

INTERPRETATION OF STATUTES

INTERPRETATION :- The action of explaining the meaning of something.

STATUTES :- A written law enacted by the Legislature.

INTERPRETATION OF STATUTES

1. **Meaning** :- Interpretation means the art of finding out the true sense of an enactment by giving the words of the enactment their natural and ordinary meaning.

Interpretation of the Statutes is a process by which the meaning of a particular legislation can be ascertained.

INTERPRETATION OF STATUTES

2. Definition :- According to Salmond “Interpretation or construction is the process by which the courts seek to ascertain the meaning of the legislature through the medium of authoritative forms in which it is expressed”.

INTERPRETATION OF STATUTES

3. Object of Interpretation of Statutes :- The meaning and application of certain words can change over time as society changes. As such judges need to interpret statutes to clarify the meaning of those words and to them their current meaning, while keeping in mind the intention of the legislature.

The object of the interpretation of a statutes is to ascertain the intention of the legislature through particular statute. Such ascertainment help in the understanding of the real sense of complicated facts of customary laws, regulations, contract law, will etc.

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4. Nature and Scope :- Necessity of interpretation would arise only where the language of a statutory provision is ambiguous, not clear or where two views are possible or where the provision gives a different meaning defeating the object of the statute.

If the language is clear and unambiguous, no need of interpretation would arise.

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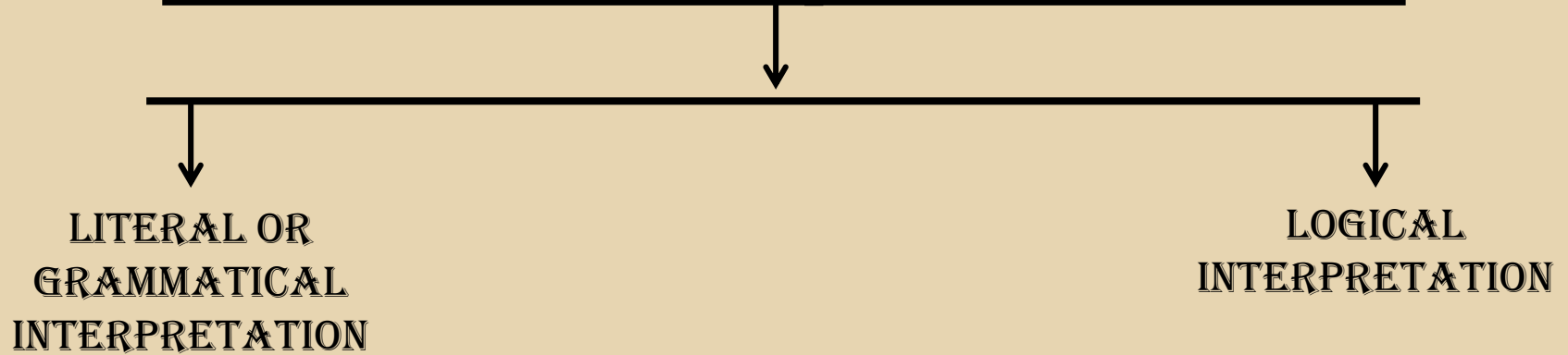
Case Law :- R.S Nayak vs. A.R Antulay

In this case, court held if the words of the statutes are clear and unambiguous, it is plainest duty of the Court to give effect to the natural meaning of the words used in the provision.

The question of construction arise only in the event of an ambiguity of the plain meaning of the words used in statute would be “self – defeating”

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Classification of Interpretation of Statutes



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1. Literal or Grammatical Interpretation :-

Literal rule of interpretation is the primary rule. Under this rule of interpretation the Courts interpret the statutes in a literal and ordinary sense. They interpret the words of the statute in a way that is used commonly by all. The basic of this principle is that the object of all interpretations is to know what the legislature intended.

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Case Law :- Ramavatar vs. Assistant sales tax officer **A.I.R. 1961**

In this case, Supreme court held that betel leaves could not be given the dictionaries, technical or botanical meaning when the ordinary and natural meaning is clear. Being a word of everyday use, must be understood in its popular sense by which the people are conversant with it as also the meaning which the statute dealing would attribute to it, Its sale is, therefore, liable to sales tax.

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2. Logical Interpretation :-

Logical interpretation means abstract interpretation over logical lattices. Such interpretation departs from the literal words on the ground that there may be other, more satisfactory evidence of the author's true intention.

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Logical Interpretation

1. **Ambiguity:-** Sometimes, a statute instead of meaning one thing may mean two or more different things. In such a case it is the duty of the courts to go behind the letter of the law.
2. **Inconsistency:-** Sometimes, a law instead of having more meaning than one, may have none at all, the different parts of its being repugnant so as to destroy each other's significance. In such a case it is the duty of the judicature to correct the letter of the law accordingly.
3. **Incompleteness:-** Sometimes the text though neither ambiguous nor inconsistent, In such a case it is the duty of the courts to provide the exact meaning of the letter of the law.

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