, or the Accounting Standards for Local Bodies promulgated by the Committee on Accounting Standards for Local Bodies (CASLB) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, as may be applicable, the auditor's opinion shall identify the jurisdiction of origin of the framework.

7. **Other Reporting Responsibilities:** If the auditor addresses other reporting responsibilities in the auditor's report on the financial statements that are in addition to the auditor's responsibility under the SAs to report on the financial statements, these other reporting responsibilities shall be addressed in a separate section in the auditor's report that shall be sub-titled "Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements," or otherwise as appropriate to the content of the section.

If the auditor's report contains a separate section on other reporting responsibilities, the headings, statements and explanations shall be under the sub-title "Report on the Financial Statements." The "Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements" shall follow the "Report on the Financial Statements."

8. **Signature of the Auditor:** The auditor's report shall be signed.
9. **Date of the Auditor's Report:** The auditor's report shall be dated no earlier than the date on which the auditor has obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence on which to base the auditor's opinion on the financial statements, including evidence that:
- (a) All the statements that comprise the financial statements, including the related notes, have been prepared; and
 - (b) Those with the recognised authority have asserted that they have taken responsibility for those financial statements.
10. **Place of Signature:** The auditor's report shall name specific location, which is ordinarily the city where the audit report is signed.

SA 705 deals with the auditor's responsibility to issue an appropriate report in circumstances when, in forming an opinion in accordance with SA 700 (Revised), the auditor concludes that a modification to the auditor's opinion on the financial statements is necessary. The succinct requirements of this SA 705 are given below:

Types of Modified Opinions:

This SA establishes three types of modified opinions, namely:

- (i) a qualified opinion,
- (ii) an adverse opinion, and
- (iii) a disclaimer of opinion.

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The decision regarding which type of modified opinion is appropriate depends upon:

- (a) The nature of the matter giving rise to the modification, that is, whether the financial statements are materially misstated or, in the case of an inability to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence, may be materially misstated; and
- (b) The auditor's judgment about the pervasiveness of the effects or possible effects of the matter on the financial statements.

7.10.1 Unqualified Report: An unqualified opinion should be expressed when the auditor concludes that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework used for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements. An unqualified opinion indicates, implicitly, that any changes in the accounting principles or in the method of their application, and the effects thereof, have been properly determined and disclosed in the financial statements. An unqualified opinion also indicates that:

- (a) the financial statements have been prepared using the generally accepted accounting principles, which have been consistently applied;
- (b) the financial statements comply with relevant statutory requirements and regulations; and
- (c) there is adequate disclosure of all material matters relevant to the proper presentation of the financial information, subject to statutory requirements, where applicable.

7.10.2 Modified Reports: An auditor's report is considered to be modified when it includes:

- (a) Matters That Do Not Affect the Auditor's Opinion
 - ✓ emphasis of matter
 - ✓ Other Matter
- (b) Matters That Do Affect the Auditor's Opinion
 - ✓ qualified opinion
 - ✓ disclaimer of opinion
 - ✓ adverse opinion

The auditor shall modify the opinion in the auditor's report when:

- (i) The auditor concludes that, based on the audit evidence obtained, the financial statements as a whole are not free from material misstatement; or
- (ii) The auditor is unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to conclude that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement.

Uniformity in the form and content of each type of modified report will enhance the user's understanding of such reports.

(a) Matters That Do Not Affect the Auditor's Opinion:

(1) Emphasis of Matter paragraph: Sometimes the auditor considers it necessary to draw users' attention to a matter presented or disclosed in the financial statements that, in the auditor's judgment, is of such importance that it is fundamental to users' understanding of the financial statements, the auditor shall include an Emphasis of Matter paragraph in the auditor's report provided the auditor has obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence that the matter is not materially misstated in the financial statements.

The Examples of circumstances where the auditor may consider it necessary to include an Emphasis of Matter paragraph are:

- An uncertainty relating to the future outcome of an exceptional litigation or regulatory action.
- Early application (where permitted) of a new accounting standard that has a pervasive effect on the financial statements in advance of its effective date.
- A major catastrophe that has had, or continues to have, a significant effect on the entity's financial position.

A widespread use of Emphasis of Matter paragraphs diminishes the effectiveness of the auditor's communication of such matters. Additionally, to include more information in an Emphasis of Matter paragraph than is presented or disclosed in the financial statements may imply that the matter has not been appropriately presented or disclosed; accordingly, it limits the use of an Emphasis of Matter paragraph to matters presented or disclosed in the financial statements

Such a paragraph shall refer only to information presented or disclosed in the financial statements. The inclusion of an Emphasis of Matter paragraph in the auditor's report does not affect the auditor's opinion. An Emphasis of Matter paragraph is not a substitute for either:

- (i) The auditor expressing a qualified opinion or an adverse opinion, or disclaiming an opinion, when required by the circumstances of a specific audit engagement; or
- (ii) Disclosures in the financial statements that the applicable financial reporting framework requires management to make.

