



परमेशि जगन्मातर्महालक्ष्मि नमोऽस्तु ते॥

Salutations to Goddess Mahalakshmi who is the mother of the universe. The supreme one. - *Mahalakshmyastakam 7.*



Dear Professional Colleagues,

Penning down this message, wherein the preparations are in full swing to celebrate the festival of lights across the length and breadth of this nation and even beyond, we at the Institute of Company Secretaries of India are basking in the glory of celebrations of the 51st National Convention of Company Secretaries – the annual mega festival of the ICSI.

It is amazing to witness how just a few days can add so much to the memoir books, paint golden in the leaves of history, lend to our already sprinting feet and fill our hearts with copious volumes of pride and humility at the same time.

Just a month ago, the pages of this journal had been filled with tons of memories created in the gracious presence of the Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, Hon'ble Finance Minister – Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman and the 55th Foundation Day of the ICSI on October 4, 2023.

Not only are the moments still fresh and alive in our thoughts, but their words of wisdom, appreciation, and expectations of all echoing inside each one of us. I am just when you wonder cannot get any better than this, the Lord Almighty invites you to his beautiful land and be stores with his choicest of blessings.

51ST NATIONAL CONVENTION OF COMPANY SECRETARIES: KASHI VISHWANATH KI NAGRI KO DHANYAVAAD

सानन्दमानन्दवने वसन्तमानन्दकन्दं हतपापवृन्दम्।
वाराणसीनाथमनाथनाथं श्रीविश्वनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये॥

'Kashi', as we all fondly called the city of Varanasi comes from the Sanskrit word 'Kas', which means 'to sparkle'. It is believed that when the Earth was created, the first ray of light fell on Kashi.

For a city with such religious, historic and spiritual significance, one is bound to be reminded of the infinitesimal nature of human life in individuality - nothing more than a blip in the universe. And yet the Lord of Kashi, Mahadev has not only lent magnanimity to our pursuits by according us this opportunity to host the 51st National Convention of Company Secretaries in the historic city of Banaras; rather I would call it, his blessing that the biggest congregation of Company Secretaries was inaugurated at the hands of our Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankar, and the Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Smt. Anandiben Patel.

Irrespective of the language I choose, words will definitely fail me in defining the surge of emotions experienced on meeting the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankar. An epitome of true humility, his joviality was beyond contagious. Not only did he put us all at ease with his encouraging smile, his genuine interest in the workings of the Institute as well as those pursuing various responsibilities made his presence seem more than familial.

“It is this place which had taught the world for ages what is ethics, what is morality, what is spirituality. So you have chosen such a good place that you can go absolutely charged to deliver for the nation and discharge your obligations as envisioned by law”.

“The role of a company secretary has evolved over the years. They are now key pillars of governance and compliance within organizations; upholding the principles of transparency, ethics and accountability in corporate governance.”

His words of appreciation on the choice of city as well as our theme along with the roles and responsibilities of Company Secretaries have given a fine sense of direction to our thoughts, intent and action.

I am equally humbled to acknowledge the gracious presence of Smt. Anandiben Patel, Hon’ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh. An octogenarian by age, her acclimatisation with the recent trends, of both government and governance has left us all spellbound. Not only was her address filled with words of wisdom and expectations, her understanding of the role of Governance Professionals – both present and future what is crystal clear. To quote her, *“CS play a prominent role in helping corporates tread path of progress. I appreciate ICSI for shaping such important professionals of the country & organising events that give opportunity of extensive learning”.*

The ICSI has always been proud of its alignment with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The feeling is par ecstatic when the same pride is reciprocated. The presence of Dr. Manoj Govil, Secretary, MCA, his acknowledgement and appreciation of the role of Company Secretaries and ICSI before the Hon’ble VP and Governor has added further vigour in our action.

I am equally gratuitous towards our Guest Speakers - Shri K Rajaraman, IAS, Chairperson, IFSCA; Shri Amit Jain, CEO & Co-founder, CarDekho Group; Pujya Dr. Gnanvatsalswami, Life Coach & Eminent Speaker BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha; Dr. BVR Mohan Reddy, Founder Chairman and Board Member, Cyient Ltd. and CS R Krishnan, Former President, The ICSI for their time and their presence amongst us deliberating on the various aspects of our core theme **India at G20: Empowering Sustainable Future through Governance and Technology**.

I cannot help but thank our International Delegates - Mr. M Nurul Alam, Senior Vice President, Institute of Chartered Secretaries of Bangladesh; Ms. Anneliese Reinhold, Council Member, Institute of Directors, UK; Mr. Soorin Babu, Assistant Honorary Treasurer,

Malaysian Association of Company Secretaries; joining us from different parts of the world and rendering the National Convention into an International one.

Although the ritualistic vote of thanks has been given at the Convention Venue itself, I feel truly humbled and grateful to each and every member of the ICSI, who, with their participation – physically or virtually have played the role in the success of the 51st National Convention of Company Secretaries. I am sure that the deliberations, takeaways and cherished friendships fostered shall guide our way into a promising future filled with the most unique of opportunities !!!

