The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India

(Setup by an Act of Parliament)

– Kumbakonam Branch (SIRC)

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

Knowledge. Integrity. Excellence.
For a Stronger Tomorrow.



NATIONAL FINANCIAL AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 14

"Financial knowledge today,
Financial freedom tomorrow."

SAVE	PLAN	INVEST	SPEND	ACHIEVE
Wisely	Smartly	Intelligently	Responsibly	Your Goals

BE FINANCIALLY AWARE,
BE FUTURE READY!

Empowering Members.
Enriching Profession.
Serving Society.

From The Chairman's Desk



Dear Professional Colleagues,

Warm greetings to all of you.

I begin this month's communication with a heavy heart. The untimely demise of CA B. Saravana Sundar, Mannargudi, Past Chairman of our Branch, has left all of us deeply saddened and devastated. He was a fine gentleman, a committed professional and a well-wisher of our fraternity. His sudden departure has created a void that is difficult to comprehend. It was indeed one of the saddest days for our Branch and the Institute. On behalf of the Kumbakonam Branch and all its members, I convey our heartfelt condolences to his family and pray to the Almighty to give them strength and courage to bear this irreparable loss. May his noble soul rest in peace.

The month of July was vibrant and eventful, with a fine blend of professional and social activities.

We commenced the month by proudly celebrating CA Day with the hoisting of our Institute's flag. The occasion was made even more meaningful through various social initiatives, including a Blood Donation Camp, Tree Plantation and Swachh Bharat activities. As part of the CA Day celebrations, we also conducted a Financial Literacy Programme at Vallalar School, Kumbakonam, creating awareness among young students on the importance of financial discipline and basic financial concepts. It was indeed a befitting way to celebrate our profession while reaffirming our commitment to society.

On the professional front, we conducted an Online CPE Programme on Income Tax Scrutiny Norms and ITR-related issues, which received an overwhelming response and was wonderfully welcomed by many of our branch members. The enthusiastic participation once again demonstrated the importance our members attach to continuous professional learning and knowledge enrichment.

As part of our environmental and social responsibility initiatives, we also undertook tree plantation activities. We visited a Goshala and extended our support by contributing towards one month's feed for the cows and one day's veterinary expenses. These initiatives, undertaken in line with ICAI's social responsibility initiatives, gave us immense satisfaction and reinforced the role of our profession in contributing meaningfully to society.

A Significant Step Towards Our New Branch Premises

I am extremely happy to share with all of you another important development for the future of our Branch.
Considering the growing requirements of our members and students, we had made a request to ICAI for the constitution of an Infrastructure Development Committee (IDC) for our branch, with the objective of identifying suitable new premises and developing the infrastructure of the Kumbakonam Branch.

I am delighted that ICAI has accorded approval for the constitution of the Infrastructure Development Committee. The Committee has been constituted under the leadership of our beloved Central Council Member, CA P. Rajendra Kumar, as Chairman, and CA Sripriya Kumar as Vice-Chairperson. The Committee members and ex-officio members shall form part of the committee, with the Secretary of the branch acting as Secretary to the committee.

The constitution of this committee places us firmly on the path towards our long-cherished objective of securing new and improved premises for the Kumbakonam Branch. This is indeed a proud and significant moment for all of us and an important step towards creating better infrastructure for our members and students for generations to come.

On behalf of our branch and its members, I place on record our sincere gratitude to ICAI and its leadership for considering our request and according approval for this important initiative. We also look forward to the guidance and support of the Infrastructure Development Committee in taking this dream forward.

We also successfully conducted the Annual General Meeting of our branch on 10th July 2026 in a smooth and cordial manner. I sincerely thank all our members for their participation, valuable suggestions, and continued support to the branch. The constructive interaction and involvement of our members will certainly guide us in taking forward the activities and initiatives of the branch in the right direction.

Looking Ahead—August 2026

With the completion of the salary return filing season, we now move into another important phase of our professional calendar. August assumes significance for the filing of non-corporate, non-tax-audit returns. I wish all our members and their teams a smooth and successful filing season. Amidst our demanding professional schedules, let us continue to maintain the highest standards of diligence, quality, and professional ethics.

The coming weeks will also witness several meaningful initiatives from our branch. We are planning Financial Literacy Programmes, Career Counselling Programme, and AURA programme for our students. Through these initiatives, we look forward to creating financial awareness among the public, inspiring young minds to pursue the Chartered Accountancy profession, and providing our students with opportunities for learning and development.

