

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India

Board of Discipline u/s 21A of The Cost Accountants Act, 1959

Final order number: ICMAI/BOD/2026/33

Complaint number	Complaint No. Com/21-CA (139)/2024
In the matter of	CMA Raghavender Reddy Kandadi (M/30434) [Complainant] Vs. CMA H. Padmanabhan (M/16200) [Respondent]
Date of Hearing	As per records and order sheet
Date of order	31 st March, 2026

CORAM:

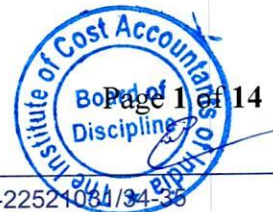
1	Shri P.K. Pujari, IAS (Retd)	Presiding Officer
2	CMA (Dr.) Ashish Thatte	Member

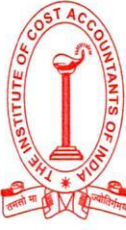
PRESENT

1	CMA(Dr) Hemant Kumar Sindhwani	Director (Discipline)
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Brief of the Case:-

1. The Disciplinary Directorate is in receipt of a complaint in Form I dated 28th May, 2024 in triplicate along with the prescribed complaint fee of Rs 2950/- (inclusive of GST) from CMA Raghavender Reddy Kandadi (hereinafter referred to as the "complainant"), bearing membership number 30434 against CMA H. Padmanabhan (hereinafter referred to as the "respondent") bearing membership number 16200, containing certain allegations against the respondent falling under various provisions of the Cost Accountants Act, 1959.
2. The complaint consists of 6 no of pages, inclusive of the attached annexure vide which it is alleged that the CMA H. Padmanabhan, former Vice President has misuse of the logo and the official website of the institute for personal use which is punishable offence. Form I is reproduced verbatim below:



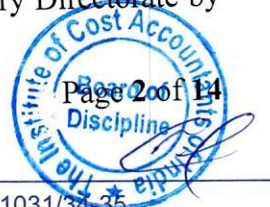


FORM I

[See sub-rule (1) of Rule 3]

1.	Name of the Complaint: (With membership number, if member of *Institute of Cost Accountants of India)	CMA Raghavender Reddy Kandadi (M/30434)
2.	Name of the member/firm against whom complaint is being made: (With membership number/registration number of the firm, if known)	CMA H. Padmanabhan (M/16200)
3.	Latest address of the complaint for communication	8-2-277/a/5/203, Apurupa Apartment, Road No.2, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500034
4.	Last available professional address of the member or the firm against whom the complaints is made	Sr. Deputy General Secretary, Indian Overseas Bank Officer Association, 763, Anna Salai, Chennai: - 600002
5.	Particulars of allegation(s), serially numbered together with corresponding clause/part of the relevant Schedule (s), or Particulars of allegation(s) serially numbered together with clause/part of the relevant Schedule(s) under which the alleged acts commission or omission or both would fall.	Annexures of 5 pages enclosed with details.
6.	Particulars of evidence(s) adduced in support of the allegation(s) made	Screenshot is in annexed.
7.	Name(s) of person who have knowledge of the facts of the case.	

3. The above complaint was scrutinized and was registered in terms of Rule 5 of the Cost and Works Accountants (Procedure of Investigation of Professional and Other Misconduct and Conduct of Cases) Rules, 2007 and the same was proceeded with in the manner as prescribed in Chapter III of the Rules and was registered by the Disciplinary Directorate by giving a unique number, Complaint No. Com/21-CA(139)/2024.





