

From the President



My dear Professional Colleagues,

“Glory lies in the attempt to reach one’s goal and not in reaching it.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

As I pen down my final message in this Journal as President of ICAI, I am overwhelmed with fond memories of yesteryears in my life journey. I am reminded of the start of my incredible journey in this profession as an article trainee with CA. Bansi S. Mehta, Past President of ICAI, my *guru* and my mentor. Life in articleship was challenging, but the strong foundation of discipline, commitment, and integrity that it gave during the period, helped me in my entire professional life, including during my tenure as WIRC member from 2001, WIRC Chairman in 2007-08, and as President of this Institute. For building to be strong, the foundation needs to be solid. It takes a village to raise a child and I am fortunate to have the best mentors and guides along the way. At this juncture, I do not wish to write like a historian detailing about what we have achieved in the past year as you will read about it in detail elsewhere in the journal, here I wish to tell that I am eternally grateful for getting the privilege to serve you.

The ICAI, in its illustrious journey, started with about 1700 members in the year 1949 after the independence. Today, ICAI is having 164 branches in India, 34 chapters abroad along with an overseas office in Dubai and a new office in Singapore. Accountancy is truly a global profession and we

Indian Chartered Accountants are the second largest body of Chartered Accountants in the world, with more than 300,000 members and more than 700,000 students. Today ICAI and its members are a force to be reckoned with.

India has emerged as the new dynamic face of the global accountancy profession and all the past seven decades of integrity, professionalism, independence, competency, and ethics have shaped ICAI to be leading body in the accounting world. It is matter of pride for my fellow professionals and all Indians to get opportunity to host World Congress of Accountants, 2022 to be held in Mumbai in November, 2022. The event often referred to as ‘Olympics of the Accounting world’ will be co-hosted by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) with

the Institute. I am thankful to be bestowed with opportunity to Chair of Executive Committee of WCOA 2022 and it would be our endeavour to make it a memorable knowledge enriching event that will help to make our country honoured.

I am happy that during the year ICAI qualification has been recognised by UK NARIC as being comparable to specific Regulated Qualifications Framework levels of the UK and UAE. This will give an advantage to our students and members. Members looking for opportunities in foreign counties may also try overseas campus placement portal to give themselves option of a truly global career. I would also recommend that members learn a foreign language that will provide them with an extra edge while looking for global opportunities.

Members may also explore the Digital Learning Hub, the distance learning platform providing e-learning opportunities. ICAI constantly strives to proactively leverage technology to better serve stakeholders and the latest such initiative is the creation of a self-service portal to make applications (forms) and transactions (services) faster and convenient. The Institute has always placed students at a high priority and has endeavoured to prepare students for tomorrow by imparting requisite knowledge and skill in innovative ways. Several student-friendly initiatives through the Board of Studies and Examination Department were undertaken to help them to fulfill their dreams. I wish all the students best luck in their future endeavours.

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I have been travelling across India and the globe representing ICAI and putting forward the views, ideas in the overall interest of Indian accounting profession. Love and affection extended to me during these visits have been truly overwhelming. My gratitude to all those with whom I have come into contact and interacted during my tenure as Vice-President and President, ICAI. I will cherish those moments throughout my life. ICAI has associated with The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), Kuwait Association of Accountants and Auditors (KAAA), Saudi Organisation for Certified Public Accountants (SOCPA) and CPA Australia through its MRA/MOU and this would act as a catalyst for renewing India's focus for facilitating the export of Accountancy Services and its promotion in a digital world, being earmarked as one of the Champion Sector initiatives of the Government of India.

In the Overseas Campus Placements semi-qualified Accountants were also given the opportunity to participate. The Institute also provides a tailwind to these placements by providing avenues for members and students to learn new languages through ICAI's tie-ups with Instituto Cervantes, GoetheInstitut, Alliance Francaise, and Japan Foundation for Spanish, German, French, and Japanese, respectively. ICAI is also looking forward to providing avenues for learning the Arabic language as one of its action plan for the Champion Sector.

We are going from strength to strength in increasing the number of women Chartered Accountants which today stands at about 82,000. I would also like to share that the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) is now a women majority board and I draw inspiration from this fact that women in accountancy and Boards will continue to lead to increased productivity and angularity in business and profession.