I am also delighted to share that our branch will have an enthusiastic representation at the SIRC Conference, with nearly 30 members from our branch participating. Such active participation is a matter of great happiness and pride and provides an excellent opportunity for professional networking, knowledge sharing, and strengthening fellowship among our fraternity.

Every achievement and every initiative of our branch is possible only because of the wholehearted support of our members. I sincerely thank our Managing Committee Members, Past Chairmen, Senior Members, Students, Families and well-wishers for their continued guidance, encouragement, and enthusiastic participation.

As we move forward, the prospect of better infrastructure for our Branch, more opportunities for our students and continued professional and social initiatives gives us renewed energy and confidence.

Together, let us continue to learn, contribute, connect and grow.

Wishing you and your teams a productive August and a smooth, successful and happy tax filing season.

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Jai ICAI, Jai Hind.

With Warm Regards



CA. H. Vijay Sarathi

Chairman, ICAI Kumbakonam Branch (SIRC)

SNIPPETS FROM JULY 2026 PROGRAMMES

CA Day

1st July 2026

Flag Hoisting by CA H Vijay Sarathi, Chairman , Kumbakonam Branch(SIRC)







Blood Donation Camp 2026









Tree Plantation 2026



Tree Plantation at Gandhi Park, Kumbakonam



CA H Vijay Sarathi, Chairman, Kumbakonam Branch, Planted a sapling at Gandhi Park, Kumbakonam



CA M S K Prasanna Kumar, Vice Chairman, Kumbakonam Branch, Planted a sapling with **CA Govindarajan S** and **CA R Balaji** at Gandhi Park, Kumbakonam



CA Vivek Manohar, SICASA Chairman, Kumbakonam Branch and **CA Ganesh Radhakrishnan** Planted a sapling at Gandhi Park, Kumbakonam

Financial and Tax Literacy Drive



CA. H. Vijay Sarathi, Chairman, briefing the Vallalar Higher Secondary School students about the CA Course.



CA Raghuram, CUB explaining the banking operations

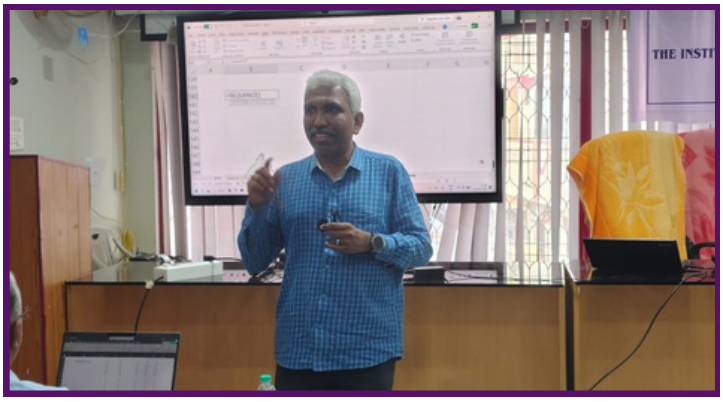


Students keenly exploring Banking Operations.



Group Photo after Tree Plantation at Gandhi Park

Two Day Workshop on Advanced Excel
10th & 11th July 2026



Session by **CA Rathinagiri**



Members Engaged in the Learning Session

Kumbakonam Branch AGM-2026
10th July 2026



During AGM Managing Committee Members of Kumbakonam Branch(SIRC)
From Left **CA V A Sitharasan** (Secretary), **CA H Vijay Sarathi** (Chairman), **CA R Venkatesh** (Treasurer) and **CA M S K Prasanna Kumar**(Vice-Chairman)



Welcome Address by Branch Chairman



Branch Secretary, presenting the Audit Report and Branch Activity Report infront of the Branch Members



Branch Members while presenting Audit and Activity Report

World Environment Day Celebrations - 2026



CA. H. Vijay Sarathi, Chairman, Kumbakonam Branch, feeding a calf at the Gosala, Sundara Perumal Koil as part of Animal Welfare Activity on 4th July 2026



As part of the Animal Welfare Activity, Kumbakonam Branch donated one sack of cattle feed to the Gosala.



