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Towards Ethical Corporates: The Convergence of SFIO Action and Company Secretarial Oversight

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the statutory and operational framework of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under the Companies Act, 2013, and critically analyses the expanding role of Company Secretaries (CS) in corporate fraud prevention, compliance, and investigation. As key governance professionals, CSs are not only responsible for regulatory adherence but also act as ethical stewards within their organizations. Through legal provisions, case law, and practical scenarios, the article evaluates the intersection of enforcement via SFIO and internal compliance led by CSs, offering recommendations to enhance the synergy between corporate governance and fraud investigation mechanisms.

Keywords: *Company Secretary, Compliance, Responsibility for Slippage, SFIO, Standards of ICSI*

I. INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of corporate governance mechanisms hinges on robust compliance and timely detection of fraudulent practices. The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), established under the Companies Act, 2013, serves as India's apex body for probing corporate fraud. Parallel, Company Secretaries (CS) serve as key governance professionals responsible for ensuring legal compliance, ethical conduct, and regulatory communication.

In the wake of several high-profile corporate scams, such as the Satyam scandal and the IL&FS crisis, the Indian corporate ecosystem witnessed a shift toward strengthening institutional mechanisms for detecting and investigating corporate frauds. This led to the institutionalization of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), a specialized multidisciplinary organization under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), empowered by the Companies Act, 2013.

SFIO is a specialized agency established by the Government of India to investigate and prosecute corporate frauds, operating under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, SFIO plays a

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pivotal role in maintaining the integrity of India's corporate sector. This article delves into the establishment, powers, functions of SFIO under the Companies Act, 2013, and outlines the critical responsibilities of Company Secretaries (CS) in ensuring compliance and facilitating investigations.

Concurrently, the role of Company Secretaries (CS)—as the chief governance officers within corporations—has become increasingly significant. No longer limited to maintaining statutory registers or filing returns, CSs today act as sentinels of ethical governance and corporate integrity. This article research paper explores the legal structure and powers of SFIO, the integral role of CSs, and how both entities interact in the domain of corporate fraud enforcement.

II. SFIO: LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND POWERS

A. Evolution of SFIO

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) was constituted in July 2003 following the recommendations of the Naresh Chandra Committee, which identified the need for a dedicated agency to investigate complex corporate frauds. Initially operating without statutory backing, SFIO was granted legal authority under Section 211 of the Companies Act, 2013. So early part of evolution of SFIO was set up by Government of India vide Resolution No. 45011/16/2003-Admn-I dated 02.07.2003. It has been granted statutory status under the Companies Act, 2013 vide Notification No. S.O.2005 (E) dated 21.07.2015. It is a multi-disciplinary investigating agency under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs wherein experts from diverse sectors like banking, capital market, corporate law, forensic audit, investigation, taxation, legal and information technology etc. work together to investigate corporate frauds for detecting and prosecuting or recommending for prosecution white colour crimes/fraud.

SFIO is headed by a Director as Head of Department in the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India. The Director is assisted by Additional Directors, Joint Directors, and Deputy Directors, Senior Assistant Directors, Assistant Directors, Prosecutors and other secretarial staff. The Headquarter of SFIO is at New Delhi with its Regional Offices at Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad & Kolkata.

B. Role and Establishment of the SFIO

To deal with serious frauds, the Indian government established the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO). This office became official through 2015 notification and operates under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The SFIO is a multidisciplinary agency with

experts in fields like:

- Accountancy and auditing
- Law and company regulations
- Banking and finance
- IT and taxation

Section 212 outlines the process for initiating an investigation, SFIO's jurisdiction, and its powers. An SFIO investigation can be ordered by the Central Government under circumstances such as:

- There's a report from the Registrar of Companies
- A company requests an investigation via special resolution
- There is significant public interest
- A government department asks for it

Thus, the SFIO investigates various types of fraud, including, Fake financial statements, Bogus invoicing, Capital market scams, Fraudulent real estate dealings etc.

C. Statutory Recognition under the Companies Act, 2013:

SFIO possesses extensive powers to investigate the affairs of a company. As per Section 212(2) of the Companies Act, 2013, once an investigation is assigned to SFIO, it holds exclusive authority to conduct the investigation, and no other agency can proceed with the same investigation.

