INDEX

INTRODUCTION

Accounting is a system meant for measuring business activities, processing of information into reports and making the findings available to decision-makers. The documents, which communicate these findings about the performance of an organisation in monetary terms, are called financial statements. Usually, accounting is understood as the Language of Business. However, a business may have a lot of aspects which may not be of financial nature.

As such, a better way to understand accounting could be to call it The Language of Financial Decisions. The better the understanding of the language, the better is the management of financial aspects of living. Many aspects of our lives are based on accounting, personal financial planning, investments, income-tax, loans, etc. We have different roles to perform in life-the role of a student, of a family head, of a manager, of an investor, etc.

The knowledge of accounting is an added advantage in performing different roles. However, we shall limit our scope of discussion to a business organisation and the various financial aspects of such an organisation. When we focus our thoughts on a business organisation, many questions (is our business profitable, should a new product line be introduced, are the sales sufficient, etc.) strike our mind. To answer questions of such nature, we need to have information generated through the accounting process.

The people who take policy decisions and frame business plans use such information. All business organisations work in an ever-changing dynamic environment. Any new programme of the organisation or of its competitor will affect the business. Accounting serves as an effective tool for measuring the financial pulse rate of the company. It is a continuous cycle of measurement of results and reporting of results to decisionmakers Just like arithmetic is a procedural element of mathematics, book keeping is the procedural element of accounting, shows how an accounting system operates in business and how the flow of information occurs. People make decision Business transactions occur Accountants prepare reports to show the results of business operations

MEANING AND FEATURES OF ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

For searching the goals of the accounting profession and for expanding knowledge in this field, a logical and useful set of principles and procedures are to be developed. We know that while driving our vehicles, follow a standard traffic rules. Without adhering traffic rules, there would be much chaos on the road.

Similarly, some principles apply to accounting. Thus, the accounting profession cannot reach its goals in the absence of a set rules to guide the efforts of accountants and auditors. The rules and principles of accounting are commonly referred to as the conceptual framework of accounting.

Accounting principles have been defined by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants as "The body of doctrines commonly associated with the theory and procedure of accounting serving as an explanation of current practices and as a guide for the selection of conventions or procedures where alternatives exists. Rules governing the formation of accounting axioms and the principles derived from them have arisen from common experience, historical precedent statements by individuals and professional bodies and regulations of Governmental agencies". According to Hendriksen (1997), accounting theory may be defined as logical reasoning in the form of a set of broad principles that

i) provide a general frame of reference by which accounting practice can be evaluated, and

ii) guide the development of new practices and procedures. Theory may also be used to explain existing practices to obtain a better understanding of them. But the most important goal of accounting theory should be to provide a coherent set of logical principles that form the general frame of reference for the evaluation and development of sound accounting practices.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) has advocated the use of the word "Principle" in the sense in which it means "rule of action". It discusses the generally accepted accounting principles as follows:

Financial statements are the product of a process in which a large volume of data about aspects of the economic activities of an enterprise are accumulated, analyzed and reported. This process should be carried out in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

These principles represent the most current consensus about how accounting information should be recorded, what information should be disclosed, how it should be disclosed, and which financial statement should be prepared. Thus, generally accepted principles and standards provide a common financial language to enable informed users to read and interpret financial statements.

Generally accepted accounting principles encompass the conventions, rules and procedures necessary to define accepted accounting practice at a particular time......