Sustainability Pledge led by **CA M S K Prasanna Kumar,** Vice Chairman, Kumbakonam on 11th July 2026



As part of World Environment Day Celebrations Sustainability Pledge taken by branch members



As part of World Environment Day Celebrations, The Tree Plantation Drive was inaugurated by **Dr. A. Gunasekaran**, Regional Joint Director of Collegiate Education at Government Arts College, Kumbakonam. On 22nd July 2026



CA R Venkatesh, Treasurer, Kumbakonam Branch, **CA Ganesh Radhakrishnan** and **CA Mithra Vijayarama** also planted a sapling at College ground

Kumbakonam Branch (SIRC)

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES, AUGUST- 2026

Date	Day	Timing	Place	Mode	Programme Title	Resource Person	Fee (Inc. GST)	CPE
15th Aug 2026	Sat	08:00 am to 10:00 am	ICAI Bhawan, Kumbakonam	Physical	Independence Day Celebrations	-	-	NA
21st Aug 2026	Fri	10:00 am to 02:00 pm	Periyar Maniyammai Institute of Science and Technology	Physical	Super Mega Career Counselling Programme	CA. Kumar Sitaraman	-	NA
22nd Aug 2026	Sat	10:30 am to 12:30 pm	Thatchankurichi	Physical	Financial and Tax Literacy Drive	CA V Mahadevan	-	NA
22nd Aug 2026	Sat	10:30 am to 12:30 pm	Dr. G S Kalyanasundaram Memorial School	Physical	Financial and Tax Literacy Drive	CA Srinivasan N	-	NA
24th Aug 2026	Mon	10:00 am to 01:00 pm	SASTRA University, Kumbakonam	Physical	Public outreach programme on the Income Tax Act,2025 for Non Profit Organisations	Mr. J. Premanand Jothy, IRS, Commissioner of Income Tax (Exemptions)	-	NA

ARTICLE 1

ADVANCED PROMPTING FOR CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS - PART 2

TREE-OF-THOUGHT STYLE PROMPTING | ASKING AI TO COMPARE OPTIONS

Contributed by: CA S Santhanakrishnan, B.com., FCA



In the previous part of this series, we discussed Chain-of-Thought style prompting, where AI is asked to show the working step by step. That method is useful where calculations, classifications and explanations are required.

In many professional matters, however, there is not just one possible answer. There may be two or three possible options, each with different accounting, tax, cash flow, compliance and governance implications.

This is where *Tree-of-Thought style prompting* becomes useful.

What is Tree-of-Thought Style Prompting?

Tree-of-Thought style prompting means asking AI to examine multiple possible paths before suggesting a conclusion. In simple terms, it is like preparing a decision table.

For Chartered Accountants, this is useful in advisory work, internal discussions, management reporting and decision support. Instead of prompting AI for one response, we ask it to compare options, identify advantages, highlight risks and then suggest a reasoned view.

Simple Example

Instead of asking: "Should the company take a loan or issue shares?"

a better prompt would be:

"Our client is considering three options for raising ₹100 crore:

1. Bank loan at 10% interest
2. Issue of preference shares with 8% dividend
3. Rights issue to existing shareholders

Compare the three options considering tax impact, cost of capital, cash flow, debt-equity ratio, tax benefit available, compliance requirements and governance considerations. Present the comparison in a table and give a reasoned recommendation."

This prompt is better because it requires AI to compare alternatives before suggesting a view.

The output may look like this:

Option	Possible Advantage	Possible Concern
Bank Loan	Interest may be tax-deductible; ownership is not diluted	Debt burden and repayment pressure
Preference Shares	May be useful where equity dilution is to be controlled	Dividend expectation and company law compliance
Rights Issue	Strengthens equity base	Depends on shareholder participation

Such a comparison does not replace professional judgement. But it helps the CA prepare a structured discussion note.

Accounting Example

A CA may also use this style for accounting matters.

Prompt:

"A company has slow-moving inventory. Explore three approaches:

1. Write down inventory to net realisable value
2. Create provision for slow-moving inventory
3. Physically dispose of obsolete inventory and recognise loss

For each option, explain accounting treatment, profit impact, documentation required and disclosure points under Ind AS 2."

This kind of prompt helps the professional view the issue from different angles.

The CA can then examine:

- whether inventory is actually obsolete;
- whether net realisable value is lower than cost;
- whether management has sufficient evidence;
- whether there is a consistent policy;
- whether disclosure is required.

Where CAs Can Use This Prompting Style

Tree-of-Thought style prompting is useful in funding decisions, restructuring options, accounting policy choices, internal control remediation, tax position evaluation, ERP implementation choices, risk assessment, contract review and business advisory notes.

In practice, it helps the CA avoid premature conclusions.

Why This Matters

A good professional note should not merely say, "This is recommended." It should also show that reasonable alternatives were considered.

