Dear Professional Colleagues,

“Excellence is a continuous process and not an accident.” These are the words of our beloved former President late Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam popularly known as Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. He has been a lot more than just a political figure and a scientist. He was a great thinker and a leader in true sense and will always be remembered.

The ICSI pays homage to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Former President of India - a visionary, an extraordinary human being who is fondly remembered as People’s President, The Missile Man, his sudden demise has grieved the Nation. We fondly remember his speech and interaction at the ICSI Symposium on Vision 2020 held at New Delhi 9th January, 2008 where he said, “Since the 11th plan is targeting to have a GDP growth of over 10% per annum, there is a need for the entire industrial and business establishment being serviced by the company secretaries to increase their present rate of growth and sustain it for at least a decade”.

Every person has some inborn strengths, which he hone over his lifetime with learning and experiences, these inner strengths, and experiences, cannot be lost or taken away. Exploring these inner strengths and applying them to a challenging task reaps true success. As the saying goes“Nothing can dim the light which shines from within”.

You are aware that the Companies Law Committee constituted to make suggestions on the issues arising out of implementation of Companies Act, 2013 had sought comments through the portal of Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The Ministry had asked the institutes/business chambers to collate suggestions from their members and present the same to the Ministry. Accordingly, the Institute had sought the suggestions from the members and received an overwhelming response. I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation and thank all the members for their views / comments and suggestions. I am glad to inform that the Institute has submitted all the policy related suggestions received from the members to the Ministry.

The Secretarial Standard on Meetings of the Board of Directors and Secretarial Standard on General Meetings came into effect from July 1, 2015. I appeal to all members to follow the standards in true letter and spirit to reap the governance benefits anticipated by law. Further, taking note of the requirement to understand the magnitude and implications of these standards for ensuring compliance and with a view to provide guidance on the implementation, queries related to SS-1 and SS-2 were invited from Stakeholders. In response to which a large number of queries were received and duly considered and responded to individually.

In this regard, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have also been placed on the website for the reference of the stakeholders. The same would be updated from time-to-time as and when additional queries are received. The replies to these queries are also being integrated in the Guidance Notes on Board Meetings and General Meetings. A series of webinars have been planned to provide Guidance on Secretarial Standards. The third webinar of this series was conducted on 8th July, 2015 wherein the queries of the stakeholders were addressed; the video recording of the webinar has been uploaded on the website of the Institute for the reference of the members. In addition to these initiatives, seminars and conferences are also being organized through the Chapters/ Regional Councils across India.

A National Seminar on Secretarial Audit was conducted at Chennai on 18th July 2015. Further, National Seminars are scheduled to be held in New Delhi and Kolkata on August 8, 2015 and August 22, 2015 respectively. I urge upon the professional fraternity to participate in the seminars in huge numbers and enrich themselves through the deliberations by the experts in their chosen subjects.

The portfolio of services being provided by the Company Secretaries both in practice and in employment is expanding and the role of Company Secretary is undergoing a significant transformation.
I am pleased to inform you that as part of creating awareness for Hyderabad Chapter for taking lead in this regard, initiatives taken by the ICSI under the leadership of Mr. Ahalada Institute participated in the two day event. This is one of the new 25-26, 2015 at Hyderabad. Over 400 members and students of the "Corporate Laws & Challenges To The New Governments" on July Hyderabad organised a Two Day National Research Seminar on The institute jointly with PG College of Law, Osmania University, Practice Unit which is engaged in rendering attestation assignments. developing and improving the systems and procedures in place in a being rendered by our professionals, the entire exercise helps in a mechanism to further enhance the quality of professional services has set a target of completing the peer review in respect of 1000 coming months. I have been informed that the Peer Review Board mechanism more awareness programmes have been planned in the number of Peer Reviewers empanelled by the Board will soon reach the milestone of 500. With a view to further strengthen the Peer Review mechanism more awareness programmes have been planned in the coming months. I have been informed that the Peer Review Board has set a target of completing the peer review in respect of 1000 practice units during the year. There is no doubt that peer review is a mechanism to further enhance the quality of professional services being rendered by our professionals, the entire exercise helps in developing and improving the systems and procedures in place in a Practice Unit which is engaged in rendering attestation assignments. I call upon all practicing members to voluntarily offer their Practice Units for being peer reviewed.

The institute jointly with PG College of Law, Osmania University, Hyderabad organised a Two Day National Research Seminar on "Corporate Laws & Challenges To The New Governments" on July 25-26, 2015 at Hyderabad. Over 400 members and students of the Institute participated in the two day event. This is one of the new initiatives taken by the ICSI under the leadership of Mr. Ahalada Rao, Council Member of the Institute. I would also like to thank the Hyderabad Chapter for taking lead in this regard.

