



My dear Professional Colleagues,

Let me wish a very happy *Chartered Accountants' Day* to all of you! Being the world's second largest accountancy body today, we are all ready to celebrate our Platinum Jubilee CA Day completing the 70-year long fulfilling journey of excellence.

At the turn of the seventh decade of our existence, I would like to recall what our first President Shri G. P. Kapadia had said: *"In discharging the duties and performing various functions, the paramount consideration which should weigh with the members of the profession is that they are not merely performing particular duties to earn emoluments, but that they have to discharge a wider function and their obligation—a moral one—is to function in such a way that they are above suspicion and, as members of the learned and an honourable profession, they provide service to the community being accountable to the authorities and also to the legislature of the country which has bestowed autonomy on the profession."*

Proclaiming our responsibility, the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad had said on his visit to ICAI in 1954: *The fast increasing tempo of the industrial and economic development of the country makes it imperative that every Chartered Accountant should realise that he belongs to a profession which provides the first line of defence to the unwary public against money grabbers and opportunists. Your responsibility in this matter becomes all the greater because of the autonomy, which your profession enjoys.* In a way, a tone was set by the Hon'ble first President of India and first President of ICAI, and that became a template of

our responsibility. Without doubt, ICAI and its member fraternity have shouldered this onerous responsibility diligently with utmost care, vigil, and sincerity in the best interests of stakeholders and, more importantly, functioned as true partners-in-nation-building. Over the years, ICAI has moved ahead, and grown big in strength and stature shouldering its responsibilities.

Starting with a few hundred members in 1949, ICAI today has about 3 lakh members. With its 5 Regional Councils and 164 Branches spread across the nation and 34 overseas Chapters across the world, our members are strongly contributing to both national and global economy, and this indeed gives us a reason to celebrate.

To achieve anything and everything in life, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam recommends a mix of *great aim, knowledge, hard work* and *perseverance*. And, he asks the leaders with vision and passion to keep their integrity intact, since it is integrity that removes the obstacles before them. And for the last seven decades, ICAI has been ceaselessly contributing to the nation with its trained workforce of noble, efficient, suave and globally-competent finance professionals. Having integrity and transparency ingrained in their fundamentals, Chartered Accountants are constantly bringing a positive difference in the financial health of all businesses, corporates, people that they serve.

## Reliving the International Legacy

When the global accounting body, IFAC (International Federation of Accountants), was conceptualised and formed in 1977, we were one of its founding members, since then we played an important role in its formation. We were also one of the founding members of CAPA (Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants) too, when it was formed in 1976; the Confederation today represents 33 national professional accounting bodies operating in 24 jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region. It was ICAI that mooted the idea of forming the SAFA (South Asian Federation of Accountants) in the year 1982, in view of the common culture, trading practices and legal systems of the South Asian region. And in 1984, the Federation was formed with the election of then ICAI President as its First President. ICAI has been the permanent secretariat for the Federation since its formation.

ICAI also became a founder member of the Asian-

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Oceanian Standard-Setters Group (AOSSG), a group comprising 27 national accounting bodies from the Asian-Oceanian region formed to discuss and share experiences on the adoption of IFRSs and the development of high-quality set of global accounting standards. ICAI is also a member of the International Valuation Standards Council (IVSC), which is an independent global standard-setter for the valuation profession. ICAI has similarly joined the Chartered Accountants Worldwide (CAW), which brings together the leading accountancy bodies of the world, support and promote the CA profession and professionals, and aims to create global opportunities. Owing to its reputation of a proactive accountancy body, ICAI was assigned the Indian jurisdiction of XBRL International in 2008. Then in 2010, realising the need to involve the regulators, technology experts, corporations and academics, and promote XBRL in India, ICAI formed XBRL India, a Section 8 company under Companies Act, 2013, which also manages the affairs of Indian jurisdiction of XBRL International.

Given its global reputation, last year, ICAI's global reach and professional standing was recognised, when it was given the prestigious right of hosting the 21<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Accountants (WCOA) in the year 2022, which is considered the *Olympics of Accountants* today.

Considering its fundamental professional responsibility, ICAI has been reaching out to help the developing countries in formalisation of accountancy profession and development of professional accounting bodies; so far, ICAI has helped many developing countries in the past that include Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Djibouti and Mongolia.

Then, to help its members abroad by providing a platform for discussion on the matters of professional interests and a connect with the Institute, ICAI established its overseas Chapters, with the first being Doha (Qatar) Chapter, which was inaugurated in 1980-81. Today, we have 34 overseas Chapters across all continents, which also offer professional support to the members in India who wish to go to the respective country seeking professional opportunities.