This is important for:

- audit documentation;
- board notes;
- management discussions;
- client advisory;
- regulatory defensibility;
- internal quality review.

Tree-of-Thought style prompting helps create a structured first draft of such analysis.

Professional Caution

AI may compare options, but it may not fully understand the client's business, cash flow position, tax profile, shareholder expectations, banking covenants or regulatory history.

Therefore, the CA must validate the AI-generated comparison against actual facts.

A safe rule is: **AI may help prepare the option analysis. The CA must decide which option is appropriate.**

Prompts for Practice

1. Ind AS Practice Prompt

"Act as an accounting advisory assistant. A company has significant slow-moving inventory. Compare three approaches: write down to net realisable value, create a slow-moving inventory provision, or dispose of obsolete inventory and recognise loss. For each option, analyse treatment under Ind AS 2, profit impact, disclosure requirements, documentation support, audit risk and management judgement involved. Present the comparison in a decision table and conclude with matters requiring professional review."

2. Income-Tax Litigation Practice Prompt

"Act as a tax litigation strategy assistant. A company has received a draft assessment order proposing a transfer pricing adjustment on management service fees paid to an overseas associated enterprise. Compare three response strategies: the factual documentation approach, benefit-test defense, and benchmarking/technical comparability defense. For each strategy, identify strengths, weaknesses, evidence required, likely revenue objections, and appeal risk. Prepare a decision note for a CA to review."

3. GST Practice Prompt

"Act as a GST advisory assistant. A company exports services to an overseas group company and receives foreign currency consideration. Compare three positions: treating the supply as an export of service with LUT, treating it as an intermediary service risk, and treating it as a domestic taxable supply due to place-of-supply concern. Analyse GST implications, documentation required, refund risk, litigation exposure, and practical safeguards. Present the output as an option-analysis note."

Conclusion of Part 2

Tree-of-Thought style prompting is useful where a matter has multiple possible solutions. It helps the CA compare choices, identify trade-offs, and prepare better decision notes.

For professional work, this method is valuable because judgement improves when alternatives are properly examined.

In the next part of this series, we will look at **Socratic prompting**, where AI can be used not merely to give answers but to ask better questions.

To be continued in the next issue...

ARTICLE 2

TURNOVER IS NOT PROFIT: UNDERSTANDING TURNOVER IN INTRADAY SPECULATIVE EQUITY TRADING



Contributed by: CA K Hari Krishna, ACA

Scope and statutory transition: This article deals only with same day cash market equity trades settled without actual delivery. It does not cover eligible exchange traded derivative transactions, which are excluded from the definition of a speculative transaction subject to statutory conditions. Income of FY 2025–26, relevant to AY 2026–27, continues to be governed by the Income-tax Act, 1961. For transactions from 1 April 2026, the corresponding provisions of the Income-tax Act, 2025 are also stated.

With the growth of retail participation in intraday equity trading, many assessees now report speculation business income or loss for the first time. A recurring practical question is this: if an intraday trade produces a loss, why is the absolute amount of that loss also included in turnover for tax audit purposes? The answer lies in separating the trading result from the method used to measure turnover in contracts settled without delivery.

A practical question

"I bought shares for Rs. 3,900 and sold them on the same day for Rs. 3,800. I lost Rs.100. How can the same Rs.100 also be called turnover?"

1. What settlement without actual delivery means

In a delivery based equity transaction, shares are credited to or debited from the investor's demat account through the applicable exchange settlement cycle. In a same day intraday trade that is squared off, the client's buy and sell obligations are netted and no shares are delivered into or out of the client's demat account. The broker ledger reflects the settlement difference together with brokerage and applicable statutory levies.

Under section 43(5) of the Income-tax Act, 1961, a speculative transaction generally means a contract for the purchase or sale of a commodity, including stocks and shares, that is settled otherwise than by actual delivery or transfer. The corresponding provision for transactions governed by the Income-tax Act, 2025 is section 66(31).

2. Working through the numbers

Assume that an intraday equity position is bought for Rs.3,900 and sold for Rs.3,800 on the same day:

Particulars	Amount
Buy contract value	Rs.3,900
Sell contract value	Rs.3,800
Gross trading result before charges	Rs.(100)
Gross settlement difference payable	Rs.100
Turnover contribution for tax audit purposes	**Rs.100**

Note: The actual debit in the broker ledger may exceed Rs.100 because brokerage, securities transaction tax, exchange charges, GST, stamp duty and other levies are separate from the gross trading difference.