BENEFITING MEMBERS: COLLABORATING THROUGH MoUs

The ICSI has always been innately conscious of the needs and requirements of the professionals as regards dispensing off of their professional responsibilities. As a parent institution, while our intent is to create avenues of capacity building, as a professional organisation our intent is to find arenas of providing technical and technological support and comfort; and as a family, our intent is to find means of personal growth, safety, security, leisure, even self-actualisation.

Adding to the thought, the 51st National Convention came across as the perfect opportunity to not only launch publications, but release a dedicated Handbook on Benefits for the members of the Institute. Along with that, we have signed and exchanged MoUs with HDFC Life for providing insurance options, Samsung India to avail the benefits of the Samsung Corp+ Program offering unique privileges on Samsung products and payment options; Prudent Insurance for securing the Prudent Protect Motor Insurance benefits and Club Mahindra for bringing to all members, membership access to 4300+ resorts at a special discounted rate.

I am absolutely sure that the members shall avail of the offerings of these companies and relish the benefits and experience.

STRENGTHENING SELF-GOVERNANCE: ICSI (MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMPANY SECRETARIES IN PRACTICE) GUIDELINES, 2023

Amongst the long list of publications released at the hands of our dignitaries during the various sessions of the National Convention, one that I would like to share a bit more in detail is the ICSI (Management and Development

of Company Secretaries in Practice) Guidelines, 2023. If 'Preach what you practice' is the mantra that we swear by, it is only fitting that good governance begins at home. And to materialise the same, the primary step is to have an accurate sense of the law. Apprehending the same, the ICSI has brought all the Guidelines pertaining to members within the binds of a single book.

Given the evolving boundaries of Practice and the expanding footprints of the Profession in emerging areas with multitude of opportunities demanding expertise, significant duties have been cast on the Company Secretaries in Practice necessitating high degree of professionalism and meticulous abidance with the applicable legislations.

All this and more have placed before us the need to have a dedicated set of Guidelines to facilitate the practising members by consolidating all the relevant Guidelines as applicable and the processes involved therein in a coherent manner ensuring ease of reference and enhanced comprehension; right from applying for the PCS Orientation Programme and enrolling as a Company Secretary in Practice to running a successful Practice. These Guidelines primarily focus on the procedure to be followed by members in all stages of Practice; starting from undergoing the PCS Orientation Programme, obtaining the Certificate of Practice, venturing into Practice and managing their Firm, the service areas available to them, branding and development of Profession, and so on.

I am of the firm belief that these Guidelines will serve as a valuable aid to members in their professional endeavours.

STRONG ROOTS MAKE FOR A STRONGER TREE : ICSI CHAPTERS AND REGIONAL COUNCILS

Each year as we begin to chalk out the plans for the months ahead, the ICSI Leadership summit brings together not only the members of the ICSI Central Council and the Heads at the Secretariat, rather it is those three days when the entire ICSI with all its Chapter and Regional Councils, their Managing Committees and their Executive Officers comes under one roof to demarcate activities and initiatives, sharing their concerns and the possible challenges and making a selfless commitment to serve each and every stakeholder to the best of their capabilities.

The reason why I mention a long bygone event is because it makes my heart swell with pride to thank and congratulate all the Regional Councils and Chapters who have lived up to their commitment and supported the ICSI initiatives to the hilt.

But more than myself, I believe each of the Regional Councils and Chapters who have received the Awards for the year 2022 must be on cloud nine for have had the opportunity to be bestowed upon these honours at the hands of the Hon'ble Vice President of India and Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

I extend my heartiest acclamations to all of you for your tremendous efforts making you worthy of these honours and believe that all the other RCs and Chapters shall while taking a cue from them strive towards more... much more...

MONTH GONE BY AND THE TIMES AHEAD

If the launches and releases of the 51st National Convention are any indication, the times ahead expected to be equally riveting and nail biting as the ones we have passed by. If the past two months saw us hosting the NCLT Conclave across various ROs and Chapters, the months to come intend to encourage us in raising interesting deliberations on the issues and challenges in the achievement of the ultimate goal of sustainability.

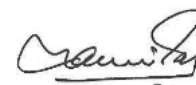
Since good governance, as a concept cannot thrive in isolation, practical roadmaps are required to be chalked out to imbibe the ESG principles in the smallest and biggest of business enterprises, all with the aim of leading a sustainable road to development. The ESG Conclave launched at the hands of the Hon'ble Vice President aims to do just that.

Meanwhile preparations are on for the Jury Meeting and Award Ceremony of the ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance, the details of which would be sharing in the next edition. Just as we had released the Chartered Secretary Collectors' Series on CSR at the 55th Foundation Day, we released the Collectors' Series for MSMEs and Start-ups at the 51st National Convention; and as we talk the next series are in progress.

As we celebrate the festival of knowledge and wealth, of righteousness and expansive growth, of Lord Ganesha and Maa Lakshmi, I wish, hope and pray that each one of us in our capacity as individual members and together representing an entire profession take this Institution to unfathomable heights and glory...!

Happy reading !!!

Yours Sincerely



CS Manish Gupta
President, ICSI