In this regard, ICAI as an institution has supported its members by getting into a number of MoUs and MRAs with other established accountancy

bodies of the world with a view to help its members with global education/ degree and training, and professional opportunities.

## Evolving Technology

As early as in 1967, the then ICAI President CA. V. B. Haribhakti had visualised the emerging need of IT-savvy CA professionals in view of the *usefulness of computers, electronic data processing systems and mechanised aids to accounting and data processing*. He was of the view: "There is no doubt that the Accountant is the fittest person to assist the users of the electronic data processing systems". He had urged the profession to be "ready to meet the challenges of the Computer Age and to successfully carry out the new duties which the Computer Age will enjoin on them." Today, the CA profession and professionals have that preparedness while they have been constantly embracing the technology of their age making that an integral part of their functional domains.

The constitution of *Digital Accounting and Assurance Board* in 2017 and that of a special-purpose *Digital Transformation and Process Reengineering Group* in 2018 aim to analyse the impact of digital and information technology, big data, blockchain and artificial intelligence and improve the internal operations and dealing mechanism at the Institute. With Post-Qualification Courses on Information Systems Audit and Forensic Accounting and Fraud Detection and 3-day Training on Forensic Analytics using CAAT Tools at Forensic Lab, ICAI has been strengthening its members' professional competence along its IT-quotient.

## UDIN—A System to Safeguard Members' Identity

To safeguard our members from misrepresentation by miscreants vis-à-vis the attestation of financial documents/ certificates, ICAI has implemented in phased manner an innovative concept of UDIN, i.e. unique document identification number. Chartered Accountants with full-time Certificate of Practice can register on the UDIN Portal and generate UDIN by registering the certificates attested/certified by them.

## Creating Specific Allied Professional Opportunities

As you know, ICAI had established the ICAI Accounting Research Foundation (ICAI ARF) in 1999, which has evolved as a core research

academy with an objective to impart and promote accountancy education and research. In 2016, ICAI set up a Section 8 company in accordance with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, *Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (IIPI)*, to enroll and regulate insolvency professionals as its members. It then formed another Section 8 company in 2018 in accordance with the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation) Rules, 2017, *ICAI Registered Valuers Organisation (ICAI RVO)*, to enroll and regulate registered valuers as its members. Both these enterprises of the Institute have opened the way to extended professional opportunities for our members.

## For the Students: CA Curriculum— Revised and Renewed

Having supported the nation in its transformation from a developing economy to an economic powerhouse, ICAI has thoroughly revamped its course content and syllabus in view of the rapidly changing business environment and technological advancements, so that its professionals effectively continue to contribute to the economic development. Very beautifully, our past President CA. Y. H. Malegam had worded the goals of profession: *“...the primary objective of our education and training processes should be to produce a well-rounded professional who gets integrated into the society of which he is a part. In the pursuit of our education activities, we receive no subsidy from the Government or contribution from industry. Yet we must always be conscious of the fact that the output from our profession has to be of direct benefit to Government as well as to society in general and industry in particular.”* In 2017 on the CA Day, Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi launched the *New Scheme of Education and Training*, and said: *“I am hopeful the new course will boost the financial skills of people joining this profession.”*

Let me inform you, this CA course curriculum had many comprehensive revisions in the past. The objective was to improve the quality of qualified Chartered Accountants that eventually contribute to the national economy or become our ambassadors in helping other countries achieve financial excellence. And the glorious years of our profession prove that the purpose has been well-served.

## Committed to Professional Social Responsibility

Some five decades ago, the then ICAI past President Dr. R. C. Cooper had assured the stakeholders: *“Future of the Profession is bright. It is entirely in our hands to quicken the tempo of progress. The success would very largely depend on our ability to extend our horizon and look beyond the narrow field of professional work.* ICAI has always been aware of its professional social responsibility and, time and again, it has publicly proclaimed its commitment by example. In the times of any crisis leading to a call for welfare, it has always made generous contribution and released timely help to the victims of crisis. Be it Koynanagar (Maharashtra) earthquake in 1967, Gujarat earthquake in 2000-2001, Tsunami calamity in 2005-2006, Uttarakhand flood in 2013-2014, Nepal earthquake in 2015, or Kerala Flood in 2018-19, ICAI has always risen to the occasion and reached out with the mission to help and support the victims. Having strongly condemned the cowardly killing of CRPF personnel in Pulwama of Jammu & Kashmir and extending its heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred, ICAI took it upon itself to popularise the benevolent initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs about the platform called *India's Bravehearts (Bharat ke Veer)*, urging the stakeholders to donate directly to the individual accounts of the families of *Bravehearts*.