The Rs.100 loss is the gross trading result before charges. It is not cash available to the assessee. For turnover computation under the ICAI tax audit guidance, however, the magnitude of the settlement difference is taken as Rs.100. The two figures happen to be numerically identical but answer different questions.

3. The legal basis for using the difference amount

The Income-tax Act defines a speculative transaction, but it does not prescribe a separate formula for calculating turnover in such transactions. For the purpose of determining liability to tax audit, paragraph 5.11(a) of the ICAI Guidance Note on Tax Audit under Section 44AB, Revised 2025, states that the difference amount is turnover and that the aggregate of favourable and unfavourable differences should be considered.

Accordingly, the turnover figure is not the gross buy value, gross sell value, capital deployed or cash flow. It is a compliance measure based on the settlement differences recognised under the ICAI Guidance Note for tax audit purposes.

4. Why favourable and unfavourable differences are aggregated

A negative difference is not deducted from a positive difference while computing turnover. Each settlement difference is considered independently and its absolute amount is aggregated.

Illustration: Profit on Trade A: Rs.500. Loss on Trade B: Rs.500. Net gross trading result before charges: Nil. Turnover for tax audit purposes: Rs.500 + Rs.500 = Rs.1,000.

The net result measures profitability. The aggregate of absolute differences measures turnover for the limited compliance purpose described above.

5. Why the distinction matters

Maintenance of books

For an individual or HUF governed by section 44AA(2) of the Income-tax Act, 1961, the threshold test refers, broadly, to business income exceeding Rs.2,50,000 or total sales, turnover or gross receipts exceeding Rs.25,00,000 in any of the three immediately preceding previous years. For a newly set up business, the test also considers whether those limits are likely to be exceeded during the current year. The corresponding provision under the Income-tax Act, 2025 is section 62. The obligation is to keep books and documents sufficient to enable computation of income; it should not be described as a prescribed set of books for every business.

Tax audit

Under section 44AB of the Income-tax Act, 1961, tax audit is generally attracted where business turnover exceeds Rs.1 crore. The threshold is increased to Rs.10 crore only where both of the following conditions are satisfied: aggregate cash receipts do not exceed 5 per cent of total receipts, and aggregate cash payments do not exceed 5 per cent of total payments. A receipt or payment through a non account payee cheque or bank draft is deemed to be in cash for this purpose. The corresponding provision under the Income-tax Act, 2025 is section 63.

Therefore, turnover of Rs.5 crore does not automatically trigger tax audit solely on the ground that it exceeds Rs.1 crore. The result depends on whether both statutory cash conditions for the enhanced Rs.10 crore threshold are met.

Presumptive taxation under section 44AD

Section 44AD(6) of the Income-tax Act, 1961, excludes only four categories from an "eligible business" : the business of plying, hiring, or leasing goods carriages referred to in section 44AE; a profession specified under section 44AA(1); income in the nature of commission or brokerage; and any agency business. Speculative business is not named in this exclusion list, and the Act does not, in terms, bar an eligible assessee from declaring speculative business income under section 44AD merely because the business is speculative.

In practice, however, presumptive taxation is not applied to speculative business income. The turnover for such a business is not actual sale proceeds but a notional figure, being the aggregate of absolute favourable and unfavourable settlement differences as recognised under the ICAI Guidance Note for tax audit purposes. Section 44AD presumes profit as a percentage of turnover in the ordinary commercial sense, and this notional difference figure does not fit that framework. The return filing utility also keeps speculative business income in a separate reporting head from the section 44AD presumptive schedule. The correct position, therefore, is that speculative business income falls outside the practical scope of section 44AD on account of how its turnover is defined and reported, and not because section 44AD expressly excludes a business on the ground that it is speculative.

Treatment of an overall speculation loss

If the speculation business as a whole results in a loss, that loss may be set off only against profits and gains of another speculation business. Subject to the return filing and other statutory conditions, the unabsorbed loss may be carried forward for four tax years. For AY 2026–27 and earlier years, section 73 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 applies. For Tax Year 2026–27 onward, the corresponding provision is section 113 of the Income-tax Act, 2025.

Conclusion

In an intraday speculative equity trade, profit or loss and turnover are different measures. Profit or loss shows the economic result of the trade. Turnover for tax audit purposes is computed by aggregating the absolute favourable and unfavourable settlement differences in accordance with the ICAI Guidance Note. In the example above, the Rs.100 loss and the Rs.100 turnover contribution share the same number, but they do not represent the same concept.

