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Theory Base of Accounting

Accounting Period Concept

Accounting period refers to the span of time at the end of which the financial statements of an enterprise are prepared, to know whether it has earned profits or incurred losses during that period and what exactly is the position of its assets and liabilities at the end of that period. Such information is required by different users at regular interval for various purposes, as no firm can wait for long to know its financial results as various decisions are to be taken at regular intervals on the basis of such information. The financial statements are, therefore, prepared at regular interval, normally after a period of one year, so that timely information is made available to the users. This interval of time is called accounting period. The Companies Act 2013 and the Income Tax Act require that the income statements should be prepared annually. However, in case of certain situations, preparation of interim financial statements become necessary. For example, at the time of retirement of a partner, the accounting period can be different from twelve months period. Apart from these companies whose shares are listed on the stock exchange, are required to publish quarterly results to ascertain the profitability and financial position at the end of every three months period.

Cost Concept

The cost concept requires that all assets are recorded in the book of accounts at their purchase price, which includes cost of acquisition, transportation, installation and making the asset ready to use. To illustrate, on June 2005, an old plant was purchased for Rs. 50 lakh by Shiva Enterprise, which is into the business of manufacturing detergent powder. An amount of Rs. 10,000 was spent on transporting the plant to the factory site. In addition, Rs. 15,000 was spent on repairs for bringing the plant into running position and Rs. 25,000 on its installation. The total amount at which the plant will be recorded in the books of account would be the sum of all these, i.e. Rs. 50,50,000. The concept of cost is historical in nature as it is something, which has been paid on the date of acquisition and does not change year after year. For example, if a building has been purchased by a firm for Rs. 2.5 crore, the purchase price will remain the same for all years to come, though its market value may change. Adoption of historical cost brings in objectivity in recording as the cost of acquisition is easily verifiable from the purchase documents. The market value basis, on the other hand, is not reliable as the value of an asset may change from time to time, making the comparisons between one period to another rather difficult. However, an important limitation of the historical cost basis is that it does not show the true worth of the business and may lead to hidden profits. During the period of rising prices, the market value or the cost at (which the assets can be replaced are higher than the value at which these are shown in the book of accounts) leading to hidden profits.

Dual Aspect Concept

Dual aspect is the foundation or basic principle of accounting. It provides the very basis for recording business transactions into the book of accounts. This concept states that every transaction has a dual or two-fold effect and should therefore be recorded at two places. In other words, at least two accounts will be involved in recording a transaction. This can be explained with the help of an example. Ram started business by investing in a sum of Rs. 50,00,000 The amount of money brought in by Ram will result in an increase in the assets (cash) of business by Rs. 50,00,000. At the same time, the owner's equity or capital will also increase by an equal amount. It may be seen that the two items that got affected by this transaction are cash and capital account. Let us take another example to understand this point further. Suppose the firm purchase goods worth Rs. 10,00,000 on cash. This will increase an asset (stock of goods) on the one hand and reduce another asset (cash) on the other. Similarly, if the firm purchases a machine worth Rs. 30,00,000 on credit from Reliable Industries. This will increase an asset (machinery) on the one hand and a liability (creditor) on the other. This type of dual effect takes place in case of all business transactions and is also known as duality principle. The duality principle is commonly expressed in terms of fundamental Accounting Equation, which is as follows :

$$\text{Assets} = \text{Liabilities} + \text{Capital}$$