Dear Members

Let me begin my message by congratulating Ms. Mini Ulanat, our National Student Coordinator and past chairperson of CSI Kochi for having been selected to receive the prestigious Chevening fellowship to attend the TCS Cyber Security Programme, a 12 week intensive course starting during the last week of Feb 2015 at Cranfield University, Defence Academy of United Kingdom, UK. Ms. Mini has expressed her desire to share her learnings and spread awareness about these important topics on her return from the programme.

I had the opportunity of participating in the CSI@50 celebrations and the TechNext India 2014-15 convention on the theme “IT Education Sowledness” organized by CSI Mumbai during 31st Jan – 1st Feb 2015 in association with FOSSEE and IIT Bombay. Mr. B. N. Satpathy, Sr. Advisor, NITI Aayog (Planning Commission) had inaugurated the convention and explored the possibilities of CSI working with NITI Aayog in its various initiatives. Shri. D. Sivanandhan, IPS, Former Director General of Police, Maharashtra, in his keynote address on “Ever Moving Boundary of Cyber Security” presented the realties and urged that the Govt. and professional societies like CSI should work together in creating awareness in the areas of cyber security. The convention in terms of technical content, was comparable to our annual convention, run very professionally with multiple parallel tracks catering needs of various stakeholders like professionals, academics and students. The major highlight of the convention was the Roundtable Meet on “Online Education (MOOCs)”, where both the academic and industry participants deliberated on the need, relevance, trends and future of e-learning. Prof. D.B. Phatak, our Fellow and Padma Shri award recipient, in his address stated the possibilities of MOOCs being accepted by educational agencies in our conventional systems of education and stressed the need for preparing our teachers for Blended Learning and invited CSI to be a part in the online training programme being planned by IIT Bombay. The convention which also had a mini exhibition attracted around 500 participants. The team TechNext India under the leadership of Chairman Mr. Sandip Chintawar and Vice Chairman Dr. Suresh Chandra J Gupta deserve appreciation for their efforts.

I congratulate the CSI student branch of University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), Dehradun for having taken a lead in organizing the State level, Regional level and the National level Student Convention in a row and announcing to organize NGCT-2015, the 1st International Conference on Next Generation Computing Technologies during Sep 2015. The NSC held during 5-6, Feb 2015 with a focus on Cyber Security attracted over 400 student participants from various parts of the country. I thank the Chair & Vice Chair of CSI Dehradun Dr. T. N. Jowhar, and Dr. Vinay Avasthi, Mr. R.K. Vyas, RVIP-1 and Dr. M.N. Hoda, Chair-Div I, CSI for their active role in promoting CSI in the northern part of India by organizing such events.

The CSI Delhi and The National Capital Region (NCR) CSI chapters are systemically planning for the Golden Jubilee Convention, the 50th annual convention -- CSI-2015 during the first week of Dec 2015 by organizing a series of events every month for the last few months and building up the tempo for the annual meet. As a part of this, a meeting was organized on 16th Feb 2015 on the theme “Make in India” with Dr. Ajay Kumar, IAS, Joint Secretary & Director General, DST, the Chief Guest. Dr. Ajay Kumar, in his address highlighted the importance of the “Make in India” initiative and the GOI’s steps such as supporting research, nurturing innovation and startups, providing Internet access, promoting Net neutrality. He added that DeitY currently works with CSI and many of its initiatives and will continue to do so in future. A panel of industry and academic experts deliberated on how to go about making the “Make in India” a successful initiative. I reiterated that, in this initiative out of 25 sectors identified through only two directly relate to ICT, the importance of the role of ICT in the remaining 23 sectors cannot be underestimated. As a part of spreading awareness about these important initiatives of Government, CSI conducted a Student Essay Contest on the themes “Make in India”, “Digital India” and “Clean India”. There was enthusiastic participation with over 200 participants. The results of this contest are now available at http://gojoo.TZwCmK. We plan to continue with this initiative in future. I thank Dr. Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Ex-Principal, PIBM College, Pune for his support in conducting the competition.

I had the opportunity of interacting with Dr. Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX and Professor at MIT when he was at Chennai delivering a leadership lecture at IIT Madras on “Reinventing Education” providing an overview of MOOCs and edX which aspires to reinvent education through online learning. The edX initiative whose mission includes increasing access to education for students worldwide through MOOCs, substantially enhancing campus education in both quality and efficiency through blended online approaches has partners throughout the world including IITs in India is keen in having CSI as a partner in India. In line with this, the need for standards in e-learning were discussed in the recently held Sectional Committee meeting on e-learning of the BIS Committee on Electronics and Information Technology at Delhi and it was felt, India being a large country with wide diversity and language barriers should take the lead and actively participate in making global standards. CSI with a large number of student and academic members with Education Research background and is ideally positioned to contribute to this initiative along with the existing SIG on Technology Enhanced Learning.

One of the long standing dreams of mine is to have a publishing arm at CSI – “CSI Press” in lines of other professional societies such as IEEE CS, and ACM having IEEE CS Press, and ACM Press respectively and engage in educational and knowledge sharing activities. Sustaining the society activities with just membership fees and dwindling sponsorships is quite difficult. Organizing state of art technology events at affordable cost across the country, bringing out quality proceedings and high standard journals in emerging areas of CSE and ICT, creating online courses, incubating ideas and creating IPs etc., will go in a long way in enhancing the value of our service to the society and grow with financial stability. Our attempt to bring out CSI Transactions on ICT with Springer is progressing well. During the CSI-2014 at Hyderabad and subsequently at CSI ED at Chennai, I had discussions with APress, the book publishing division of Springer who has shown interest in partnering with CSI and help our dream to come true. With this initiative we can encourage our industry and academic members having expertise and knowledge to publish books and monographs under CSI Press for global readers and also make them available to our large member community in the country. I urge all our members to share their views on this important aspect.

As we approach the year end, a lot of student related competitions as Discover Thinking Programming Contest, Alan Turing Quiz Competition, and Project Contests are run at different regions for talent recognition. CSI ED along with NSC coordinated with SGCs, RSCs and conducted many of them and few are at the finals stage. I thank all the individuals spearheaded in these events and the SBs and chapters helped in the successful conduct of them.

The 5th edition of the IT Excellence Awards, our annual prestigious industry IT projects recognition event received a phenomenal response from industry across all verticals. The projects were evaluated by an eminent jury panel including our knowledge partner, Deloitte. The winners were recognized in a gala event recently held in Mumbai.

My one year term as President of CSI was enjoyable, challenging and educative. I thank the Execom members, fellows and senior members, and chapter OBs for their guidance and support in executing my responsibilities. The CSIC editors and the board have done an excellent work in bringing out quality publication in a timely manner and meeting the expectations of all the stakeholders of CSI. The CSI HQ and CSI ED staffs have been very cooperative. My industry and academic contacts have readily accepted my requests and supported CSI events organized at various chapters and student branches. And finally, I owe a lot to the members of CSI for having given me an opportunity to serve CSI. I welcome the new Execom headed by Prof. Bipin V Mehta and wish them to take CSI to a newer height. While this is my last message to CSIC readers as President of CSI, I wish to continue my relationship through my regular column in CSIC and through the CSI eNewsletter.

With best wishes and warm regards

H.R. Mohan
President
Computer Society of India