For professional education only. The tax treatment of a particular assessee should be determined after considering the nature of the transactions, the applicable tax year, the broker records and the relevant statutory conditions.

INTERVIEW

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CA. R. BUPATHY



PAST PRESIDENT, THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF INDIA
CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Every profession is shaped by individuals whose vision, integrity and dedication inspire the generations that follow. The Chartered Accountancy profession is no exception.

On the occasion of his Golden Jubilee in the profession, the ICAI Kumbakonam Branch (SIRC) is privileged to present an exclusive interview with CA. R. Bupathy, Past President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

His remarkable five-decade journey reflects professional excellence, an unwavering commitment to ethical values, and distinguished contributions to institution-building and public service.

Having witnessed the profession's transformation from manual accounting to AI-driven assurance, from paper-based compliance to digital governance, and from traditional practice to global opportunities, he offers a perspective of immense value to students, young professionals and experienced practitioners alike.

We hope this conversation inspires every Chartered Accountant to pursue excellence with integrity, purpose and a spirit of service.

Interview

1. Your professional journey began with strong roots in this region. How did those early experiences shape your career and prepare you for national leadership?

I commenced my professional practice in Chennai as a first-generation Chartered Accountant, without the benefit of an established mentor or professional backing. The initial three years were particularly difficult and challenging. The principal issue during that period was the availability of time—there was more time at my disposal, but very little professional work.

I soon realised that the knowledge and experience gained during my articleship were not, by themselves, sufficient to provide comprehensive and high-quality services to clients. I therefore utilised this initial period to strengthen my knowledge base by interacting with peers in the profession and volunteering to assist other professionals.

Through this process, I developed the practical skills required to understand and respond effectively to client queries. Identifying solutions to issues raised by fellow professionals also enabled me to consolidate and expand my own professional knowledge.

These interactions helped me understand the practical difficulties faced by new entrants to the profession. I particularly observed that professionals from smaller towns, who had received their school and college education in regional languages, often found it difficult to present their ideas effectively, both verbally and in writing.

Many such professionals were exceptionally talented but were unable to connect themselves with opportunities emerging at the national and global levels.

All these experiences shaped my understanding of the profession and enabled me to represent members and students effectively when I was provided the opportunity to serve on the Council and subsequently, as the President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

2. Congratulations on completing fifty years in the profession. Looking back at your first day as a Chartered Accountant, what has changed the most in the profession, and what has remained unchanged?

Thank you very much for your best wishes.

The manner in which professional work is executed has changed dramatically with the advent of technology and more particularly with AI. Technology has improved efficiency, enhanced the accuracy of work and significantly reduced the time required to complete many professional assignments.

Professionals who have adapted to this changing environment have been able to navigate the present challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Although the methods, systems and tools used by Chartered Accountants have undergone substantial changes, the fundamental values of the profession—independence, integrity, trust and ethical conduct—remain unchanged. These values continue to form the foundation of the Chartered Accountancy profession.

3. As President of ICAI, you had the opportunity to shape the profession at the national level. Which initiative or decision from your tenure gives you the greatest satisfaction? With the benefit of hindsight, is there anything you would have approached differently?

I prefer to highlight the initiatives undertaken during my entire tenure as a Council Member, rather than restrict them only to my term as President of ICAI.

The following important initiatives were conceptualised, formalised and implemented during this period:

i. Campus Placement Programme for Chartered Accountants

The Campus Placement Programme for newly qualified Chartered Accountants was launched to connect members with employment opportunities in leading organisations.

I am very pleased to note that this initiative continues even today, with suitable modifications to meet changing industry requirements and the expectations of newly qualified professionals.

ii. Communication and Presentation Skills

There was a widespread view that the communication and presentation skills of students and Chartered Accountants required considerable improvement.

To address this need, the All-India Oratorical Competition for students was introduced. Structured courses on communication and presentation skills were also incorporated into the articleship period.

These initiatives have continued over the years and have contributed significantly to improving the confidence, communication abilities and professional presentation skills of students and members.

iii. Peer Review and Continuing Professional Education

In line with international professional practices, the system of peer review was conceptualised and implemented.

The objective of peer review is to evaluate the professional work performed by Chartered Accountants and suggest measures for improving the quality of their performance. Initially, peer review was applicable only to firms conducting audits of listed companies. Its scope has subsequently been expanded in a gradual manner.

The peer review process helps ensure the quality of work performed by Chartered Accountants while also guiding and supporting them in the effective discharge of their professional responsibilities.