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THE INSTITUTE OF
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भारतीय लागत लेखाकार संस्थान
Statutory Body under an Act of Parliament
(Under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs)

Headquarters:
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Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003
Phone : +91-11-24622156-57-58
Website : www.icmai.in

4. The complaint dated 28th May, 2024 was duly forwarded to the respondent vide letter No. G/DD/Com-CA(139)/(M/16200)/01/07/2024 dated 14th June, 2024 followed by reminder dated 8th July, 2024 calling upon the Respondent to submit a written statement in terms of Rule 8(3) of The Rules, 2007 within 21 days from the date of service of the letter under reference. In response, the Respondent submitted a request dated 8th July 2024, seeking an extension of 21 days due to prior professional commitments. The Disciplinary Directorate considered and granted the requested extension to facilitate the submission of the defense.
5. Pursuant to the extension granted, the Respondent, vide emails dated 29th July 2024 (comprising 1 page) submitted his written statement, which is reproduced verbatim hereunder:

Quote:

Subject: Complaint No Com/21-CA(139)/ 2024 – CMA Raghavender Reddy Kannadi - Vs- CMA H. Padmanabhan

Your letter No. Com/21-CA(139)/2024, dated 14, June 2024

Dear Sir,

Please refer to your letter No. Com/21-CA(139)/2024 dated June 14, 2024 wherein a complaint filed by CMA Raghavender Reddy Kondadi has been enclosed calling upon me to submit written statement.

At the outset, I completely deny and dispute the allegations made in the complaint dated 28th May 2024. The complaint is false, frivolous and an abuse of the disciplinary mechanism for the following reasons:

I. The logo of the Institute has been used in any WhatsApp group which is a private group and not an official group of the Institute.

II. In many WhatsApp group which is run privately, the admins are making use of Institute logo.

This is not a violation but it should be perceived as a brand building exercise.

III. I have tremendous respect for the Institute logo and nowhere the same has been misused. The complainant is making up his own story for reasons best known to him, may be to malign or tarnish my image.

IV. If the complainant has come across this logo in the private WhatsApp group on 8th July 2023, as he claims, what was the reasons for remaining silent and filing the complaint after more than 10 months? This smacks of vendetta and there is definitely something more than that meets the eye.

V. This complaint has no merit and should be quashed immediately and costs imposed upon the complainant.

Finally, I crave leave to add/alter/amend/modify my submissions at any stage of the proceedings.

Yours faithfully,
CMA H Padmanabhan
M 16200





Unquote

6. The respondent email dated and 30th July 2024 submitted additional defence submission (comprising 2 pages), which is reproduced verbatim hereunder:

Date : 30th July 2024

To : CMA Rajendra Bose

Director (Discipline)

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India

12, Sudder Street, Kolkata 700016.

Subject : Reply to complaint no. Com/21-CA(139)/2024 filed against me.

Respected Sir,

I am in receipt of a communication regarding a complaint filed against me under complaint no. Com/21-CA(139)/2024 dated 28.05.2024. I have gone through the contents of the complaint and at the outset I deny all the allegations levelled against me and request you to summarily reject the said complaint. I now submit my detailed reply for your kind consideration :

1. The complainant has referred to Violation of "As per Chapter 3 - sec 22 "Other Misconduct" Chapter 6 Self-Regulation Guidelines and "code of ethics" which is non conclusive and non-existent

The complainant has accused me of violation of abovementioned Sections, but I am not able to locate these particular sections in the CWA Act. The complainant has not quoted any specific violation under the First or Second Schedule relating to the Professional Misconduct and thus the complaint itself lacs merit. It is also not possible for me to reply unless I am aware about which provision is alleged to be violated. Having said this I reserve my right to reply in detail if the complainant provides the exact rule that is Allegedly violated by me.

2. Link referred is not operational

[<https://icmai.in/external/PublicPages/WebsiteDisplay/Members-codeethics.aspx>]

The complainant has referred to a weblink based document. I am not able to access the said document and thus I am not in a position to comment on it or reply on it. I reserve my right to submit a detailed reply if the said document is available to me on the given link.

Having said above I would like to submit following for your consideration.

