

Artificial Intelligence and the Company Secretary Profession: Key Insights from Mehta & Mehta Webinar

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the professional landscape, redefining how governance, compliance, and advisory functions are performed. In a recent knowledge-sharing webinar organised by Mehta & Mehta, experts and practitioners deliberated on the opportunities, challenges, and ethical considerations surrounding the adoption of AI in the Company Secretary (CS) profession.

The session witnessed active participation from members across the country, reflecting both curiosity and concern about how AI will influence professional relevance, responsibility, and regulatory compliance in the years ahead.

Evolving Interface Between AI and Corporate Governance

Traditionally, Company Secretaries have been viewed as custodians of compliance and statutory records. However, with the increasing complexity of corporate laws, frequent regulatory amendments, and heightened stakeholder expectations, the role of the CS has already been evolving towards that of a governance strategist.

The panellists emphasised that AI acts as an enabler in this transition. By automating repetitive and rule-based tasks, AI allows professionals to focus on higher-order functions such as advisory support to Boards, governance structuring, risk anticipation, and ethical oversight.

Understanding AI as a Professional Tool

The webinar highlighted that AI should be viewed strictly as a facilitator and not a substitute for professional judgment. Participants discussed various practical applications of AI, including:

Automated compliance calendars and alerts; Drafting assistance for notices, minutes, policies, and reports; Regulatory research and tracking of amendments under the Companies Act and SEBI Regulations; Payroll, HR, and routine process automation; Preparation of presentations with structured content and visuals.

While AI significantly enhances speed and efficiency, experts cautioned that accountability for outputs continues to rest with the professional using the tool.

Risks, Limitations, and Ethical Concerns

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the risks associated with excessive or blind reliance on AI. Concerns raised by participants included:

Possibility of hallucinated or outdated legal information; Misinterpretation of frequently amended laws and regulations; Confidentiality and data privacy risks when sensitive information is shared with AI platforms; Over-automation leading to dilution of professional competence.

Panellists unanimously stressed the importance of independent verification of AI-generated outputs and maintaining human oversight, particularly in critical functions involving legal opinions, regulatory filings, and Board-level decisions.

AI and Employment: Threat or Opportunity?

One of the recurring questions during the webinar was whether AI could lead to job losses in the CS profession. Addressing this concern, the speakers clarified that while AI may reduce manual workloads, it does not eliminate the need for professionals.

Instead, AI is expected to redefine roles. Professionals who adapt by acquiring analytical, strategic, and technological skills will remain indispensable. The responsibility, accountability, and ethical judgment required in corporate governance cannot be delegated to machines.

Emerging Skillsets for CS Professionals

The panellists highlighted the need for Company Secretaries to cultivate new competencies to stay relevant in an AI-driven environment, including:

Ability to supervise and validate AI-assisted outputs; Understanding of AI governance, data ethics, and regulatory frameworks; Strategic thinking and Board advisory capabilities; Continuous learning to keep pace with technological and regulatory developments.

The discussion also touched upon the possibility of developing specialised or agent-based AI tools tailored for professional use, under the guidance of AI generalists and domain experts.

Regulatory and Institutional Perspective

Participants raised queries regarding AI tools provided by professional institutes and the need for updated, reliable, and secure platforms specifically designed for professionals. The discussion reinforced that institutional AI initiatives must prioritise accuracy, confidentiality, and alignment with statutory frameworks.

It was also reiterated that any use of AI must comply with evolving ethical and governance guidelines issued by regulators and policymakers.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence is poised to become an integral part of the Company Secretary's professional toolkit. However, its true value lies not in replacing professionals but in empowering them to deliver higher-quality governance, compliance, and advisory services.

The webinar concluded with a clear message: the future belongs to professionals who embrace AI responsibly, strengthen their judgment, and reposition themselves from compliance executors to trusted governance advisors. Human intellect, accountability, and ethical leadership will continue to remain at the core of the CS profession, with AI serving as a powerful rather than a decision-maker.

To stay informed or access the webinar recording, visit the YouTube channel:

 **"Decoding Corporate Laws with Mehta & Mehta"**