I have had the fortune of witnessing ICAI prominently representing the concerns of SMPs of not just Indians but South Asian region too, at all possible international platforms including IFAC, Edinburgh Group, CAPA and SAFA. It is a matter of pride that ICAI has always held the Chair of the SMP Committee at SAFA and for the past decade been a member of the SMP Committee of IFAC. This year too, the Institute made further inroads towards the cause of profession especially SMPs. Digital Competency Maturity Model (DCMM), a self- evaluation matrices for accounting firms

developed by ICAI to gauge the Firm's relative maturity level as regards digital competency pertaining to Audit and Accounting related functions got wide global recognition and adopted by European Federation of Accountants and Auditors and SAFA. This year we released DCMM Version 2.0. We also initiated Joint Research with ICAEW on automation in finance and accounting space by interviewing companies in India and UK.

My presidency has also been punctuated with several international dignitary visits. We hosted Confederation of Asian Pacific Accountants (CAPA) events in New Delhi, Asian Oceanian Standards Setters Group (AOSSG) AGM in Goa and the ICAI's premier International Conference on *"Accountancy Profession: Catalyzing Reforms, Creating Values"* in Mumbai. The visits included many Past-Presidents of ICAI, representatives of ICAI's foreign chapters, members of Parliament, officials of IFAC, CAPA, AOSSG, ICAEW, CPA Australia and CPA Canada. We also had the privilege of hosting IFRS Trustee Delegation, IASB Vice-Chairman, CEO CPA Australia during the year. Delegations from the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK) and Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal (ICAN) also visited India. It was a fruitful exchange of ideas with all of them.

One of the projects very close to my heart was the successful phased implementation of UDINs that established the identity of members signing various reports/ certificates. This initiative in India is the first of its kind in the world that was well appreciated in the IFAC Council and will be soon mirrored by the other SAFA member bodies. Bringing further credibility to its usage, the acronym "UDIN" has now been registered under the Trade Marks Act, 1999 in the name of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

As part of our continuous learning and skill development activity, we continued to organise a large number of Seminars, Workshops and Conferences during the year at the central, regional and branch levels in an effort to provide the maximum possible opportunities for the members to interact with each other, share their experiences and provide a systematic effect on the totality of professional expertise and excellence. During the year, till now, we have organised 7,709 programmes which included 1,943 programmes on GST, 228 on Companies Act, 185 on RERA, 127 on

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Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 201 on Ethical Standards/Code of Ethics/Professional Ethics and 40 programmes on Standards on Auditing. We also enabled 157 batches of various Certificate Courses and 87 batches of Post Qualification Courses/ Diploma Courses to develop, maintain and satisfy your intellectual curiosity that would motivate life long study. I encourage the professionals to attend the future courses, seminars, and conferences that are held under the aegis of various committees of the Council to remain updated. Today, ICAI has earmarked a fund of INR 30 crore for Skill Development/ Capacity Building initiatives for CA professionals and I am also very happy that henceforth ICAI will offer a 30% reduction in fee of Certificate Courses and Diploma Courses to promote skill-building among members.

It has been the standard-setting spring with Ind AS 116 Leases, 12 new Accounting Standards for Local Bodies (ASLBs), 13 Standards on Internal Audit (SIAs), revised Standards on Auditing (SAs) 800, 805 and 810 and a revised Part-A of the Code of Ethics. I would like to underline the fact that digitisation, cloud computing, robotic process automation, machine learning, blockchain, and cognitive computing are otherwise causing disruptions can be converted into an opportunities for Chartered Accountants.

In my earlier communications, I have shared at length about various initiatives of ICAI on the regulatory front including the complete automation of disciplinary process including introduction of E-hearing facility. During the past year an impressive 7 Council Meetings covering 15 days disposing of 256 agendas, 5 Executive Committee meetings disposing of 67 items, and 7 Managing Committee meetings disposing of 136 items were held. In addition, 254 meetings of various Non-Standing Committees/Groups have taken place during the year.

While demonstrating its expertise in the areas of education, professional development and maintenance of high accounting, auditing & ethical standards, ICAI has also been extending support to Government and various regulators and taking initiatives as Partner in Nation Building. We have decided to open a representative office of the Institute in Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh in Srinagar and Leh respectively. Both these offices will be creating newer opportunities for the students, youth, and practitioners residing in these states. ICAI welcomed the students from

Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, and 8 North-Eastern States and offered them a 75% fee waiver.

