
UNIT 2 SECRETARIAL FUNCTIONS IN ORGANISATIONS

Structure

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the status and functions of a
 - secretary of an association or a club
 - secretary of a co-operative society
 - secretary of a local body
 - secretary of a government department.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding unit you learnt about the nature, scope and importance of secretarial work, the role, qualifications and duties of a secretary; and the position of a private secretary. In this unit you will learn about the status, role and functions of secretaries of different types of organisations such as an association or a club, a co-operative society, a local body and a government department.

2.2 SECRETARY OF AN ASSOCIATION OR A CLUB

Trade and professional associations, trade unions, cultural institutions, charitable institutions, religious institutions, sports clubs, etc., usually appoint a whole-time paid secretary to conduct the day to day activities of the organisation. A secretary of such organisations acts as an agent and advisor of the managing committee. These associations may also appoint, nominate or elect an Honorary General Secretary from amongst their own members, subject to their respective bye-laws. The Honorary General Secretary does not draw any salary, but he is provided various perks and facilities so as to carry out his duties efficiently.

Role and Functions

Ordinarily, the secretary of an association or a club performs the following functions:

- 1) He plays the role of an executive officer, agent and adviser of the managing committee.
- 2) The secretary is the chief executive officer of the association. In this capacity he undertakes all administrative functions such as recruitment and supervision of the office staff, correspondence, receipts and payments of money, preparing statement of accounts and arranging their audit.

- 3) The secretary, as the chief officer of the association or club, supervises and conducts its activities according to the aims and objects. He looks after the registration of new members, collection of subscription and donations, purchase and maintenance of equipments, and arrangement of parties and social gatherings.
- 4) The secretary is the convenor of all meetings. He calls the meetings of the general body as well as the managing committee. In this connection, he issues notices and agenda, makes arrangements for the meetings, prepares documents to be placed before the meeting, records the proceedings and circulates the minutes. He also looks after the follow up action.
- 5) The secretary is an agent and mouthpiece of the managing committee of the association. He executes the decisions of the committee, acts as a public relations officer, and issues press statements and notifications.
- 6) The secretary is the main advisor of the managing committee. On all matters relating to framing of rules and their amendments, actions to be taken for infringement of rules by members, or on any other legal matter, he has to give his expert opinion to the best of his knowledge.
- 7) He is the custodian of properties and investments of the association or club. He should ensure that they are properly maintained and kept secured from any misuse.
- 8) As the PRO of his association, a secretary should cultivate the goodwill of outsiders by giving them the most cordial treatment on all occasions.

2.3 SECRETARY OF A CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

A co-operative society is a voluntary association of persons having common needs and interest, who come together for self-help and mutual aid, promoting their common interest. Co-operative credit society, consumers' co-operative society and co-operative housing society are some of the common types of co-operatives. These societies are governed by the Co-operative Societies Act, of 1912 (a Central Government legislation) and the Co-operative Societies Acts and Rules framed by different State Governments. The organisational structure of co-operative societies are more or less similar in all the States.

Generally, every co-operative society has three office bearers and managing committee as provided for in its Bye Laws. The office bearers are (i) The President, (ii) The Secretary, and (iii) The Treasurer. Usually, all these office bearers and the members of the managing committee work on honorary basis. But, if the society is a large one, it can employ a whole-time paid secretary. This secretary may be appointed from amongst the members or he can be an outsider.

Status and Functions

The secretary of a co-operative society is primarily an office executive but he also acts as an agent and adviser. He should be well acquainted with the Co-operative Societies Act, office organisation and procedures. He should be tactful and hardworking as he is expected to perform a variety of functions which are enumerated below:

- 1) He has to manage and supervise the routine office work including correspondence, maintenance of records, registers and accounts and preparation of statements and returns to be submitted to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.
- 2) He issues notices regarding the meetings, makes arrangements for holding them, records the proceedings and drafts the minutes thereof. He also makes arrangements for the annual election of the managing committee. The secretary is generally present at all meetings, produces relevant papers required at the meetings, and signs the minutes of meetings along with the Chairman.
- 3) He acts as the agent and mouthpiece of the managing committee in its dealings with the staff, shareholders, and the general public. He is authorised to receive all money on behalf of the society and issue receipts therefor, to operate bank

accounts subject to the conditions laid down by the by-laws, and to pay all working expenses.

- 4) He also advises the managing committee on legal and other matters relating to the society.
- 5) He performs, all other duties concerning the society's work which may be assigned to him by the managing committee from time to time. For instance, the secretary may be required by the Managing Committee to conduct investigation on any matter and report on the findings thereof.

It should be noted that the secretary of a co-operative society is accountable for all his deeds to the managing committee and, therefore, he must convene the meetings of the managing committee after regular intervals so as to keep the members duly posted with the works of society.