Arrest and Bail Provisions : Under Section 212(8), officers of SFIO have the authority to arrest individuals without a warrant if they have reason to believe that such individuals have committed an offense under Section 447 (fraud) of the Act. Section 212(6) stipulates stringent bail conditions for individuals charged with fraud, emphasizing the seriousness of corporate offenses.

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office was formally given statutory status under **Section 211 of the Companies Act, 2013**, which mandates the Central Government to establish an office for fraud investigation. The office is staffed by experts from law, accountancy, forensic audit, taxation, capital markets, and banking.

Further, **Section 212(6)** makes offenses under Section 447 non-bailable and cognizable, reflecting the legislature's intent to treat corporate fraud with the gravity of criminal misconduct. Arrested individuals can only be granted bail if the court is satisfied that there are

reasonable grounds to believe the accused is not guilty.

D. Challenges and Legal Implications

Potential Misuse of SFIO Powers : The extensive powers granted to SFIO, such as arrest without warrant and exclusive jurisdiction, have raised concerns about potential misuse. The subjective nature of terms like "opinion" and "reason to believe" can lead to arbitrary actions if not exercised judiciously.

Legal Precedents and Interpretations

Judicial interpretations have clarified certain aspects of SFIO's powers. For instance, the Supreme Court in the case of *Serious Fraud Investigation Office vs. Rahul Modi* upheld the investigation powers of SFIO, emphasizing the need for thorough investigations into corporate frauds.

Introduction to White-Collar and Corporate Crimes

With advancements in technology and time, a new form of crime has emerged—white-collar or corporate crime. These offenses are usually committed by people in powerful positions within companies, often driven by greed, manipulation, and strong social or political connections. These crimes are mostly found in the upper levels of the business world and have become a serious concern for the government, which aims to protect society and ensure justice.

To control such crimes effectively, it's important to have strict laws and efficient enforcement agencies. Even the philosopher Aristotle once pointed out that human greed is the main reason behind the rise of such crimes.

Corporate Criminal Liability in India

Corporate criminal liability means holding companies legally responsible for the illegal actions of their employees. While this concept was not originally recognized in India, it has gained importance over time.

Prosecution and Legal Proceedings

Upon completion of an investigation, SFIO submits its report to the Central Government. Based on the findings, the government may direct SFIO to initiate prosecution against the company or its officers. The report submitted by SFIO is deemed equivalent to a police report under Section 173 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, facilitating legal proceedings.

III. THE COMPANY SECRETARY: ROLE, SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Company Secretary (CS) is a key managerial person under **Section 203 of the Companies Act, 2013**, and is considered a principal officer in terms of compliance, ethics, and corporate governance.

A. Statutory Duties of CS

CSs are tasked with ensuring compliance with various laws and corporate regulations, including:

- Maintaining statutory registers and records
- Certifying annual returns (Section 92)
- Secretarial Audit (Section 204)
- Advising the board on legal and compliance matters

Their role goes beyond documentation—they are advisors, watchdogs, and ethics officers who help companies avoid legal pitfalls.

B. Role in Fraud Risk Mitigation

A proactive CS implements internal controls, whistle-blower mechanisms, and corporate policies that help detect and prevent fraudulent conduct. Their presence in board meetings, audit committees, and compliance reviews positions them as the first line of defense in the governance architecture.

Role of Company Secretaries in SFIO Investigations

Company Secretaries play a crucial role in ensuring corporate compliance and facilitating SFIO investigations.

Compliance and Governance Oversight

CSs are responsible for ensuring that the company adheres to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, and other applicable laws. They must maintain a robust system of internal controls and corporate governance practices to prevent fraudulent activities.

Documentation and Record Keeping

Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records is essential. CSs must ensure that all statutory registers, financial statements, and other corporate documents are meticulously kept, as these may be subject to scrutiny during an SFIO investigation.

Liaison with SFIO and Regulatory Authorities

CSs act as the primary point of contact between the company and regulatory bodies, including SFIO. They must cooperate fully during investigations, providing necessary documents and information in a timely manner.

Ethical Considerations and Whistleblowing

CSs are ethically bound to report any fraudulent activities or violations of the law. They should be familiar with the company's whistleblower policy and ensure that employees are aware of the mechanisms to report unethical conduct.