To further enhance the quality of professional services and deliverables, Continuing Professional Education was also made mandatory for members.

iv. Improvement in Infrastructure and Digitalisation

To extend better facilities and services to members, initiatives were undertaken to improve the Institute's infrastructure and digitalise members' accounts and records.

These initiatives laid the foundation for the development of the present Self-Service Portal, commonly known as the SSP Portal, through which several member and student services are now delivered digitally.

4. Throughout your career, you have contributed not only to professional practice but also to strengthening ICAI as an institution. What role do you see for branches such as Kumbakonam in shaping the future of the profession?

In my view, the branches of ICAI play a very significant role in strengthening the knowledge, skills and professional capabilities of Chartered Accountants.

Technology has enabled the rapid movement of data and accelerated the exchange of information. As a result, best practices adopted in any field are now available to professionals almost instantaneously and at an economical cost.

Technology-driven systems have also contributed to improved compliance and an increase in both direct and indirect tax collections. To address emerging economic and regulatory requirements, new laws are regularly enacted and system-driven reviews and assessments are increasingly being adopted.

At the same time, the expectations of regulators, clients and other stakeholders have increased substantially. Chartered Accountants are therefore required to continuously update their knowledge of various laws, regulations and professional standards and ensure proper compliance with them.

1)ICAI branches are expected to organise relevant and high-quality programmes for the benefit of members and students. Such programmes should equip professionals to discharge their responsibilities effectively, to the satisfaction of regulators, clients and other stakeholders.

2)Branches can also play an important representative role. Where members in and around the jurisdiction of a branch experience practical difficulties in discharging their professional responsibilities, the branch may collate the issues raised by them and prepare a detailed and informed representation. The matter may thereafter be taken up through the Regional Council and ICAI with the appropriate authorities.

3)Branches may also establish networks with local government authorities to understand their operational and reporting requirements. The branch can assist such authorities by providing appropriate training in record maintenance, financial reporting and internal systems, thereby improving the overall quality of recordkeeping, governance and reporting made by Government institutions.

4)Branches must arrange programmes to explain the potential of CA Course to the students with the help of local Chartered Accountants associated with education institutions in the region.

5. From manual ledgers to AI-driven audits and digital compliance, you have witnessed one of the most significant transformations in professional practice. How should today's young Chartered Accountants prepare themselves for the next two decades?

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6. Many of our readers practise in towns such as Kumbakonam in the old Thanjavur District. What opportunities do you see for Chartered Accountants practising outside metropolitan cities, and what advice would you offer them?

Most repetitive and routine tasks will increasingly be performed by machines and automated systems. This will provide professionals with more quality time for continuous learning and for rendering high-end advisory services. Such services may include structuring cross-border transactions, identifying domestic and international sources of finance together with the related compliance requirements, undertaking systems audits, advising on ESG compliance, and assisting with disclosures to various authorities concerning assets and liabilities situated within and outside India.

As professional services can now be delivered remotely, professionals located in smaller towns and remote areas will have opportunities to collaborate with leading professionals in larger cities and extend specialised services to clients across different locations.

7. Over the past five decades, you have mentored many articled assistants and young professionals. What is the one piece of advice you find yourself repeating most often?

Individuals should plan their lifestyles according to their earning capacity and maintain adequate financial reserves to meet difficult situations arising from business disruptions, which may become more frequent in the coming years. Borrowings should generally be restricted to the acquisition of productive or long-term assets and should not be used to meet routine household or family expenses, including expenditure on holidays.

8. The profession is built on trust, ethics and independence. How have the challenges of maintaining professional integrity changed over the years? What advice would you give young members when they face ethical dilemmas?

Many professionals have experienced difficulties after undertaking financial commitments that become difficult to honour during periods of financial stress. The inability to balance their financial obligations may eventually compel them to compromise their professional independence and ethical values.

Digital transformation is creating new business opportunities while simultaneously reducing the shelf life of many business models. Professionals must therefore exercise greater caution in the present and emerging environment.

Aggressive businesspersons may approach professionals with attractive proposals and request their assistance in business development or other activities that may not be permitted under professional regulations. There may also be a tendency to carry out such activities in the names of family members. Such arrangements ultimately dilute professional independence and ethical standards and must therefore be avoided.

Professionals working in the corporate sector must also remain vigilant. During difficult periods, an organisation may be tempted to adopt practices that are prohibited by law or inconsistent with established professional standards. A professional working in such an organisation must express his or her professional opinion firmly and clearly. If the organisation continues to pursue such improper practices despite professional advice, the professional should seriously consider dissociating from the transaction or, where necessary, from the organisation itself.

