

ABSTRACT

The role and responsibilities of the company secretary may not be so well known as that of the other profession like the accountants, advocates and solicitors, architects and doctors. It is also not well defined in company legislation nor does the Act in its present state distinguish between full time and professional company secretary. Thus the role of a company secretary in this context is somewhat confusing to outside parties as far as the scope of responsibilities is concerned. From the traditional role as a mere keeper of company's documents, in recent years, the role of company secretary calls for professional knowledge and skill. Today, the recognition to the status of the company secretary is strengthened with the amendments to the Companies Act requiring them to be either a member of a professional bodies or license by the Registrar of Companies and is further legally formalised as an officer of a company.

The present study attempts to explore in details in the company secretarial function in Malaysia public listed companies.

Primary data was collected through five-page self-administered questionnaire. The sample consisted of 56 company secretaries of public listed companies in KLSE. The research is only confined to respondents in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor areas. Majority of the respondents was from companies listed in the main board. Industrial sector bagged the highest responded rate.

The literature on the work of the company secretary tends to treat all public companies as alike, and, consequently, presents a common perspective on the secretarial role. Also, the concern of the literature is typically external to the company, focusing on issues such as company law, corporate regulation and good professional practice.

By contrast, the research emphasised the strikingly different ways in which the role can be fulfilled, varying from a full time, a highly influential officer of the company, to an external agency fulfilling the minimum requirements.

The survey produced a wealth of information on the types of company involved. The questionnaire survey also produced a profile of company secretaries in public listed companies and outlined for the first time in Malaysia the extent of involvement of their duties. Relationship between the employment status of the company secretaries and the duties involved were also analysed. Principal issues raised by respondents were also discussed. Areas of major concern included the effects of demands for better corporate governance and the status of company secretary and professionalism of the company secretaryship.

Possible implications and recommendations for company secretaries, for chairmen and board members and for the MAICSA were developed. Finally, the study ends with recommendation for further research.