Check Your Progress A

- 1 Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) The secretary of an association as the chief executive officer does not have to report to any other authority about his actions.
 - ii) The secretary of a club presides over the meeting of members.
 - iii) The secretary of a co-operative society should be well acquainted with office organisation and management.
 - iv) Only a member can be appointed as the secretary of a co-operative society, not an outsider.
 - v) The secretary of an association is the mouthpiece of the managing committee of the association.
- 2 Fill in the blanks selecting the appropriate words from those given within brackets:
 - i) The secretary of a club undertakes all and functions. (clerical, administrative, legal, supervisory).
 - ii) The secretary of an association is the of all properties of the association. (caretaker, custodian, protector, user).
 - iii) The secretary of a co-operative society advises the managing committee on matters. (operational, legal, administrative).
 - iv) The bank account of a co-operative society is generally operated by its subject to the bye-laws. (President, Secretary, Manager).

2.4 SECRETARY OF A LOCAL BODY

Panchayats, Municipal Boards, Municipal Corporations and District Boards are known as local bodies. They are established in accordance with legislations of State Governments with a view to provide educational, social, medical and other civic amenities to the citizens of their respective areas. Under the provision of the statutes, each local body appoints a secretary who is a whole-time paid employee. He is one of the most important officials of the local body. He enjoys extensive powers, though he acts under the guidance and direction of the chairman of the body.

The secretary of a local body is essentially an executive officer who coordinates and supervises all office activities such as correspondence, maintenance of records, control over staff and accounts. He acts as a link between the authorities (Chairman or President) and the staff and outsiders. He is responsible for the preparation of the annual budget estimates, statements of accounts and annual reports of the local body.

He also convenes the meetings and looks after all works connected with the meetings like issue of notice, preparation of agenda, recording the proceedings, drafting minutes, and helping the chairman in conducting the meetings. Later on, he oversees the implementation of decisions taken in such meetings.

He may also undertake special duties which may be entrusted to him by the local body as and when it thinks fit. Besides, he may have to tender advice on legal and

2.5 SECRETARY OF A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT

In India, under the administrative set up of government, the executive head of a department is known as Secretary. He is the top civil servant attached to a ministry of the government and is directly responsible to the minister in-charge, e.g. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Secretary to the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, etc. Depending upon the size of a Ministry or Department, besides the Secretary, there may be civil servants designated as Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary, constituting the administrative hierarchy in the department or Ministry and carrying out various functions at different levels. In the organisation of Central or State Government, the Secretary is usually a senior civil servant of the L.A.S. cadre, who heads the secretariat of the Ministry, or department within a Ministry.

In some countries, the Minister is designated as Secretary. In the United States, for example, the political executives in the President's cabinet are known as Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, and so on. They may be assisted by other political executives like Under-Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Special Secretaries. Permanent executives attached to the political executives are the Bureau Chiefs who are civil servants. In U.K. Ministers are designated as Secretary of State, e.g. Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State for Defence, and others who constitute the Cabinet under the Prime Minister. Members of the Cabinet are political executives who may be assisted by other political executives designated as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. The civil servants are permanent executives. They are designated as Under Secretary, Assistant Under-Secretary and Assistant Secretary.

2.5.1 Appointment

Secretaries of Government departments are generally appointed from among those who have been found qualified for such positions by the Union Public Service Commission and Public Service Commissions of different States. They have to successfully complete the requisite training and their postings are later based on seniority, service record and experience. Those who have been selected for All India Services are allotted to the Central and State Government Departments. They are also transferable from the Centre to the States and vice versa. Posting of secretaries in the Ministries and Departments of the Central Government are made by the Cabinet Secretary who heads the Cabinet Secretariat under the Prime Minister. Chief Secretary of the State Government, as head of the State Government Secretariat, makes the posting of secretaries in the State Government Ministries and Departments.

2.5.2 Administrative and Advisory Functions

The functions of the secretary of a government department can be described under two broad heads, viz.,

- a) Administrative and Executive Functions; and
- b) Advisory Functions.

a) Administrative and Executive Functions

- i) Overall control over day to day administration of the department with the assistance of subordinate officers.
- ii) Issue of directives, orders and circulars for the guidance of staff.
- iii) Execution of policies and decisions of the Minister or the Cabinet.
- iv) Attending meetings, conferences, and seminars concerning the department.
- v) Coordinating the activities of the department with those of allied departments.
- vi) Conducting and supervising investigation work relating to a proposal, scheme, or plan, and reporting on it to the Minister.

vii) Supervising the collection and collection of data for policy making and decisions.

b) Advisory Functions

- i) Keeping the Minister informed about the working of the department.
- ii) Advising the Minister on the suitability of new proposals, schemes, plans, and projects.
- iii) Supplying all documents and information to the Minister which may be required by him at the session of Parliament or Assembly.
- iv) Assisting the Minister to prepare the answers to the questions raised in the legislative body while in session.