3. Use of Logo of the Institute

The Logo iCMA of the Institute can be used by any of the members of the Institute. Infact the Institute has been promoting use of this logo. The WhatsApp group is formed for the members of the Institute and to make the Logo more prominent and to give publicity to the Logo of the Institute amongst the members the same was used as Group Icon of the WhatsApp Group. I completely deny that I have violated any provisions of the Code of Ethics. I have used the Logo of the Institute (ICMA) in all good faith to promote the profession amongst its members.

4. Alleged Mis-Representation to the members depicting that the WA Group is official Institute Group





The complainant has claimed that the WA Group "CMA Fraternity SHINES" has misrepresented of being official group of Institute. I deny this fact in absolute terms when the group was formed, since then at no time no member including my self has ever claimed that that this is an official group of the Institute. Even the name of the Group does not imply that this is a official group of the Institute. The group discussion has displayed web-address of the Institute, but it is only for the information of the members. The web-address of the Institute is in public domain and is known to everyone. Mear display of web-address of the Institute in the description of the group can not be construed as mis-representation. There are many Admins and Members in this group till date no one has construed as the complainant has construed. I completely deny that the Group Name or any message on the Group in any way Depicts that this is an official WhatsApp Group.

5. Absence of guidelines for use of Institute Logo by WhatsApp Groups

I would like to submit that the popularity of WhatsApp and other Social Media Handles has increased a lot in past few years. There are no specific guidelines or rules by the Institute that outline rules for use of Logo of the Institute by any WhatsApp Group or Social Media Handle. In absence of any such specific guidelines by the Institute it is not fair to charge a genuine member with violation based on interpretation of a single individual.

6. Distribution of Institute Emblem for use by members by Institute it self

I would like to point out that the Emblem of the Institute in form of Lapel pin is distributed by the Institute to its members in many of the programs. It is also circulated to all the new entrants to the membership of the Institute. This creates an impression that the emblem of the Institute can be used my members of the Institute. The Institute has not framed by guidelines for its use by members either on person or on social media handles. In absence of any such guideline, it is not justified to prosecute a member who has always acted in good faith of the profession.

Having stated above I once again submit that I have not violated any provisions of the Professional Misconduct as defined in CWA Act and Regulations made there under. I once again state that the complainant has not alleged violation of any specific section / rule /schedule as given under the CWA Act. I still reserve my right to submit response if any additional information is submitted by the complainant.

I once again request you to summarily reject the said complaint against me and keep me Updated.

Thanking you. Your's sincerely,
CMA H. Padmanabhan
No. 43, Prem Nagar,
Karamana Post Office,
Thiruvananthapuram - 695002

Unquote

7. The written statement dated 29th July, 2024 was forwarded to the complainant under the cover of letter No. G/DD/Com-CA(139)/2025/C-02/04 dated 6th August 2025 followed by reminder dated 29th September 2025 calling upon his rejoinder in terms of sub-rule (4)





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of Rule 8 of the Cost and Works Accountants (Procedure of Investigation of Professional and Other Misconduct and Conduct of Cases) Rules, 2007.

8. The Complainant, vide letter dated 9th October, 2025 sent his Rejoinder of 3 pages, which is reproduced below in verbatim:

Quote:

Respected Director (Discipline)
Disciplinary Directorate
The Institute of Cost Accountants of India
New Delhi India

Sub: Complaint No Com/21-CA(139)/2024 dated 28th May 2024

Ref: 1. No. G/DD/Com-CA(139)/2025/C-02/04 dated 6th August, 2025

2. No. G/DD/Com-CA(139)/2025/C-03/05 dated 29th September, 2025

I am submitting following points with reference to reference mentioned above.

1. At the outset, I strongly object and deny the explanations given and the averment made by the respondent CMA H Padmanabhan in his reply, in response to your letter to him forwarding the complaint and seeking explanation. And I also want you to confirm whether the respondent was given notice of 21 days to respond, and if yes, when the notice was given and when the respondent responded.

2. It is noted from your letter 1, referred to above, that the respondent had sent his response as above, through an email to Director Discipline 29W1 July 2024 and a letter dated 30th July 2024. If it were to be true, why Disciplinary Directorate contacted me after more than one year on 066 August, 2025, forwarding the said response to me and seeking my rejoinder. This sounds something upsetting.