Let me now mention some of the important developments that took place over the last month:

1. The ICAI Convocation held in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Jaipur in January 2020 to award Membership and Merit Certificates to newly enrolled Members and Rank Holders, respectively, was graced by dignitaries like Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Minister of Science & Technology, Health and Family Welfare in Delhi, Hon'ble Thiru. K Pandiarajan, Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, Government of Tamil Nadu in Chennai, CA. Arun Singh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament and CA. (Dr.) Niranjan Hiranandani, President ASSOCHAM in Mumbai to name a few. In the event, around 18,000 members and more than 66 CA Examination Rank Holders were felicitated. It was heartening to see young members proudly flipping tassels from one side of their cap to another.
2. ICAI recently honoured stellar individuals who possess excellent skills, dedication, enthusiasm, leadership, and the ability to deliver the best that we all strive to emulate by organising the 13th ICAI Awards in Mumbai. The awards were presented in 9 major categories, i.e., CA Business Leader, CA CFO, CA CXO, CA Young Leader, CA Entrepreneur, CA Global Achiever, CA Educator, CA Special Recognition (for specially-abled members), and CA Hall of Fame by Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Railways. The precursor to the ICAI Awards ceremony included thought leadership by banking, insurance and industry experts with the focus on roles of CFO, CEO, Ethics, Robotics, and Digital disruption.
3. ICAI Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting were also organised recently amidst a huge gathering in Jaipur to give impetus to various companies to improve their standards of financial reporting. During the year 188 companies from different sectors applied for the awards and a total of 12 awards were given away by the Chief Guest Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, Hon'ble Judge, High Court of Rajasthan. I am confident that our fraternity both in industry and practice will be able to shoulder the responsibility of the times to come.

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4. As a part of pursuing its goal of playing significant role and developing relationship of mutual understanding with International Bodies, ICAI nominees comprising, myself, Vice-president and others met IFRS Foundation delegation comprising Mr. Erkki Liikanen, Chair of IFRS Foundation Trustees, Mr. Vinod Rai, Trustee, IFRS Foundation and Mr. Lee White, ED, IFRS Foundation. ICAI nominees also participated in meetings of the IFRS Foundation delegation with C&AG, RBI, and SEBI to discuss issues of mutual interest and areas of co-operation.
5. ICAI is helping in nation-building by supporting the cause of justice through leveraging its vast network of branches to help provide video conferencing facilities between members and Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) in areas where the ITAT does not have benches or in places where regular members are not available. An arrangement in this regard has been recently entered with ITAT during its 79th Foundation Day in Delhi.
6. You would be pleased to know that now Indian Institute of Management, Jammu (IIM, Jammu) has recognised Chartered Accountancy qualification as an equivalent to a Master's degree for the purpose of pursuing a Ph.D. Programme in IIM, Jammu. With this recognition, a total of 104 Universities, 7 IIMs and 2 IIT (Madras and Bombay) (Total 113 Universities/Institutions) have recognised Chartered Accountancy qualification for pursuing a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programme.

My efforts to actively work for the profession in last two decades led me to be 67th President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India for the Council year 2019-20. The profession gave me an opportunity to join Central Council in 2013, ever since then, I have endeavoured to serve the profession at national level with integrity and dedication. Change is inevitable. However, even when I relinquish the position, I will continue to contribute to the furtherance of the profession. I, along with my colleagues from the accountancy profession, will continue to strive to work effectively for the growth of the Institute and the profession.

Like all of you, I am looking forward to the Union Budget 2020 which we all hope will provide a boost to the Indian economy to achieve the ambition of being USD 5 trillion economy by 2025. I would like

to thank the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Ministry of Finance for their support and ICAI will continue to have a dialogue with them. In handling the onerous responsibility that comes with position of being the President of the Institute, I got ample support and useful suggestions from my colleagues in the profession. I would like to especially thank the Vice President CA. Atul Kumar Gupta for all the support and hard work he has put in to make our endeavours a success. I would like to thank our members in Parliament who have addressed their fraternity. I would also like to thank all my Council members, government nominees, Acting Secretary ICAI, Secretaries and HODs of various Non-Standing Committees and Standing Committees/ Departments, Regional Council members, Branch Managing Committee members, and the entire staff of ICAI for their untiring contribution which has helped me in discharging my duties. I would like to thank all the young budding students and members who showered immense respect and love. I can never repay this debt. I take leave of you with a sense of great personal satisfaction. I also see the future as being full of exciting possibilities, tremendous opportunities. Soon I will hand over the baton of ICAI leadership to my successor. I wish the Institute and the profession very best in future.

I look forward to meeting many of you during ICAI's 70th Annual Function to be held in New Delhi on February 7, 2020, where we would be felicitating our rank holders, Best Regional Council Award, and Best Branch Award, etc. You would get to meet a galaxy of students, dignitaries from Government trade/commerce, diplomats, media and prize winners. On the occasion you can feel the energy of the CA rank holders who will no doubt raise the flag of the Chartered Accountancy profession.

As I drive off and set my GPS for Vision 2030 of ICAI becoming the world's leading accounting regulator, I will keep fond memories of my all colleagues, juniors and seniors in my rearview mirror. All the best to everyone!

Best wishes,



CA. Prafulla P. Chhajed
President, ICAI
30th January, 2020