ICAI has always felt responsible for its members' and students' welfare. In 1999-2000, ICAI took a path-breaking decision to help its physically challenged members by providing that one scholarship be reserved for them pursuing Post-Qualification Courses. Realising its responsibility towards its members or the immediate family of its members, who may face a crisis due to various reasons, ICAI created a benevolent fund called *Chartered Accountants' Benevolent Fund (CABF)* in 1962 to help and support members in distress as well as the family of its deceased members. CABF is strengthened with the donations made by the generous members of the Institute. I appeal to all my professional colleagues to continue donating to the Fund so that it remains strong enough to be able to help our colleagues in distress and the families of our deceased colleagues. On the similar lines, ICAI has also set up the *Chartered Accountant Students'*

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*Benevolent Fund* to provide financial assistance to its students who are meritorious but poor and need help to pursue the CA course.

Earlier in 1964-65, ICAI had proclaimed that a member will be deemed to be in practice during the period he renders services in the armed forces of the country. In 1972-73, free professional services (relating to income-tax, wealth-tax, and estate duty matters) had been provided to the heirs of martyred jawans and officers of the country's armed forces. ICAI had decided to give preference to the children of such jawans and officers for their engagement as articulated/ audit clerks, and exempt them from all tuition and registration fees of the Institute.

More recently, in line with its commitment to the environment, ICAI has developed its Green Vision and taken a decision to encourage members to go for the e-copy of the ICAI journal. It was also decided to provide a discount of ₹ 500/- to the members in their annual membership fee for opting not to receive the hard copy of their Journal. So far, I am happy to note, more than 22000 members have decided in favour of this eco-friendly measure.

## Infrastructure to Match the Stature

Beginning with its own headquarters built in the year 1954 and inaugurated by the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad, ICAI built an extension of the building, whose foundation was laid by the then Union Minister for Industrial Development and Company Affairs Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed in 1968, who later became the President of our country. Then, we added two state-of-art Institute's buildings in Noida (2009-10) and then in Mumbai (2013-14), which happens to be our biggest infrastructure till date. Today, out of a total 164 Branches, 99 have their own premises. ICAI has made two Centres of Excellence in Jaipur and Hyderabad.

## Meeting the Leaders of New India

As our profession receives constant public attention and Governmental expectations towards our increased participation in the nation-building, ICAI has become a leading player in the nation's economy and its development. I quote our past President CA. Y. M. Kale: "*What the Institute can and will do is to spare no effort in pursuing a dialogue with the decision-makers and present to them with all*

*the persuasion at its command...What the Institute cannot and will not do is to sensationalise the issue by adopting an unnecessarily confrontationalist posture.*"

ICAI will take all possible measures to support the new Government in its growth agenda. And our nation's interests will always be our top priority. Recently, we met some of the Union Ministers, Union Ministers of State and Members of Parliament to extend our best wishes as their vision and leadership will take the country to greater heights. On behalf of the profession, I congratulate them.

## Pre-Budget Memorandum Submitted

Recently, we met the CBDT Chairman Shri P. C. Mody and submitted our Pre-Budget Memorandum. The CBDT Chairman considered our suggestions on procedural difficulties and rationalisation of provisions and agreed with our viewpoint. In this meeting, we also requested him to utilise ICAI in reaching out to the members and the public and in bridging the gap between taxpayers and the Department.

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With a determined stand to grow along with the nation, ICAI and CA profession have transformed themselves from being the anchor of our country's fiscal prudence to playing the role of partners-in-nation-building. With the sweet spot that our country rests on today and given the predication of India as an emerging and potential economic global force, Indian CA profession is about to complete another year of its meaningful existence and conclude our 70-year long glorious journey on 1<sup>st</sup> July. This will, therefore, be a landmark for the profession.

ICAI past President CA. Bansi S. Mehta had said: "*History has the habit of repeating itself...That is part of all histories and (our) profession is no exception...*" History must never rest and it should continue to grow. We will keep adding glories to our magnificent history, since I am confident that our journey of excellence will continue forever.

Best wishes



**CA. Prafulla P. Chhajed**  
President, ICAI

27<sup>th</sup> June 2019