3. The respondent CMA H Padmanabhan, in his response, as forwarded by you to me had shown the pretext of his ineptness and incapacity to access the web link: <https://icmai.in/external/PublicPages/WebSite/Display/Members-code-eMics.aspx>, which is false and malevolent; in fact the link is live and available even now. I am shocked as to why the respondent, who paradoxically is a 2 times CCM and a past Vice President, could not find a webpage, continuing the Members code and ethics.

4. The respondent had confirmed the usage of the emblem and the submission of the respondent, as reproduced below, is perverse, fraudulent, and misleading, and thus is untrue.

3. Use of Logo of the Institute

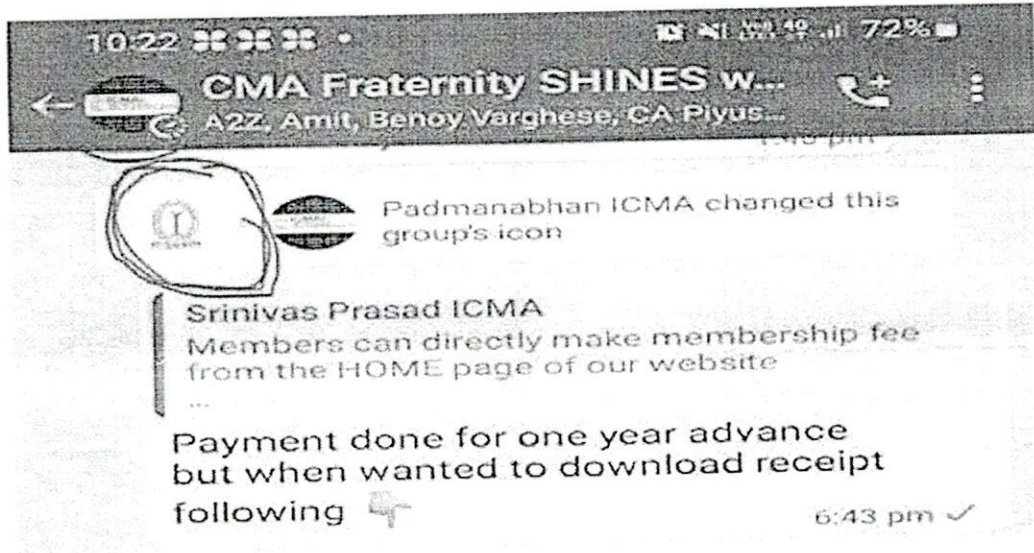
The Logo ICMA of the Institute can be used by any of the members of the Institute. Infact the Institute has been promoting use of this logo. The WhatsApp group is formed for the members of the Institute and to make the Logo more prominent and to give publicity to the Logo of the Institute amongst the members the same was used as Group Icon of the WhatsApp Group. I completely deny that I have violated any provisions of the Code of Ethics. I have used the Logo of the Institute (ICMA) in all good faith to promote the profession amongst its members.

5. Emblem of the Institute [The one with the Lighted lamp and the stanza "Tama Soma Jyotirga Maya"] is a symbol of the magnificence of the Institute upholding its grandeur And it not a public property to be used by members in their private work.



