Dear Friends,

The winds of transformation have started blowing over IT Industry. Veteran Banker, Shri K.V. Kamath was named as Chairman of Infosys Technologies, the second largest software company in India. With this it is clear that leadership in IT companies is now no longer going to be restricted to IT professionals. Emergence of new services and solutions for inclusive sector has started showing an impact on the growth of IT industry. Government of India has earmarked crores of rupees for empowering its citizens and the society at large by arranging innovative ICT solutions in various projects like UID and organising various schemes for skill development, enhancing of knowledge and education, upgrading infrastructure etc. Recently concluded CSI National Conference for “ICT FOR SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL INDIA” held at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai did enlighten about new upcoming opportunities for IT industry. Demand of ICT solutions for inclusive growth has surfaced in education, agriculture, health etc., and it offers excellent opportunities in the areas of R&D and provides for the development of capability and competency for new emerging sectors.

Latest trends and developments in IT industry provide a good basis for planning various CSI programs and seminars and forming policies for our society. Question arises as to how these trends will have an impact on CSI plans; in what manner we should participate in the nation building exercises; what should be our strategy and action plan be to support these developments; and what kind of technical programs and seminars should be organized for better relevance and connectivity with Nation’s priorities.

Corporate user segment is looking at Cloud Computing to achieve economies of scale and agility in delivering their services to Customers. This emerging model now in its nascent stage in India, is posing a challenge to the conventional way of managing IT Services with in-house IT.

I am glad to mention that we are discussing the subject of cloud computing and related developments in this issue of CSI communications. This is an excellent opportunity for CSI to connect with the user community by arranging a good number of programs in this domain.

CSI recently launched CSI Communications with varied contents and new design, which was highly appreciated by our members. We are indeed proud of our editorial team consisting of Prof. Rajendra Sonar, Dr. Debasish Jana, Prof. Achuthsankar Nair and Ms. Jayshree Dhere, and our publishing team viz. Suchit, Shashank Kadam and our printer, who have professionally designed and brought forth a fully transformed CSI Communications. I am confident that with the high quality of technical content, CSI will very soon match the category of world class publications of ACM, IEEE and will be of great help to improve the perception and brand image of CSI.

Our Education Directorate with the assistance of editorial team consisting of CSI veteran, Mr. HR Mohan, Dr. Vipin Tyagi and Dr. R.K. Vyas, has rolled out Student Newsletter “CSI Whizkidd”. I am in no doubt that soon this newsletter will evolve and do a good service to student members.

Another important aspect of our publication is CSI “Computer Science Research Journal”. Research Publication viz. Transactions is being rolled out with determined efforts of Prof. S V Raghavan and Mr. S. Mahalingam. Since, Project “CSI Transactions” may take another year, strategically, we have initiated a process for starting an online, General Purpose Research publication “CSI Research Journal”. My sincere gratitude to our Life member, research veteran & TIFR senior professor, Prof. Shyamasundar, who agreed to lead this activity as Chief Editor. Soon an editorial team will come into existence and plans will be known thereafter. Prof. Dipti Prasad Mukherjee, RVP, has laid the foundation of its revival.

I consider publications and periodicals an important service to members. High quality, good variety of content and consistency of these publications are great contributors to ratings and visibility/perception of society. Since last couple of years, we observed that there is not much growth of publications. Hence, for few months, till this activity gets stabilized, I have requested ExecCom that I would like to personally supervise as ex-officio Chairman of Publication Committee and try to build teams and long term plans. We need to outline our policies and schemes for publications for a horizon of 2-3 years. For this, it is important that we have a good team, partnership model with publishers and clarity of market demands, good understanding & linkages to research community, collaborations with premier research Labs like IBM, Intel, Infosys and engagement with senior academicians from IITs, IIITs & others and also build up a good operation and organization committee to support this. These Publications can fetch decent revenue for society.

I am concerned with the state of affairs at most of our Chapters. While student activities and technical programs are increasing manifold, Chapter level activities are fading, except few places like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Coimbatore and Chennai. We are not able to attract professionals. Our membership among IT professionals and corporate circles also needs much improvement.
In my understanding, profile & commitment of team members & their linkage with stake holders, clarity of ideas, planning and organization create a difference. We need to seriously create a balance team structure of representative stakeholders, CIOs, self-employed CEOs, Practitioners, Academicians, Govt. officials, IT professionals in each Committee, through nomination, if not through election route, under provision of co-option.

There is need for continuous mentoring and preparing agenda of activities. I would request RVPs, the Membership Committee & Director Education to spare time to co-ordinate this area. We shall have few location specific common programs. We shall not lose sight of our engagement with IT professionals and corporate in deciding these programs. Balance shall be maintained between programs useful for educational institutions, corporate and government. Good learning experience can be taken from Mumbai Chapter, which is successfully running useful programs.

CSI has introduced new scheme of bulk membership for corporate, the promotion of which requires persuasion in each major chapter.

With efforts of Dr. Bhatia & of some of RVPs, quite a few chapters are being revamped. My good wishes to them.

There is a need to have an organization strategy to identify program for addressing on-going issues.

It is time for Research and Development Sector to make a Paradigm shift to cope up with transformations that are taking place at Industry and Academic Levels. Former President Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam has expressed his view that modern methods of research based learning and teaching can play an important role in development of the society - “The world in the 21st century will be a knowledge based society with multiple opportunities. What worked yesterday, won’t work today. Educational Institutions need to be the power houses for knowledge."

Promotion of research as career may be a good thrust area for student members. I am happy to note that our all-India student co-ordinator, Mr. Ranga Raj Gopal has started dialogue with team of regional RSC/ SSC. Our RVPs may start using similar approach with chapters for helping them in their activities.

I recommend introduction of some meaningful programs for skill and competency development through certification programs and try to run “Teach R & D” kind of motivation workshops at some institutions both for faculty and students, with an objective of promoting research as an exciting career. A small team for this purpose may be formed by Director Education, Prof. N.L. Sarda, IIT, Mumbai, who is ready to help.

Our Research Committee convener, Prof. Rajiv Sangal is trying to bring under CSI banner, few research conferences, which are currently being organized by individual groups in various parts of the country. We shall welcome such initiatives of collaboration and alignments with resourceful groups.

New strategy for revival of SEARCC, which requires consistent efforts, was discussed during visit of SEARCC President, Mr. Anthony and President of Sri Lanka and PNG. CSI may play an important role in SEARCC.

We need to vitalize SIGs functionality. SIGs are created for carrying out technical programs and promotion of research in each domain. We still have to realize our objectives. Some of SIGs are not able to do any program. There is need to look for a new approach and demand commitments from each SIG convener. We may consider formation of new committees for these non-functional SIGs, in next 3 to 6 months time.

I convey my sincere appreciation to organizers of following events that took place during the month of April, 2011.

- National Conference on ICT for social Empowerment of Rural India, Mumbai.
- National Conference on Rural Trends in Computational Intelligence, Indore.
- Regional Student Convention, Hyderabad, held in March, 2011 – Region-V.

To conclude, I look forward to active participation by my colleagues in ExecCom, chapters, SIGs & Special committees to fully get involved in carrying out CSI Mission of Nation Building Initiatives.

Entire CSI family was deeply grieved by the loss of our beloved CSI Fellow, Dr. Chandwani. He will be known as the most caring CSI Veteran, foremost Educationist, Research Scholar and a highly dedicated and sincere person. I pay my sincere homage to Dr. Chandwani.

Jai hind!
With love,

M D Agrawal

“Complexity of a system is directly proportional to the simplicity of its original design.” – Anonymous.