When the auditor includes an Emphasis of Matter paragraph in the auditor's report, the auditor shall:

- (i) Include it immediately after the Opinion paragraph in the auditor's report;
- (ii) Use the heading "Emphasis of Matter", or other appropriate heading;
- (iii) Include in the paragraph a clear reference to the matter being emphasised and to where relevant disclosures that fully describe the matter can be found in the financial statements; and
- (iv) Indicate that the auditor's opinion is not modified in respect of the matter emphasised.

(2) Other Matter Paragraphs in the Auditor's Report: If the auditor considers it necessary to communicate a matter other than those that are presented or disclosed in the financial statements that, in the auditor's judgment, is relevant to users' understanding of the audit, the auditor's responsibilities or the auditor's report and this is not prohibited by law or regulation, the auditor shall do so in a paragraph in the auditor's report, with the heading "Other Matter", or other appropriate heading. The auditor shall include this paragraph immediately after the Opinion paragraph and any Emphasis of Matter paragraph, or elsewhere in the auditor's report if the content of the Other Matter paragraph is relevant to the Other Reporting Responsibilities section.

(b) Matters that Do Affect the Auditor's Opinion: An auditor may not be able to express an unqualified opinion when either of the following circumstances exists and, in the auditor's judgment, the effect of the matter is or may be material to the financial statements:

- (i) there is a limitation on the scope of the auditor's work; or
- (ii) there is a disagreement with management regarding the acceptability of the accounting policies selected, the method of their application or the adequacy of financial statement disclosures.

The circumstances described in (a) could lead to a qualified opinion or a disclaimer of opinion. The circumstances described in (b) could lead to a qualified opinion or an adverse opinion.

(1) A Qualified Opinion: The auditor shall express a qualified opinion when:

- (i) The auditor, having obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence, concludes that misstatements, individually or in the aggregate, are material, but not pervasive, to the financial statements; or
- (ii) The auditor is unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence on which to base the opinion, but the auditor concludes that the possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements, if any, could be material but not pervasive.

(2) A Disclaimer of Opinion: The auditor shall disclaim an opinion when the auditor is unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence on which to base the opinion, and the auditor concludes that the possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements, if any, could be both material and pervasive. The auditor shall disclaim an opinion when, in extremely rare circumstances involving multiple uncertainties, the auditor concludes that, notwithstanding having obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding each of the individual uncertainties, it is not possible to form an opinion on the financial statements due to the potential interaction of the uncertainties and their possible cumulative effect on the financial statements.

(3) An Adverse Opinion: The auditor shall express an adverse opinion when the auditor, having obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence, concludes that misstatements, individually or in the aggregate, are both material and pervasive to the financial statements. Whenever the auditor expresses an opinion that is other than unqualified, a clear description of all the substantive reasons should be included in the report and,

unless impracticable, a quantification of the possible effect(s), individually and in aggregate, on the financial statements should be mentioned in the auditor's report. In circumstances where it is not practicable to quantify the effect of modifications made in the audit report accurately, the auditor may do so, on the basis of estimates made by the management after carrying out such audit tests as are possible and clearly indicate the fact that the figures are based on management estimates. Ordinarily, this information would be set out in a separate paragraph preceding the opinion or disclaimer of opinion and may include a reference to a more extensive discussion, if any, in a note to the financial statements.

The table below illustrates how the auditor's judgment about the nature of the matter giving rise to the modification, and the pervasiveness of its effects or possible effects on the financial statements, affects the type of opinion to be expressed.

Nature of Matter Giving Rise to the Modification	Auditor's Judgment about the Pervasiveness of the Effects or Possible Effects on the Financial Statements	
	Material but Not Pervasive	Material and Pervasive
Financial statements are materially misstated	Qualified opinion	Adverse opinion
Inability to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence	Qualified opinion	Disclaimer of opinion

Circumstances That May Result in Other Than an Unqualified Opinion

Limitation on Scope: If, after accepting the engagement, the auditor becomes aware that management has imposed a limitation on the scope of the audit that the auditor considers likely to result in the need to express a qualified opinion or to disclaim an opinion on the financial statements, the auditor shall request that management remove the limitation.

If management refuses to remove the limitation referred to in paragraph 11, the auditor shall communicate the matter to those charged with governance and determine whether it is possible to perform alternative procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence.

If the auditor is unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence, the auditor shall determine the implications as follows:

- (a) If the auditor concludes that the possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements, if any, could be material but not pervasive, the auditor shall qualify the opinion; or
- (b) If the auditor concludes that the possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements, if any, could be both material and pervasive so that a qualification of the opinion would be inadequate to communicate the gravity of the

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situation, the auditor shall:

- (i) Resign from the audit, where practicable and not prohibited by law or regulation; or
- (ii) If resignation from the audit before issuing the auditor's report is not practicable or possible, disclaim an opinion on the financial statements.

If the auditor resigns as contemplated by above paragraph, before resigning, the auditor shall communicate to those charged with governance any matters regarding misstatements identified during the audit that would have given rise to a modification of the opinion.