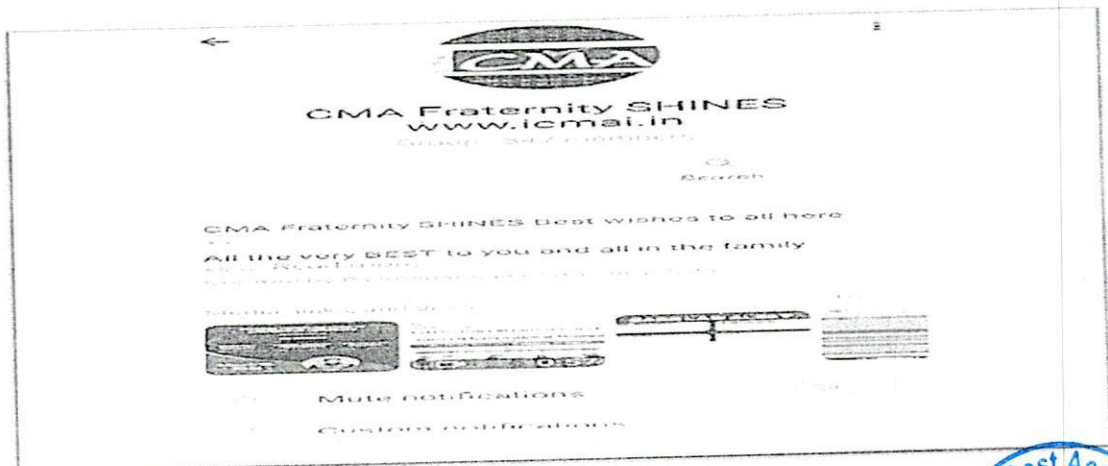


The respondent is trying to mislead by portraying the logo that is normally permitted to be used by members [The one with "i" and CMA letters] as the emblem, which he had used in the WA page, and a screenshot of the same is reproduced below for ready reference.



It is also hereby urged upon you to confirm, whether the Institute has been promoting to use this Emblem, by members, at their vims and fancies. And also confirm whether such usage amounts to a misconduct or not.

6. More so, The full name of the WhatsApp group is "CMA Fraternity SHINES www.icrnai.in". This is what it shows, and it is the personal work of the respondent and not official of Institute of Cost Accountants of India. The name of the group clearly includes "www.icmai.in" which is nothing but our institute website. No one has a right to include the same in their private work. The screen shot of the same is reproduced below, for your ready reference:





7. Also, the respondent in item no 4 of his response by not showing the full name of WhatsApp group “CMA Fraternity SHINES www.icmai.in” and by eliminating www.icmai.in had apparently lied in his response, and made false representation.

8. In respondent email dated 29th July 2024 claims “These smacks of vendetta and there is definitely something more than that meets the eye”. I strongly condemn this statement and there is no truth in it, and virtually he is trying to tarnish my image, and he is further liable for such damaging pronouncements.

I shall reserve my right, without prejudice, to submit any further response; if any additional information is submitted by the respondent.

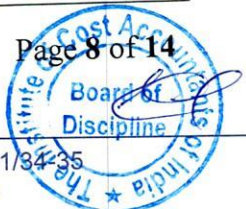
CMA Ragvender Reddy Kandadi
 8-2-277/A/5/203, Apu rupa Apartment,
 Road No 2, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad - 500034

Unquote

9. Investigation and analysis:

a) For the purposes of investigation and analytical examination of the matter, a notice dated 15th January, 2026 under section 21C of the Cost Accountant Act, 1959 read with Rule 8(5) of the Cost and Works Accountants (Procedure of Investigations of Professional and Other Misconduct and Conduct of Cases) Rules, 2007, was issued to the Secretary, ICMAI, for seeking information which is provided by Secretary vide communication dated 9th February, 2026. The information sought and reply of secretary/ICMAI is tabulated below;

SNo	Query	Reply/Comment of Secretary/ICMAI
1	Whether a member of the Institute is permitted to use the logo of the Institute and/or the official website URL of the Institute in a WhatsApp group or similar electronic communication platforms.	As informed by the Membership Department vide email dated 21 st January, 2026, the matter is presently covered under Clause 5 of the Draft Guidelines for Advertisement for Members in Practice (December 2025) hosted on the Institute's official website for inviting public comments. Clause 5 of said draft guidelines, inter alia, provides that: 1. Only Members of the Institute and firms are permitted to use the