I am pleased to inform you that as part of creating awareness for are expected to deal with various laws other than the company law. The Institute has been taking several initiatives with a view to build capabilities of members in niche areas. One such area being Competition Law. The Institute has planned a series of National Conferences in Competition Law in association with the Competition Commission of India. The first Conference was organized at Mumbai. The second conference in the series was organized at Kolkata on the theme “Compliance of Competition Law by Enterprises” on 20th July, 2015. While Mr. M. S. Sahoo, Member, Competition Commission of India was the Chief Guest, distinguished speakers at the programme included Mr. Sunil Kanoria, Sr. Vice President, ASSOCHAM, Mr. G. R. Bhatia, Partner, Luthra and Luthra Law Offices; Mr. Ved Prakash Mishra, Director, Competition Commission of India; Mr. Shouvik Kumar Guha, Assistant Professor, The WB National University of Juridical Sciences; Professor (Dr.) P. IshwaraBhat, Vice-Chancellor, The WB National University of Juridical Sciences; Mr. Tarun Mathur, Manager, Ernst and Young; Mr. K. K. Sharma, Advocate, Former Director General, CCI &Commissioner of Income Tax.

I am glad to inform you that the MoU between Central Board of Excise and Customs and the ICSI for setting up ACES Certified Facilitation Centres has been extended till 31st March, 2017 for the benefit of the members. Members fulfilling the criteria for setting up ACES Certified Facilitation Centres may take benefit under the MoU and render services such as Digitisation and/or E-filing of Central Excise and Service Tax Documents, online registration, amendment to the registration form, filing various claims, intimations, and permissions, refund claim, request for provisional assessment and export related documents in addition to filing replies to show cause notices and appeals to Commissioners (Appeals).

The Peer Review Board of the Institute has also planned a series of training programmes for Peer Reviewers to be organised throughout the country. I am pleased to inform you that the Institute has so far organised ten Peer Reviewers’ Training Programmes. I am sure, keeping in view the overwhelming response from the members the number of Peer Reviewers empanelled by the Board will soon reach the milestone of 500. With a view to further strengthen the Peer Review mechanism more awareness programmes have been planned in the coming months. I have been informed that the Peer Review Board has set a target of completing the peer review in respect of 1000 practice units during the year. There is no doubt that peer review is a mechanism to further enhance the quality of professional services being rendered by our professionals, the entire exercise helps in developing and improving the systems and procedures in place in a Practice Unit which is engaged in rendering attestation assignments. I call upon all practicing members to voluntarily offer their Practice Units for being peer reviewed.

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I am pleased to inform you that as part of creating awareness for CSR, the Hyderabad Chapter of ICSI is organizing CSR 5K Walk for Social Responsibility on August 9, 2015 starting from Necklace Road. I invite all members and students to participate in this social cause in large number.

As part of Corporate Governance initiative of the Institute, this year the Institute will be presenting the prestigious 15th ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance, to recognize and encourage the adoption of best governance norms and practices by Indian corporates. The Institute’s mission and vision statements echo our commitment for promotion of corporate governance. This year awards will be given in four categories, i.e., Two Best Governed listed Central Public Sector Companies; Two Best Governed Listed banks; Two Best Governed Listed SMEs; and Two Best Governed Listed companies. The questionnaires are developed through an open, transparent and consultative process and the draft Questionnaire for all the four categories was uploaded on ICSI website for comments from various stakeholders. The Questionnaires and the evaluation methodologies are finalized by an Expert Group constituted for the purpose. The meeting of the Expert Group is scheduled in August. I urge upon the members to encourage the companies to participate in the awards and make this initiative of your Institute a true success.

The 16th Annual congregation of practising members the National Conference of Practising Company Secretaries is scheduled to be held on August 13-14, 2015 at Bolgatty Palace & Island Resort, Kochi on the theme “PCS-Calibrating Competence for Achieving Excellence”.

The much awaited 43rd National Convention of Company Secretaries is scheduled to be held at Kempinski Ambience Hotel, Delhi during 17-19 December, 2015. I request all the members to block these dates in their diary and to be part of this mega event of the Institute.

Dear Colleagues, it is now time to concentrate on capacity building which includes excelling in the core area, exploring new opportunities and carving out the niche areas. I would appeal to the members especially the younger ones to have courage to think differently and traverse the unexplored path without fear. Our inner strengths are to be reinforced with the commitment. To conclude let me quote the words of wisdom by Marcus Aurelius, “You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(CS ATUL H MEHTA)

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