Even CS on Role of Corporate is responsible

Under the Companies Act, 2013, as per Section 2, Sub-section (24) “company secretary” or “secretary” means a company secretary as defined in clause (c) of subsection (1) of section 2 of the Company Secretaries Act, 1980 (56 of 1980) who is appointed by a company to perform the functions of a company secretary under this Act; similarly, the CS in Practice is also defined in Sub-section (25) “company secretary in practice” means a company secretary who is deemed to be in practice under sub-section (2) of section 2 of the Company Secretaries Act, 1980 (56 of 1980).

Now, when the SFIO files complaint and if wanted to array the Company Secretary (in employment) the interpretation is invited to Sub-Section (60) “officer who is in default”, for the purpose of any provision in this Act which enacts that an officer of the company who is in default shall be liable to any penalty or punishment by way of imprisonment, fine or otherwise, means any of the following officers of a company, namely:— (i) whole-time director; (ii) key managerial personnel; (iii) where there is no key managerial personnel, such director or directors as specified by the Board in this behalf and who has or have given his or their consent in writing to the Board to such specification, or all the directors, if no director is so specified; (iv) any person who, under the immediate authority of the Board or any key managerial personnel, is charged with any responsibility including maintenance, filing or distribution of accounts or records, authorises, actively participates in, knowingly permits, or knowingly fails to take active steps to prevent, any default; (v) any person in accordance with whose advice, directions or instructions the Board of Directors of the company is accustomed to act, other than a person who gives advice to the Board in a professional capacity; (vi) every director, in respect of a contravention of any of the provisions of this Act, who is aware of such contravention by virtue of the receipt by him of any proceedings of the Board or participation etc.

Similar, provision can be found from The Company Secretaries Act, 1980, particularly Section 6, Certificate of practice, defines the role of PCS. As such when the CS become the member and obtain the Certificate of Practice (COP) he can be regarded as the PCS and not on the role of the Corporate. In addition, Section 7 of the said act provides Members to be known as Company Secretaries. So, when the CS wanted to take defence in the Court or Tribunal, the two differentiated definitions would come into play.

IV. SFIO INVESTIGATIONS AND CS INVOLVEMENT

Company Secretaries (CS) play an integral role when a company becomes subject to an SFIO investigation. Their multifaceted responsibilities place them at the intersection of compliance, communication, and documentation.

A. Triggering an SFIO Investigation

SFIO investigations can be triggered through the circumstances mentioned herein before. Upon initiation, the CS must promptly ensure that all statutory books, registers, board minutes, audit reports, and other critical records are in proper order and available for examination.

B. CS as the Regulatory Interface

The CS typically serves as the official liaison between the company and SFIO. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating submission of information requisitioned by SFIO
- Ensuring legal privilege in sensitive documents is maintained
- Advising the board on regulatory response strategies
- Communicating with external legal counsel

Given that SFIO reports can lead to criminal prosecution under Section 447, the CS must ensure full legal compliance while safeguarding the company's legal rights.

Legal Provisions for Penalties and Punishment under Indian Companies Act, 2013

Indian Companies Act, 2013	Related to	Penalties and Punishments
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Sec. 447	Punishment for fraud	Imprisonment of not less than six months and may extend to ten years. Fine is less than the amount involved in and may extend to thrice the amount. If the Fraud involves interest then the imprisonment would not be less than three years.
Sec. 448	Punishment for false statement	The punishment is the same as applicable for fraud.
Sec. 449	False proof	There is a provision for a term Imprisonment which will not be less than 3 years and can extend to 7 years and with fine which can increase to rupees 10 lakh.
Sec. 450	If there is no any provision for penalty	Monetary penalty of 10 thousand rupees and if the contravention is an ongoing offence, then further fine extending to 1 thousand rupees for
Sec. 451	Repetitive default	Punishable for double the amount of penalty, with any imprisonment for the same
Sec. 452	Unlawfully withholding of property	Fine not less than 1 lakh rupees but it can extend to 5 lakh rupees. There is a provision for imprisonment which is 2 years and when Court may ordered restoration of property and in default thereof
Sec. 453	Punishment for improper use of the word “limited” or “private limited”	Fine of not less than 500 rupees but it can extend to 2000 rupees for each day during which the title or name has been used

C. During and After Investigation

During investigations, the CS may be called upon to:

- Facilitate forensic audits
- Provide sworn affidavits or depositions
- Attend interrogation sessions (either personally or on behalf of the company)

- Post-investigation, the CS plays a vital role in implementing the recommendations, overseeing remedial actions, and revising corporate governance structures to prevent recurrence.

V. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOME PROVISIONS INTERPRETED BY JUDICIARY

A. There are catena of Judicial Precedents from which one can carve out the role of CS in criminal prosecution.

1. Satyam Computer Services Ltd. v. Union of India (2011)

In this landmark case, the Supreme Court emphasized the importance of transparency and integrity in corporate governance. The directors were held accountable for financial misconduct, highlighting the necessity for directors to act in good faith and in the best interests of the company.

2. Needle Industries (India) Ltd. v. Needle Industries Newey (India) Holding Ltd. (1981)

The Supreme Court held that directors must avoid situations where their personal interests conflict with those of the company, reinforcing the fiduciary nature of their duties.

3. Piedmont Trading Pvt. Ltd. v. Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd. (2014)

This case underscored that directors owe a duty of loyalty to the company and must not engage in activities detrimental to its interests.

4. Tata Sons Ltd. v. Cyrus Investments Pvt. Ltd. (2021)

The Supreme Court ruled that the board's decision to remove Cyrus Mistry as Executive Chairman was in compliance with the Companies Act, 2013, emphasizing that directors must act in the best interests of the company as a whole. Reinforced that directors must act in the best interests of the company, its employees, shareholders, and the community, including the protection of the environment.

5. Serious Fraud Investigation Office v. Rahul Modi (2019): Highlighted the SFIO's role in investigating instances of mismanagement, negligence, or fraud, and the responsibilities of company officers in such investigations.

6. SFIO v. Nitin Johari (2020)

In this landmark case, the Delhi High Court upheld SFIO's arrest powers under Section 212(8), despite contentions that such powers violated constitutional rights. The judgment reaffirmed that SFIO officers act as police officers under the Code of Criminal Procedure when making arrests under Section 447.

This case clarified that procedural safeguards akin to CrPC must be followed, ensuring that SFIO's powers are exercised judiciously.

7. *SFIO Versus Aditya Sarda*, 2025 INSC 477, Supreme Court of India, recently held that "...Special Court considering the seriousness of the alleged offences had initially issued bailable warrants, however, the Respondents kept on avoiding the execution of such warrants and did not appear before the Special Court though fully aware about the pendency of the complaint proceedings against them. The Special Court therefore had to pass detailed orders from time to time for the issuance of non-bailable warrants, and thereafter had also initiated the Proclamation proceedings under Section 82 of the Code, for requiring respondents to appear before it. The High Court however without paying any heed to the proceedings conducted by the Special Court against the respondents, and ignoring the well settled legal position, granted anticipatory bail to the Respondents vide the impugned orders. As discussed earlier, the said Orders being perverse and untenable at law, cannot be allowed to be sustained, and deserve to be set aside..."

8. In *R.K. Gupta v. Union of India*, SCC OnLine Del 8197, decided on 21-12-2023 Delhi High court held that "If power is given to the Special Court under Section 436(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 ('the Act') to try offences other than those under the Act, then SFIO's power to investigate into such offences cannot be restricted." The Court thus opined that the investigation report within the scheme of the Act would be treated as a police report and therefore, the officer filing the said report shall also be considered an officer in charge of a police station, although not specifically provided for in the Act. The Court further opined that if power was given to the Special Court under Section 436(2) of the Act to try offences other than those under the Act, then the power of SFIO to investigate into such offences could not be restricted and if the report which was filed was to be treated as a police report under Section 173(2) of the CrPC, then the officer was to be considered to be vested with powers of an 'officer in-charge of a police Station'. The Court thus stated that from a conjoint and harmonious reading of the provisions of the CrPC and the Act, it could not be said that SFIO was barred from investigating an offence under the IPC.

9. *Serious Fraud Investigation Office v. Rahul Modi* (2022), The Supreme Court upheld the wide powers of SFIO in the *Rahul Modi* case, noting that fraud investigations require a "multidisciplinary approach." The court allowed clubbing of investigations across group companies.

This ruling allows SFIO to investigate beyond the specific company named in the order,

extending to connected entities, thereby widening the CS's sphere of responsibility.