		<p>designated logo of the Institute; however, use of the Emblem of the Institute is prohibited.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">The logo may be displayed on the firm's website, letterheads, visiting cards, office stationery, name boards, and other branding materials, whether in print or electronic form.The logo shall not be altered, modified, distorted, or integrated into any other logo or design element.Usage of the logo must not create any perception that the Institute endorses the quality, standards, utility, or assurance of services provided by the firm.The Institute reserves the right to monitor usage of its logo and may direct removal of the same in case of violation, at the cost and responsibility of the concerned member or firm. <p>It is clarified that the aforesaid Guidelines are presently in draft form and are yet to receive final approval.</p>
2	Whether there exist any guidelines, regulations, or instructions governing the use of	As informed by the Legal Department vide email dated 19 th January, 2026, the subject matter does not specifically



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<p>the logo of the Institute and/or the official website URL of the Institute; if so, kindly provide a certified copy of the same for record and reference.</p>	<p>form part of the provisions of the Cost Accountants Act, 1959 or the Rules and Regulations framed thereunder. However, the Institute issues Guidelines/Circulars from time to time for Members, Students, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>In respect of usage of the Institute's logo (Crest and Lamp), no specific standalone guidelines are presently available on the Institute's website. However, reference is made to the document titled "Professional Avenues for Members Code of Ethics", available on the Institute's website, wherein Chapter 6 (Self-Regulation Guidelines) provides certain directions regarding usage of designation and printing of letterheads. Relevant extracts are summarized below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Institute prints official letterheads for the President and Vice-President bearing their names, designation, and the address of the Institute along with the Emblem. Personal addresses, whether professional or residential, are not to be printed.2. Regional Councils and Chapters shall print official letterheads for
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		<p>their respective Chairpersons bearing the designation, address of the concerned Regional Council/Chapter, and the Institute's Emblem, without mentioning personal names. Other office-bearers are required to use common letterheads of the Regional Council/Chapter, with designation typed below their signatures.</p> <p>Further, it is informed that the Certificate of Trade Mark in respect of the Institute's Logo (Crest and Lamp) has been issued by the Trade Marks Registry Kolkata on 21st December, 2025 and is valid up to 17th August, 2033. Accordingly, the said logo constitutes the registered trade mark and exclusive intellectual property of The Institute of Cost Accountants of India.</p>
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- b) From the comments furnished by the Secretary, the Institute of Cost Accountants of India, it is observed that, as on date, no specific or approved guidelines exist governing the use of the Institute's logo by its members. It is further noted that the Professional Avenues for Members – Code of Ethics, as available on the Institute's website, provides certain guidance with respect to the use of designation and printing of letterheads; however, the said document is silent regarding the usage of the Institute's logo. It is also pertinent to note that the logo of the Institute has been registered as a trademark with effect from 21st December, 2025. However, the matter under





consideration pertains to the year 2023, i.e., prior to such registration.

10. Comments from the Disciplinary Directorate:

- a) The present complaint pertains to the allegation that the Respondent, CMA H. Padmanabhan (M/16200), has used the official logo/emblem of the Institute of Cost Accountants of India as a group icon for a private WhatsApp group titled "CMA Fraternity SHINES www.icmai.in" and has further included the official website URL of the Institute in the group's title/description, thereby allegedly creating an impression that the said group is an official platform of the Institute.
- b) The Complainant contends that the official Emblem (featuring the lighted lamp and the Upanishadic stanza) is the exclusive property of the Institute and not a public asset for private use. The Complainant further alleges that the Respondent, being a senior member and past Vice President, has deliberately misled the fraternity by portraying a private initiative as an official one, which constitutes "Other Misconduct" under Section 22 of the Act.
- c) The Respondent, in his written submissions, has denied the allegations and submitted that the WhatsApp group in question is a private group and not an official platform of the Institute. It has been contended that the use of the logo was in good faith and intended to promote the profession and enhance visibility of the Institute. The Respondent has further submitted that there are no specific guidelines issued by the Institute prohibiting such use of the logo/emblem on social media platforms. It has also been contended that the complaint lacks merit as no specific provision of the First or Second Schedule to the Act has been invoked.
- d) In the rejoinder, the Complainant has refuted the submissions of the Respondent and reiterated that the use of the Institute's Emblem in a private forum is impermissible. It has been further contended that inclusion of the Institute's website address in the name of the WhatsApp group is misleading and creates a false impression of official endorsement.
- e) Upon consideration of the material available on record, it is observed that the Respondent has not disputed the factum of usage of the Institute's logo/emblem in the WhatsApp group in question. The issue that arises for determination is whether such





