

## Justice (CA.) Dr. Vineet Kothari

### ‘CA Course Transforms its Students into People of Precision & Stickler for Details, making a CA-Turned Lawyer an Instant Success’



*Dr. Justice (CA.) Vineet Kothari is the senior-most Puisne Judge of Madras High Court. He was appointed Judge in the Rajasthan High Court in June 2005. He then joined the Karnataka High Court as Judge in April 2016. Born, brought up and thoroughly educated in Jodhpur, Justice Kothari completed his graduation in Commerce and Law. Later he went on to complete his PhD in Law, specialising in tax laws. Besides being a Chartered Accountant, he is also a qualified Company Secretary. So far, Justice Kothari has decided approximately 22,000 cases in the Rajasthan High Court, 5,000 cases in the Karnataka High Court and 1,000 in the Madras High Court, of which most of the cases were on Civil and Tax Laws. He is on Board of the International Association of Tax Judges and a member of Commonwealth Magistrates & Judges Association, London. Read on what Justice Kothari has to say about the profession...*

#### What made you decide to pursue the CA course?

When I decided to join the CA course, it was both a natural and personal decision. My elder brother Shri B. M. Kothari was a Chartered Accountant from the batch of 1962, who had been a leading CA professional of Jodhpur. Having served the ITAT as member for 15 years, he had been my mentor and my Guru. It was he who inducted me to the Chartered Accountant's course. After I completed my graduation in Commerce with distinction from Jodhpur University in the year 1978, I joined the CA course. Let me also tell you, I had also joined the bachelor's in Law and the professional CS (Company Secretary) course as my academic pursuit, and I completed all the three in 1982.

#### Why did you choose your present career, shifting from the core CA profession?

In 1984, Mr. Marudhar Mridul, a renowned senior advocate of Jodhpur, who used to come to our office for his own income-tax matters, perhaps saw some spark of argumentative capabilities in me, and he persuaded me to switch to the legal profession, surrendering my Certificate of Practice. I call him my second Guru. And, let me tell you, it certainly was a difficult and life-changing decision. On the lighter side, it was difficult for an eligible bachelor who is a Chartered Accountant. I got married in January 1984 and switched to the legal profession in

September 1984. My better half, Meena, is a lawyer and a trained mediator in her own right. Coming back to your question, I worked hard as Chief Editor of *Sales Tax Literature*, a law journal published from Jodhpur, for six years, while working in my senior's office from 8 am to 12 in the midnight. My hard work finally paid off and I got myself established as a leading tax lawyer in the Rajasthan High Court within first five years of my practice. Today, both my Gurus and my parents are no more with me, but their love, training and ideals have remained with me. I will cherish them forever.

#### How does the CA education and training help you in your day-to-day dealings in your public/professional life?

As you pursue the CA course, the sense of discipline and hard work that you inculcate in yourself for the course gets into you for life. This is quite a tough course. But then, this thoroughly trains and transforms its students into the people of steely prosecutor, precision, calculative and stickler for details. Chartered Accountants can never miss out on minute details and this is what makes a CA-turned Lawyer almost an instant and sure success. Then if you have command over language and know how to use this effectively, it's *sone pe suhaagaa* (i.e. adding excellence to something already good). I am sorry for using the Hindi idiom

# Our Achiever

here, as *icing on the cake* doesn't give the degree of relevance to my expression, which I want.

**What is your message to the young aspirants (i.e. students) of CA profession?**

My message to the young students of this course is: You must keep the high image of the CA profession in mind. Remember that the Chartered Accountants are the professionals of strong ethics, refined transparency and high integrity. In a way, you and your responsibilities are indispensable. Treat yourselves as the students of a noble profession. At the same time, I would request ICAI to get the laws enacted by the Parliament towards the decision on minimum and maximum professional remuneration for various professional services, that have some correspondence with the stakes and turnover of the clients concerned. This will help the Institute inspire its CA professionals in keeping a check on their individual aspirations. Moreover, a sense of professional satisfaction including economic security will be permeated too. However, I know, only the professionals themselves can control their ambitions. And they will be happy and contented in life if they do so. I would suggest the Institute to start some post-qualification course focused on personality development for CA professionals.

**World is constantly evolving. Economy is opening up. International boundaries are getting blurred. Do you think opportunities for CA professionals have increased? Will these keep increasing in future too?**

Certainly. I clearly see a quantum jump in the need for CA professionals across sectors. Also, CA professionals today are more aware of their times. Thanks to the Institute. With ever-increasing international trade of goods and services, the industry in the country as well as across the globe will need a large pool of competent CA professionals in foreseeable future of 50 years. They must prepare themselves to grab and manage the opportunities.

**As you know, ICAI brings an array of post-qualification courses for its members' empowerment. Can you suggest some emerging areas, where our members require education and training to remain contemporary and relevant?**

There are multiple emerging professional avenues today such as international taxation, mediation for commercial disputes, insolvency, insurance computer applications and valuation, which may be explored. Today when the engineers from top institutions train in financial management and take on responsible positions, the CA

professionals already trained in those skills are certainly better off to handle those responsibilities worldwide. I find it very amusing that engineers are providing financial services today. Chartered Accountants need to introspect and act. Nobody should be able to stop them.



**How will you rate the ICAI performance as a regulator, a standard-setter, an educator and as a partner in nation-building?**

ICAI is certainly a very prestigious Institution. Credit goes to its high-quality examination and education and training standards. I can only commend this and ask the Institute to keep it up. Benchmarks are to be raised with time and ICAI will do that. I am sure. Only the top institutions or individuals have the ability to set high standards and achieve excellence and ICAI has done this so successfully in the past. But there is always a room for improvement.

**Do you foresee any challenge for CA professionals in the coming times? How should Chartered Accountants prepare in order to respond to them?**

Only quality service, transparency and integrity will prepare and help the Chartered Accountants meet all forthcoming challenges, which will gradually increase with time, as the demands will increase from the CA profession. Candidates may be permitted to join courses in Law, MBA, etc., along with the CA course, or, an integrated course combining those two courses may be offered.

**Your message to ICAI? We would like to know your expectations.**

ICAI can do better framing of commercial, economic and taxation laws. Then alternatively, it can also provide research inputs and resources towards better framing of the law. ICAI may include the drafting of law with interpretational aspects as part of the CA curriculum. It can carve out a statutory niche for itself by placing its committee with the Ministry of Law in order to provide solicited specialised inputs.

**What is the secret behind this inspirational success of yours in public life? Any mantra of success for our readers?**

Mantra of Success for me is: 4 H – be hopeful and honest, and be ready to do hard work, and accept success with humility. For me, ICAI also means an Institute of Competent Advisors of India. ■