Professionals should also be cautious when they are described as partners in the decision-making process. Such involvement may subsequently be used as a means to compel them to approve or participate in questionable transactions, resulting in repeated compromises and the gradual erosion of ethical values.

Hence, the guiding mantra should be:

"Maintain a simple lifestyle and exercise discipline in borrowing, which will enable to uphold ethical values".

9. You recently celebrated your Golden Jubilee in the profession with your office staff, articled assistants, family, friends and fellow members. What did that occasion mean to you, and what message would you like to share with those who have been part of your journey?

The Golden Jubilee is a significant milestone in the journey of any organisation. It is particularly important to us because ours is a first-generation firm. The Golden Jubilee Celebrations are intended not merely to commemorate the completion of 50 years, but also to relive the happy as well as challenging moments that have shaped our journey.

More importantly, it is an occasion to express our sincere gratitude to all those who have supported, guided and encouraged us throughout these five decades.

One of the most significant decisions in my professional career was to associate myself with the teaching profession. The passion I developed for teaching brought me close to numerous students across all four southern states, the Union Territories and Odisha. Many of them subsequently qualified as Chartered Accountants and have excelled in their professional careers.

They continue to hold me in high regard and have expressed their affection and gratitude in several ways. I sincerely thank each one of them for their encouragement, goodwill and support on various occasions.

The message to all is that "perform your duties sincerely, to the best of your ability and the recognition including monetary compensation will automatically follow".

10. Having witnessed the profession evolve over the past fifty years, what message would you like to leave for the Chartered Accountants who will lead ICAI and the profession over the next fifty years?

Among the various principles that should guide those who serve a professional institution, I would like to highlight the following five important aspects:

i. Institution above the individual

Those who desire and volunteer to serve the profession must always remember that the institution must be placed above personal interests. The primary objective of seeking election to the Council should be to serve and strengthen the profession.

ii. Prudence in the use of institutional funds

We are ordinarily careful while incurring expenditure in our own offices and in our personal lives. Even greater caution must be exercised while dealing with the funds of the Institute. Appropriate safeguards should be established to ensure that every amount is spent prudently and exclusively for its designated purpose.

iii. Effective communication between regulators and professionals

The number of stakeholders and their expectations have increased manifold. Regulators are introducing new laws and making compliance requirements more comprehensive.

At times, the expectations of regulators may be of a very high order, and their immediate implementation may create practical difficulties for professionals and businesses in India. A sincere effort should therefore be made to establish effective two-way communication between regulators and the profession.

Where professionals face genuine difficulties in assisting businesses to comply with proposed requirements, suitable representations should be made seeking modification, clarification or deferment of their implementation. In the meantime, members should be adequately educated, trained and equipped to comply with the new requirements.

iv. Clear distinction between policy and administration

The role of elected representatives is to identify best practices in the profession and recommend their adoption. Such practices may also be relevant to the administration of the Institute.

In my view, elected representatives should bring the best ideas and practices to the table, while the permanent administration should assume responsibility for their effective implementation. The administrative machinery constitutes the permanent pillar of the organisation, whereas elected representatives serve only for a limited tenure.

v. Collective responsibility after a decision

Technical and other important issues are often extensively debated in committee and Council meetings before a decision is reached through consensus.

Once a decision has been taken, all elected members should speak with one voice and make collective efforts to communicate and implement it effectively. The individual opinions expressed by members during internal deliberations should remain confidential and should not subsequently be discussed in public forums. Elected representatives have a responsibility to uphold and respect the deliberated, consensus decisions of the ICAI.

Closing Note

On behalf of the ICAI Kumbakonam Branch (SIRC), we sincerely thank CA. R. Bupathy for his time, candour and the wisdom he continues to share with the profession he has served with distinction for half a century.

As he begins the next chapter of his remarkable journey, we wish him continued good health, happiness and fulfilment. May his experiences and reflections inspire every member to uphold the highest standards of integrity, excellence and service to the profession.

OBITUARY

S.No	MRN	Name	Status 1. (ACA/FCA)	Prof. City	Date of Death
1	212591	CA B Saravana Sundar	FCA	Mannargudi	18-07-2026

May the Almighty, Architect of the Universe rest his soul in peace

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India

(Set up by an Act of Parliament)

Kumbakonam Branch (SIRC)