usage, in the facts and circumstances of the case, constitutes professional or other misconduct within the meaning of the Act.

- f) In the course of investigation, clarification was sought from the Secretary of the Institute regarding the existence of any guidelines governing the use of the Institute's logo/emblem and official website URL. The Secretary has informed that, at present, there are no approved or notified guidelines specifically regulating such usage. It has further been clarified that while certain draft guidelines on advertisement and use of logo are under consideration, the same are yet to be finalized and, in any event, cannot be applied retrospectively.
- g) It is further noted that the document titled "Professional Avenues for Members – Code of Ethics" provides certain general guidance regarding usage of designation and letterheads; however, the same does not specifically address or prohibit the use of the Institute's logo/emblem on social media platforms. Additionally, it is observed that the Institute's logo has been registered as a trade mark with effect from 21st December 2025, whereas the alleged act pertains to the year 2023.
- h) In view of the above, and in the absence of any specific statutory provision, regulation, or binding guideline governing the usage of the Institute's logo/emblem in the manner alleged, it cannot be conclusively held that the Respondent has violated any enforceable professional standard in force at the relevant point of time.
- i) Accordingly, in the given facts and circumstances, and in the absence of any explicit prohibition, the benefit of doubt is liable to be extended to the Respondent.

11. Findings and order of Board of Discipline:

- a) The Board of Discipline has carefully considered the complaint, the written statement and additional submissions of the Respondent, the rejoinder filed by the Complainant, the material available on record, and the findings and analysis of the Disciplinary Directorate.
- b) The Board notes that the primary allegation against the Respondent relates to the use of the Institute's logo/emblem and inclusion of the Institute's website URL in a private WhatsApp group, thereby allegedly creating a misleading impression of official association with the Institute.





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- c) The Board further notes that the Respondent has admitted to the use of the logo/emblem; however, has consistently maintained that such usage was in a private capacity, in good faith, and without any intention to misrepresent or misuse the identity of the Institute.
- d) The Board has also taken into consideration the clarification provided by the Secretary of the Institute, wherein it has been categorically stated that, at the relevant point of time, there were no specific guidelines, regulations, or statutory provisions governing or prohibiting the use of the Institute's logo/emblem on social media platforms by members.
- e) It is a settled principle that in disciplinary proceedings, a member can be held guilty of misconduct only when there is a clear violation of an existing and enforceable provision of law, regulation, or binding guideline. In the absence of such a provision, and particularly where the matter falls within an evolving area such as usage of digital and social media platforms, the element of ambiguity must be resolved in favour of the Respondent.
- f) Accordingly, the Board, in exercise of powers under Rule 9(3)(a) of the Cost and Works Accountants (Procedure of Investigations of Professional and Other Misconduct and Conduct of Cases) Rules, 2007, orders the closure of the matter, and inform the Complainant and the Respondent accordingly.
- g) The matter stands disposed of accordingly.

A.P. Thatte
CMA (Dr.) Ashish Thatte,
(Member)



P.K. Pujari
Shri P.K. Pujari, IAS (Retd)
(Presiding Officer)

Place: New Delhi

Date: 31st March 2026

Distribution under Rule 15(3) of the Rule

- 1) Director(Discipline), The Institute of Cost Accountants of India
- 2) Complainant, CMA Raghavender Reddy Kandadi (M/30434)
- 3) Respondent, CMA H. Padmanabhan (M/16200)