B. Challenges for Company Secretaries

Liability Risks: A CS may be held liable for omissions or failure to prevent fraud, especially if found complicit or negligent.

Resource Constraints: Smaller firms often lack the infrastructure to manage detailed investigations or legal representation.

Ambiguity in Role: The overlapping roles of compliance officer, whistle-blower, and legal custodian can put CSs in ethical dilemmas.

Psychological Pressure: Investigations can be highly stressful, particularly when involving senior leadership or board members.

CS to Ensure and maintain Check and Balance in important compliances:

1. **Section 92 – Annual Return, Ensure accurate and timely filing of MGT-7 or MGT-7A.** Must be **certified by a practicing CS** for companies meeting thresholds. False certification or non-filing is **professional misconduct** under ICSI guidelines.

2. **Section 134 – Financial Statements & Board's Report.** Ensure **disclosures in Board's Report** are complete and correct. CS must assist in **drafting, checking statutory disclosures**, CSR activities, risk management, etc. Misstatements here can lead to SFIO investigation under fraud provisions.

3. **Section 173 – Board Meetings**, Minimum 4 Board Meetings in a year, not more than 120 days apart. **Proper notice, agenda, and minutes** to be maintained. Failure here reflects poor governance and may attract regulatory scrutiny.

4. **Section 177 & 178 – Audit Committee & NRC -** Ensure constitution of **Audit Committee, Nomination and Remuneration Committee, and Stakeholders Relationship Committee** where applicable.

Non-compliance indicates **weak internal control**, a red flag for SFIO.

5. **Section 179 & 180 – Powers of Board**, Ensure resolutions under these sections are **properly passed and filed** (e.g., borrowing limits, investment limits). Misuse or unauthorized transactions can be seen as **fraud or mis-governance**.

6. **Section 184 & 188 – Disclosure of Interest & Related Party Transactions**, Directors must disclose interest via MBP-1. RPTs must be **board-approved**, sometimes shareholder-approved. CS must **ensure proper disclosures, approvals, and entries** in registers.

Violations here can trigger **fraud allegations**.

7. **Registers & Records (Sections 85, 88, 189, etc.)**. CS is responsible for maintaining: **Register of members, Register of charges, Register of contracts and arrangements, Improper or manipulated registers** often become evidence in SFIO probes.

8. **Section 203 – Appointment of Key Managerial Personnel (KMP)**, CS is a KMP. Any non-compliance in appointment, resignation, or role execution may amount to **default**. KMPs can be held accountable for **collective decisions and frauds**.

9. **Timely Filing with ROC**, Forms like **ADT-1, MGT-7, AOC-4, DIR-12, PAS-3, etc.** CS must ensure **timely and accurate filing** to avoid penalties and investigations.

10. **Whistle-blower & Vigil Mechanism (Section 177(9))**, Especially for listed and certain public companies. CS must ensure a **robust vigil mechanism** exists to prevent internal misconducts.

11. **Loans, Guarantees, and Investments (Section 186)**, Proper Board/Shareholder approvals needed. CS must monitor compliance to prevent **unauthorized transactions** or siphoning of funds.

11. **Secretarial Audit (Section 204)**, Applicable to listed and certain public companies. CS must ensure **truthful reporting**, not just boilerplate compliance. Wrong or dishonest audits can amount to **professional misconduct or fraud**.

To mitigate the risk of professional misconduct and potential SFIO action, directors should **ensure Compliance**: Regularly review and comply with all provisions of the Companies Act, 2013. As far as Directors' compliance part is concerned, the same should be validated and should not be overlooked, some of the vital sections are:

1. **Section 166 – Duties of Directors**

This section outlines the fundamental duties of directors, emphasizing that they must act in good faith to promote the company's objectives. Exercise their powers for a proper purpose. Exercise due and reasonable care, skill, and diligence. Avoid conflicts of interest.

Not to achieve personal gain through the use of company property or information. The Supreme Court, in the case of *Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. v. Cyrus Investments Pvt. Ltd.* (2021), reinforced that directors must act in the best interests of the company, its employees, shareholders, and the community, including the protection of the environment.

2. Section 149 – Company to Have Board of Directors

This section mandates that every company, other than a One Person Company, shall have a Board of Directors consisting of individuals who meet the qualifications and are not disqualified under the Act.

