

'1.5 mn CMAs & CAs not enough for huge Indian economy'

ICAI President **Rakesh Singh** explains rationale behind CAT, the new post-class XII short-term employment oriented course

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NEW DELHI: Keeping pace with time, the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI), popularly known as Indian Institute of Cost and Works Accountant (ICWAI) till a few years ago, not only took up a new name, it heralded an era of opportunities for aspiring cost and management accountants in the country. The man spearheading the functioning of the institute, Rakesh Singh, the president of ICAI, tells us in a conversation that education needs to empower individuals for their life ahead. 'Not every single function from forms to balance sheets related to cost and finance can be left to the niche club of 1.5 million or so Cost



and Management Accountants (CMAs) and Chartered Accountants (CAs). There has to be an intermediate service in between,' adds Singh, emphatically.

The man at the helm of affairs

at ICAI walks his talk. This April, he commanded the attention of 150 educationists from 60 institutions across the state of Rajasthan in a seminar held in Jaipur to elaborate on CAT (Certificate in Accounting Technicians). CAT is an effort to bridge this gap by introducing a short-term employment oriented course for students post-class 12. It is directed towards creating a pool of human resources for small and medium industries. Students equipped with this certification will not only have an edge over other graduates who appear for ICAI's intermediate course after their graduation but also propel them into their choice of vocation, directly.

Seeing its impact in the state of Kerala where it is a major suc-

cess, the institute is in the process of replicating the model in Rajasthan this year. Explaining the benefits of the course, Singh adds, 'Learning accounting softwares such as Tally and Taxmann at graduation level will give an impetus to a student's career. We are collaborating on a large scale with colleges in Rajasthan to start this course at BCom Level from this year onwards.' The first experiment that started in Kerala was a collaboration between the knowledge acquisition programme of the state government and ICAI. Taking a cue from its positive response, it has been retuned to a year-long course for which a nominal fee of Rs 8,600 will be charged.

The post-World War II world brought about the concept of

cost accountancy to reconstruct the war ravaged economies, quips Singh. Through the course of time, the profession sustained its relevance worldwide by efficiently estimating the costs of optimising the use of available resources in the industrial and economic climate of a country. Taking the legacy forward, CAT was introduced as part of the institute's corporate social responsibility activities.

To build up a network around India, cost and management accounting support centers have been opened nationwide. The Institute has already opened about 400 centers within a year's time. It is geared up to open yet another 500 centers in the country. With the extensive network of sup-

port centers, online webinars and availability of short-term courses, the institute plans to ensure that the workforce from small cities is not forced to migrate in search of jobs.

Admission tests for CMA and CAT are just around the corner in June. Sensing the heat in students' circle, we asked the president for his word of advice. 'Devote three-four hours ardently for preparation and then seek the blessings of your parents. We do not need researchers, we need smart, savvy and hard working individuals,' says Singh. Coming from the horse's mouth, that's a quick tip for all budding cost and management accountants and accounting technicians trying out their luck this year.