"Sharing professional expertise globally"

One of the premier financial institutes, The Institute of Cost Accountants, occupies a special place in the finance space. **CMA Rakesh Singh, President, The Institute of Cost Accountants of India** spoke to Business Standard on his new role and more. Excerpts of the interview

CMA Rakesh Singh
President, Institute of Cost Accountants of India

What is your vision and agenda as the new president of the Institute?

To be responsiveness to changes in world economy our Institute is in the process of capacity and competence building of members to train them in achieving the desired goalsand making professionals available to help India Inc.in becoming leaders in every sphere of their activity in sustainable manner. Towards these goals, I propose to focus on :

- To strengthen physical infrastructure at all levels to cater to the growing demand.
- To establish CMA support Centres across the country to provide opportunity to aspiring young students interested to become "CMA".
- To establish Centre for Excellence(s) in cities with large industrial base.
- To organise focused programs to keep the members abreast with the latest development in the profession on the maintenance of Cost Accounting Records and Cost Audit and filing of Cost Audit Report in XBRL mode, besides other important changes relating to Valuation Audit, CENVAT Audit, etc.
- To issue remaining Cost Accounting Standards and Guidance Notes thereon
- To issue Cost Audit and Assurance Standards
- To share the professional expertise of the Institute in various fields globally and in particular with the members of the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) countries
- To enhance the visibility of the Institute through various public relation activities
- To develop cordial relation with sister Institutes.

How many students do you have right now? And what according to you is the reason for the popularity of the institute?

Presently, we have about 5.5 lakhs students and 56,000 qualified CMA professionals. There are many reasons attributable to popularity of the Institute viz. lot of practice areas for the members have emerged on account of liberalization of economy creating practice scope for Cost Accountants with respect to various regulators' requirements for certification of their Forms & Returns, authorization to conduct audits under various Acts Cost Audit, VAT Audit and consultancy work in many areas.

Does Government of India recognize the qualification of Institute for Certification or Audit purpose?

First of all I would like to make it clear that the Institute is not a private but statutory body under an Act of Parliament. Within six years of statutory recognition in the year 1959, the Government of India amended the Companies Act 1956 in 1965 to incorporate Section 209 (1) (d) and Section 233B. Section 209 (1) (d) prescribes for the maintenance of cost accounting records and Section 233B provides for the audit of the cost records.

Further, Government of India have constituted in 1978, an Indian Cost Account Service (ICAS). This Accounting Service is meant for persons having professional qualification Cost Accountants/ Chartered Accountants. There are 31 participating offices of various Ministries/ Departments such as Economic Affairs, Revenue, Commerce, Company Affairs, Defence, Chemicals & Fertilizers, Industry, Agriculture, Consumer Affairs & PD, Supply, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority, I&B, etc. where ICAS are posted.

Various Ministries and Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have recognised the qualification of Cost Accountants for the purpose of Audit and certification.

What are the placement options for students?

The Institute course is job oriented. There are two ways for placement of recently passed CMAs. Firstly, the Institute has centralised campus placement scheme for fresh qualified CMAs from the June and December batches. Under the centralized campus placement schemes, the Private and Public Sector Undertakings participates in

campus selection at 4 locations -Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata at the pre-announced dates and time. Secondly, the Institute organizes customized campus placement as per the mutually convenient date and time at desired location for recruiting companies in accordance with their internal recruitment criteria. Many of the PSUs such as Coal India, ONGC, NMDC, STC, MMTC, Allahabad Bank and Corporates like Nestle, TCS, HCL, TVS, Vedanta, Wipro, Jindal Steel regularly visit the campus, scouting for talented CMAs. Over the last few years, there has been a gradual rise in the placement percentage and package offered.

The world of finance is changing rapidly. How do you ensure you keep pace with it?

The subjects in Intermediate and Final Course of the Institute provide balanced and comprehensive knowledge which is evenly distributed among four knowledge pillars: Financial, Management, Strategy and Regulatory functions.

Besides regular seminars, we have been adopting the educational guidelines of International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) to design the syllabus so that our students are trained to meet the requirements of global economy. Our syllabus is revised at regular intervals keeping in mind the changed economic scenario and the need of the industry. Our syllabus is based on the philosophy of four pillars namely Strategy, Management Accounting and Regulatory Environment.