3. Section 177 – Audit Committee

Listed and certain public companies are required to constitute an Audit Committee. Directors must ensure that the committee functions effectively, overseeing financial reporting and compliance processes.

4. Section 178 – Nomination and Remuneration Committee

This section requires the establishment of a Nomination and Remuneration Committee to recommend policies for the appointment and remuneration of directors and senior management.

5. Section 184 – Disclosure of Interest by Directors

Directors are required to disclose their interest in any company or companies, bodies corporate, firms, or other association of individuals.

6. Section 188 – Related Party Transactions

Directors must ensure that transactions with related parties are conducted at arm's length and are approved by the Board and, where applicable, by shareholders.

7. Section 447 – Punishment for Fraud

Directors found guilty of fraud may face penalties, including imprisonment. The SFIO is empowered to investigate such offenses.

8. Maintain Transparency: Disclose any conflicts of interest promptly.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Regulatory Recommendations

Training and Certification: Mandate advanced training in forensic audit, fraud detection, and regulatory compliance for Company Secretaries. **Preliminary Inquiry Mechanism:** Introduce a statutory ‘preliminary inquiry’ phase before full-scale SFIO investigations to protect reputational risks. **Internal Reporting Channels:** Strengthen whistle-blower protection mechanisms within companies under Section 177(9).

B. Organizational Recommendations **Governance Audits:** Boards should authorize independent governance audits led by CSs to evaluate exposure to compliance risks.

Legal Insurance: Encourage companies to insure key officers, including CSs, against legal action stemming from investigations.

Technology Integration: Utilize AI-powered compliance software to detect red flags and generate real-time alerts for CSs.

Additional Best Practices for CS to Avoid SFIO or ICSI Disciplinary Action:

- Maintain **professional scepticism**—don't blindly follow management directives.
- Keep **evidence of diligence** (emails, notes, registers).
- Never **backdate documents or minutes**.
- Report and **escalate red flags** (like unauthorised payments, dummy directors).
- Remain updated with **notifications, MCA circulars, and SEBI regulations** (if applicable).
- **Disclose conflicts of interest** in engagements.

Exercise Due Diligence: Make informed decisions based on thorough analysis and advice.

Establish Robust Committees, ensure the effective functioning of Audit and Nomination & Remuneration Committees. **Monitor Transactions,** oversee related party transactions to ensure they are conducted at arm's length. **Promote Ethical Practices** to foster a culture of integrity and accountability within the organization.

VII. CONCLUSION

The evolution of corporate governance in India places immense responsibility on both regulatory bodies and governance professionals. The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), armed with statutory powers, plays a central role in investigating and prosecuting complex corporate frauds. At the same time, Company Secretaries, entrusted with legal, ethical, and compliance duties, serve as essential pillars of good governance.

Since the Financial Year 2019-2020 to 2023-2024, 72 number of cases were referred to Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) for investigation. Further 69 number of complaints were filed out of which 43 complaints included complaint u/s 447 of the Companies Act, 2013. In this period, fine was imposed in 114 cases, 20 cases were compounded and in 9 cases fine and imprisonment were, till rising of courts, were ordered. Rather than viewing SFIO as a post-crisis enforcer, companies must integrate its standards into their preventive frameworks.

Company Secretaries must not only ensure compliance but also anticipate and manage governance risks. A collaborative and transparent approach between internal compliance structures and external enforcement agencies like SFIO is essential for safeguarding corporate integrity in India's dynamic economic environment.

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office serves as a cornerstone in India's efforts to combat corporate fraud and maintain the integrity of its corporate sector. Company Secretaries, with their expertise in corporate governance and compliance, play an indispensable role in supporting SFIO investigations and ensuring that companies adhere to legal and ethical standards. By fostering a culture of transparency and accountability, CSs contribute significantly to the prevention and detection of corporate frauds. By bringing together experts across disciplines, it is uniquely equipped to tackle complex, high-level fraud that regular law enforcement agencies may struggle with.

Despite facing challenges such as limited resources and the changing nature of financial crime, the SFIO continues to evolve. It is strengthening partnerships, adopting modern forensic tools, and working toward reforms for greater autonomy and efficiency.

More than just a law enforcement body, the SFIO acts as a deterrent to future frauds and promotes transparency and trust in India's business ecosystem. Its efforts are essential for long-term economic stability and public confidence in corporate governance.

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