Disagreement with Management: The auditor may disagree with management about matters such as the acceptability of accounting policies selected, the method of their application, or the adequacy of disclosures in the financial statements. If such disagreements are material to the financial statements, the auditor should express a qualified or an adverse opinion.

Other Considerations Relating to an Adverse Opinion or Disclaimer of Opinion

When the auditor considers it necessary to express an adverse opinion or disclaim an opinion on the financial statements as a whole, the auditor's report shall not also include an unmodified opinion with respect to the same financial reporting framework on a single financial statement or one or more specific elements, accounts or items of a financial statement. To include such an unmodified opinion in the same report in these circumstances would contradict the auditor's adverse opinion or disclaimer of opinion on the financial statements as a whole.

7.11 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 Revised Schedule VI or any other provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 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, 1956, 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, 1956, 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.

Examples of Disclosures

Where a partnership firm does not make adequate disclosures regarding the revaluation of its fixed assets.

"During the year, the enterprise revalued its land and buildings. The revalued amounts of land and buildings are adequately disclosed in the balance sheet. However, the method adopted to compute the revalued amounts has not been disclosed, which is contrary to Accounting Standard (AS) 10, 'Accounting for Fixed Assets' issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

We report that....."

7.12 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

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- (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.

With a view to providing a clear idea of the professional responsibility undertaken by the joint auditors, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India had issued a statement on the Responsibility of Joint Auditors which now stands withdrawn with the issuance of SA 299, "Responsibility of Joint Auditors" w.e.f. April, 1996. It requires that where joint auditors are appointed, they should, by mutual discussion, divide the audit work among themselves. The division of work would usually be in terms of audit of identifiable units or specified areas. In some cases, due to the nature of the business of the entity under audit, such a division of work may not be possible. In such situations, the division of work may be with reference to items of assets or liabilities or income or expenditure or with reference to periods of time. Certain areas of work, owing to their importance or owing to the nature of the work involved, would often not be divided and would be covered by all the joint auditors. Further, it states that in respect of audit work divided among the joint auditors, each joint auditor is responsible only for the work allocated to him, whether or not he has prepared a separate report on the work performed by him. On the other hand, all the joint auditors are jointly and severally responsible –

- (a) in respect of the audit work which is not divided among the joint auditors and is carried out by all of them;
- (b) in respect of decisions taken by all the joint auditors concerning the nature, timing or extent of the audit procedures to be performed by any of the joint auditors. It may, however, be clarified that all the joint auditors are responsible only in respect of the

appropriateness of the decisions concerning the nature, timing or extent of the audit procedures agreed upon among them; proper execution of these audit procedures is the separate and specific responsibility of the joint auditor concerned;

- (c) in respect of matters which are brought to the notice of the joint auditors by any one of them and on which there is an agreement among the joint auditors;
- (d) for examining that the financial statements of the entity comply with the disclosure requirements of the relevant statute; and
- (e) for ensuring that the audit report complies with the requirements of the relevant statute.

If any matters of the nature referred above are brought to the attention of the entity or other joint auditors by an auditor after the audit report has been submitted, the other joint auditors would not be responsible for those matters.

7.13 Audit of Branch Office Accounts

As per section 128 of the Companies Act, 2013 : (1) 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:

Provided 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 seven days thereof, file with the Registrar a notice in writing giving the full address of that other place:

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

(2) Where a company has a branch office in India or outside India, it shall be deemed to have complied with the provisions of (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:

Provided 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 areas 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.

7.14 Cost Audit

It 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.

Cost Audit: Cost Audit 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 the 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:

Provided that the Central Government shall, before issuing such order in respect of any class of companies regulated under a special Act, consult the regulatory body constituted or established under such special Act.

If the Central Government is of the opinion, that it is necessary to do so, it may, by order, direct that the audit of cost records of class of companies, which are covered under subsection (1) and which have a net worth of such amount as may be prescribed or a turnover of such amount as may be prescribed, shall be conducted in the manner specified in the order.

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

Provided that no person appointed under section 139 as an auditor of the company shall be appointed for conducting the audit of cost records:

Provided further 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 and Works Accountants of India, constituted under the Cost and Works Accountants Act, 1959, with the approval of the Central Government).

Appointment 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 in practice, 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;

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- (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 in practice 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:

Provided that the report on the audit of cost records shall be submitted by the cost accountant in practice to the Board of Directors of the company.

Submission of Cost Audit Report: A company shall within thirty 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. If, after considering the cost audit report referred to under this section 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.

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 (Section 147 is discussed separately in para 7.16);
- (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. (Section 147 is discussed separately in para 7.16);

7.15 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:

Provided 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 one lakh rupees but which may extend to twenty-five lakh rupees.

- (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 any other persons for loss arising out of incorrect or misleading statements of particulars made in his audit report.
- (3A) 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.
- (4) 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 criminal as provided in this Act or in any other law for the time being in force, for such act shall be the partner or partners concerned of the audit firm and of the firm jointly and severally.