



President's Message



In the next five years I see IIF as a robust organisation with over 5,000 memberships, a significant voice in government policies, and a focus on skill development, research, and national standards. Our magazine, IFJ, will become a sought-after professional resource with more technical and research-driven content.

Foundry Fraternity, Namaste!

As I conclude my tenure as the President of the Indian Institute of Foundrymen (IIF), I reflect on the journey, challenges faced, and the progress made in steering this great organisation towards new heights. In this candid farewell reflection, I share insights on my objectives, achievements, and the future direction of IIF. From strengthening professional practices to nurturing the next generation of leaders, I offer a comprehensive view of the vision and legacy I leave behind.

What objectives did I have before becoming the President of IIF?

My primary aim was to serve the apex body of foundry and related businesses with a vision to enhance service to stakeholders, expand our global footprint, promote advancements in our profession, sustain, grow membership, and collaborate with governments on policy advocacy. These objectives were centred on driving growth and value for our industry.

What approach did I plan to achieve these objectives?

Collective leadership was key. I worked closely with the National Office Bearers (NOBs), Regional and Chapter Office Bearers and Secretariat following the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. We planned the year's activities around a central theme, monitored progress through monthly reports, and provided necessary support. Planned visits to the HO and COEs allowed for one-on-one discussions with the Secretariat.

What changes did I hope to bring during my tenure?

I envisioned IIF being managed as a professional body, with the Secretariat taking the lead in all activities, supported by the National Office Bearers. One key goal was obtaining ISO certification for our Head Office (HO) and eventually for all Centres of Excellence (COEs). We've initiated the transformation from being people-dependent to becoming system-driven, but this is just the beginning.

What new aspects did I aim to introduce?

I wanted the Head Office, COEs, and National Committees to drive the yearly activities instead of relying solely on the National Office Bearers. Performance evaluation systems, KPIs, and structured increments and promotions were introduced to the Secretariat. We've seen partial success in these areas, and I'm optimistic about continued progress.

What challenges did I expect to face?

Resistance to change was expected, especially in an organisation with over 74 years of history and many passionate, seasoned leaders. The Secretariat, with a relatively new Executive Director and staff, needed time and training to adapt. Our flagship event, IFC & IFEX, presented additional challenges, given that the hosting Chapter was new to such large-scale initiatives. However, through early preparation, extensive training, and support from region we successfully navigated these hurdles.

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How much time did I dedicate to the role?

In my acceptance speech, I committed to 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for IIF. I lived up to that promise by dedicating significant time to attending calls, meetings, events, and visits across the organisation.

What vision did I have for IIF, and was it fulfilled?

I envisioned IIF as a professionally managed organisation where the Secretariat is fully accountable to stakeholders. Feedback from members, positive responses from associate organisations, disciplined national council meetings, and the implementation of ISO at HO are indicators that we are on the right path.

What message would I like to leave for the next President?

The next President has been part of my journey and has supported the changes we initiated. My message is simple: remain unbiased, accelerate the professionalism we've started, make the Secretariat more visible and accountable, and focus on guiding them rather than micromanaging.

What message do I have for youth?

I encourage more youth to take active roles at all levels—Chapter, Regional, and National. Engaging with Past Presidents and senior members is a treasure trove of knowledge, while the foundry industry itself offers great opportunities. I urge young professionals to strengthen and nurture this mother industry by joining in greater numbers.

What is my message for the industry?

The foundry industry remains crucial to the growth of manufacturing in our country. It's essential to nurture this industry with professionalism, robust systems, sustainable practices, technology, and innovation. Succession planning, regular engagement with casting buyers, and a well-maintained supply chain will be key to success.

What challenges do I foresee for the Indian Foundry Industry?

Challenges have always been present and will continue to evolve. Talent shortages, geopolitical issues, expensive technology, and changing policies will test our adaptability. The industry must remain agile and embrace change to stay competitive.

Which regions have the most growth potential?

All Regions have growth opportunities, but given the fast-changing industrial outlook, the Southern and Western Regions appear to have an advantage.

How have these experiences shaped my personality?

Leading family-run foundries and other social organisations have shaped my leadership style, evolving from authoritative to democratic, and now to transformational. My time in IIF has enriched my understanding, thanks to interactions with Past Presidents, senior members, and young professionals alike.

Where do I see IIF in 5 years?

I see IIF as a robust organisation with over 5,000 members, a significant voice in government policies, and a focus on skill development, research, and national standards. Our magazine, IFJ, will become a sought-after professional resource with more technical and research-driven content.

Where do I see IIF in 10 years?

IIF will be a tech-driven, paperless organisation with a global presence. We'll be a member of several leading international organisations, and casting buyer associations will be a part of our fold. The Secretariat will drive IIF under the strategic guidance of national office bearers, with a focus on emerging technologies like AI and IoT.

How can IIF become more influential in the country?

Strengthening industry and individual memberships, supporting members in export and research activities, and having a strong presence in government committees are essential. An effective grievance redressal system and a committed Secretariat are also key factors.

How can funds be better utilised?

Funds should focus on member services such as supporting cluster facilities, participating in international exhibitions,

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establishing world-class labs, and promoting innovation in materials and processes.

What are the forward and backward integration plans?

Forward integration includes influencing casting buyers' decisions on design and pricing and securing a permanent role in key government committees. Backward integration focuses on supporting MSMEs with bulk purchases and skill development initiatives.

What is the plan to promote diversity?

We've already initiated gender diversity at the HO, with female employees making up a significant percentage. Similar initiatives are possible at COEs and regional offices. Given that many foundries supply MNCs, gender diversity is increasingly being driven by the customer.

What can IIF learn from other organizations like CII?

We should benchmark ourselves against CII, known for its professionalism, sectoral reach, and significant influence in government policy. Our core values, ethics, and drive should align with such organisations.

How can interactions with CII be increased?

Increasing IIF's involvement in CII, collaborating on regional and national programmes, and having CII representatives in our National Council are effective strategies.

How do I want the members to remember my presidency?

I leave that to our members. I led with passion, commitment, and dedication, supported by my fellow National Office Bearers. I believe in democratic and transformational leadership, and I hope my tenure reflects that.

How will I stay engaged with IIF?

Even after my tenure, I plan to continue mentoring future leaders and supporting the Secretariat in implementing ISO in letter and spirit.

From the bottom of my heart, I sincerely thank the National Office Bearers, National Council Members, Past Presidents, Office Bearers of Regions, Chapters, and Secretariat Team for their unwavering guidance, advocacy, and encouragement.

As I conclude, I draw inspiration from this hymn about the long, endless journey towards self-realisation that each one of us must embark on:

"Charanbai madhu vindati charantsvadu mudambaram.

Suryasya pasya sreemanam yo na tandrayate charan.

Charaiveti, charaiveti."- Aitareya Brahmana*, 7.15

The honeybee, by its motion, collects honey, and birds enjoy tasty fruits by constant movement. The sun is revered by virtue of its relentless shining; therefore, one should remain in constant motion.

Keep moving, keep moving on!

This journey has been one of growth, learning, and collaboration. As I step down, I remain optimistic about the future of IIF and confident in the capabilities of our members and leadership. Let's continue casting for Bharat, together. Charaiveti, Charaiveti..

Jai Hind and Happy Reading!

Best wishes

D S Chandrashekar
President IIF, 2023-24