

Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers was born just before the Indian Independence during the days fomenting with nationalistic inspirations. Dr Hira Lal Roy, the great visionary and pioneer of chemical engineering education in India, along with few other stalwarts felt the need for such a forum within the country to rear the nascent initiatives for spread of chemical engineering education and foster the interest of the profession.

A modest beginning was made on 18 May 1947 in a room of Jadavpur University, Kolkata, with 30 members, little fund and nominal infrastructure. The IIChE has come a long way since. Today, with around 15,000 members on its roll, the Institute has emerged as the apex professional body of chemical engineering professionals in India and has developed a distinct profile of its own which is everchanging. Even as the IIChE is always moulding itself and playing a proactive role to keep up with the dynamic needs of the society and the economy, its working, governed by an all-India Council, has already revolved round the basic objectives set forth in the Memorandum of Association.

The activities of the Institute are spread across the country through its 33 Regional Centres and 58 Student Chapters, apart from the HQ located at a five-storied building of its own at the Jadavpur University campus. The Regional Centres promote and complement the activities and objectives of the Institute within their respective territorial limits, by organizing meetings, conferences and seminars; arranging workshops, refresher courses and counseling sessions; promoting research; guiding chemical engineering students in career planning; and initiating any other activities which are of social, technical and professional relevance to their members. They serve as open fora for their members who regularly gather for informal get-togethers and exchange of notes. The Regional Centres also confer awards, prizes and scholarships.

Student members pursuing under-graduate degrees in Chemical Engineering form Student Chapters, under the auspices of the respective Regional Centres. The Student Chapters also arrange lectures, seminars, short courses, plant visits, etc., at regular intervals

to better equip and empower the students when they come out of their academic precincts. Academic activities apart, Student Chapters organize cultural events and sports activities for their members.

The IChE has been conducting the Associate Membership Examination since 1960. It is held twice a year - in March and September - at different centres across the country. The examination is meant for those working in the chemical engineering related professions, who have a diploma in engineering or a degree in science but lack a degree in chemical engineering. This examination offers them the opportunity to qualify as chemical engineers. The Government of India and most of the public and private sector undertakings recognize it for the purpose of recruitment to superior posts and services, for which a degree in chemical engineering is considered to be a qualification. Leading universities and institutes in the country recognize it for admission to M Tech courses.

The Institute publishes a quarterly journal, the Indian Chemical Engineer (ICE), which has been the Institute's main organ since 1959. Even before that, Transactions of Chemical Engineers was regularly published between 1948 and 1958. The ICE, divided into Sections A and B, is a compact journal, striking a balance between fundamental research papers from India and abroad in Section A and news snippets on industrial and corporate front, environment, safety and hazards, recent research trends, latest software, etc., in Section B. This section also features technical articles and offers in-house news.

The Institute is recognized by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. The spectrum of R&D projects undertaken by the Institute in recent times covers a wide range and research work involving field studies like Comprehensive Assessment of Management of Municipal Solid Wastes in Kolkata, Study on Improvement of Quality Management System at Naihati Works of Jenson & Nicholson (India) Ltd, etc, as also laboratory or pilot scale experiments on Membrane-based Techniques in Desalination of Brackish Water, fruit juice concentration, etc.

The Annual Session of the Institute, popularly known as the Indian Chemical Engineering Congress (CHEMCON), is the most important event in the calendar of the IChE. Held every December at one of its centres, the four-day CHEMCON features a host of events, which include memorial lectures, plenary lectures, seminars, symposia, panel discussion, exhibitions, etc. To the Indian chemical engineering fraternity in the country and abroad, CHEMCON offers the most attractive platform, ensuring four days of intensive interface with the best of brains - national and international - in chemical engineering and allied fields.

The pleasure and inspiration that a greenhorn in research gets by presenting his work and by interacting with his peers and seniors in a conference instill a strong desire of making innovative contribution to his discipline and profession. IChE is organizing SCHEMCON (Students' CHEMCON) annually since 2005 to encourage the chemical engineers of tomorrow to come out with innovative and inventive ideas as well as to boost their self-confidence.

Each year the Institute confers a large number of awards and prizes to honour eminence as well as to nurture young talents. These awards have been instituted with endowments from leading industry houses, media enterprise and R & D organizations. The awardees indeed cover a wide spectrum - revered scientists, esteemed industrialists, respected academics, meritorious students and research scholars, etc.

The Institute maintains close association with number of professional bodies at home and abroad. Post-globalisation, the IChE has embarked on a number of initiatives to become part of a wider network of inter-disciplinary forums and to be more visible in the international chemical engineering circuit.

The IChE welcomes all into its fold - the aspiring chemical engineers of the future as well as veterans with vast experience. The membership of the Institute in itself is an accomplishment that stands one in good stead in one's future career. The horizon of chemical engineering is fast widening with newer disciplines merging with it and new ideas emerging. As a member of the Institute, one gets plenty of opportunities to share the platform with many well-known

academics and established professionals in one's field. These interactions help one to constantly update and equip oneself so as to keep pace with the fast-changing professional scenario. Equally important, as one becomes a member of this network of fellow professionals with multifarious connections, one can derive rich dividends to further one's professional goals.