Check Your Progress B

- 1 Fill in the blanks selecting appropriate words from those given within brackets:
 - i) The secretary of a local body is an executive officer who and all office activities.
(performs, supervises, directs, co-ordinates).
 - ii) The secretary of a local body acts as a link between the chairman and and
(members, outsiders, staff, government).
 - iii) The secretary of a Government department is directly responsible to the (Minister, Secretary of the legislative assembly, leader of the ruling party in the assembly).
 - iv) Co-ordinating the activities of one Government department with those of allied departments is a function of
(The Secretary, Minister, Chief Minister).
 - v) Answers to questions raised in the legislature are drafted by the of the concerned department.
(Secretary, Minister, Private Secretary to the Minister).
- 2 Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
 - i) The secretary of a Government department is appointed on the basis of seniority, service record and experience.
 - ii) It is the Accountant, not the Secretary of a local body, who prepares the annual budget estimates.
 - iii) Collection and collation of factual data for decision-making by the Minister are the responsibility of the chief of the statistical division, not that of the secretary of the department.
 - iv) The secretary of the department has to keep the Minister informed about the working of the department.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

Ordinarily the secretary of trade or professional association or club is appointed as a whole-time official to conduct the day to day activities of the organisation. Associations may appoint, nominate or elect an Honorary General Secretary from among the members. But a paid secretary is also appointed to undertake administrative functions. He performs the role of executive officer, agent and adviser of the managing committee. His functions include: recruitment and supervision of the office staff, correspondence, receipts and payments of money, maintaining accounts and arranging audit of accounts, registration of new members, collection of subscription and donations, purchase of equipments, arranging parties and social meets, convening meetings, executing the decisions of the managing committee, and advising the committee on all administrative or legal matters.

Every Co-operative Society must have a Secretary as one of its office bearers. The secretary may be appointed from among the members or he can be an outsider. If the co-operative society is a large one, a whole-time paid secretary is generally appointed. The secretary is primarily an office executive but he also acts as an agent

and adviser. He has to manage and supervise the routine office work as well as prepare statements and returns to be submitted to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. He issues notices for meetings and makes all arrangements in that connection, records the proceedings and drafts the minutes. He acts as the agent and mouthpiece of the managing committee and is accountable for all his actions to the managing committee.

Local Bodies like Panchayats, Municipal Boards, Municipal Corporations and District Boards are established under State legislation, which provides for the appointment of a secretary. The secretary of a local body is a whole-time paid employee. He is the most important official and enjoys extensive powers though he acts under the guidance and direction of the chairman of the body. The secretary co-ordinates and supervises all office activities, prepares the annual budget estimates, statements of accounts and annual report of the local body. He also convenes all meetings, records the proceedings and drafts the minutes of meetings, besides undertaking special duties which may be entrusted to him by the local body.

The executive head of a Government department or Ministry in India is designated as Secretary. He is the top civil servant attached to a Ministry and is directly responsible to the Minister in-charge. Besides the Secretary, there may be other civil servants designated as Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Under Secretary constituting the administrative hierarchy in the department or Ministry to carry out various functions at different levels. In some countries, the Minister is designated as Secretary. The civil servants who are permanent executives are designated differently.

In India, secretaries of government departments are appointed from among those who have been found qualified by the Union and State Public Service Commissions. Their postings are based on seniority, service record and experience. Posting of Secretaries of Central Government departments is made by the Cabinet Secretary, while the posting of Secretaries of State Government departments is made by the Chief Secretary of the State Government Secretariat.

The functions of the Secretary of a government department include administrative and executive functions as well as advisory functions. A Secretary is required to maintain overall control over day to day administration of the department, execute the policies of the Minister or the cabinet, attend meetings, conferences and seminars concerning his department, keep the Minister informed about the working of the department, advise the minister on the suitability of new schemes, plans and projects, supply all documents which may be required by the Minister at the session of the legislature, and assist him in preparing answers to questions raised in the legislative body while in session.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Civil Servant : Permanent executive serving in a government department or Ministry.

Club : Voluntary association of persons for social, political, athletic, sports, or recreational ends.

Co-operative Society : A voluntary association of persons having common needs and interest, who come together for self-help and mutual aid.

Local Body : Elected body for local government e.g. Panchayat, District Board, Municipal Board, Municipal Committee, etc.

Professional Association : Association of people engaged in professional activity, e.g. lawyers, accountants, medical practitioners, etc.

Secretariat : Office of the secretary/minister.

Trade Association : Association of traders and trading firms voluntarily established to protect and promote common interest of members.

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A 1 i) False ii) False iii) True iv) False v) True

- 2 i) administrative, supervisory ii) custodian iii) legal iv) secretary
- B 1 i) Supervises, co-ordinates ii) staff, outsiders iii) minister
iv) the secretary v) secretary
- 2 i) True ii) False iii) False iv) True

2.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the status of the secretary of a trade or professional association? What functions does he perform?
- 2) Enumerate the functions and duties of the secretary of a co-operative society. Discuss with special reference to his functions relating to meetings.
- 3) The secretary of a local body is the most important official. Describe the role of the secretary of a local body as office executive.
- 4) Who are eligible to be appointed as secretary of a government department? Briefly explain the administrative and executive functions of the secretary of a government department.
- 5) How is the secretary of a government department appointed? Discuss his functions as an executive and an advisor.

Note : These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.