



Manning and training forms an extremely essential part of HR which plays an indispensable role in the progress and prosperity of the industry. This was the main contention of choosing HR and education as the subject for discussion at the GlobalMet conference, disclosed Capt K.N. Deboo, Chairman of GlobalMET and Director and Principal of Anglo Eastern Maritime Training Centre, while speaking to Maritime Destination, on the sidelines of the conference. He also revealed that since Lloyd's Conference had stopped since the last two years, GlobalMet was now an alternative platform to view the progress of the industry and present the industry's opinion on various aspects of shipping. He stated that some of the delegates, who had visited a few pre-sea training institutes felt that the faculty in India was more motivated and qualified than corresponding manpower supplying countries

Flawless manning and training process essential for progress of the industry: Capt Deboo

GlobalMET highlights different aspects of maritime training

Excerpts from the interview:

Why have you selected the topic “Marine HR and Education: Today and Beyond”? How relevant is it?

We have been holding GlobalMET Conferences in India, annually, since 2000. The themes at each of these conferences have dealt with different aspects of maritime education and training. This year we intended to expand the scope to also cover the HR issues, since, basically, manning and recruitment are inter-related as HR functions. Also, we felt, that since Lloyds Conference on manning and training had stopped coming to India, there was a necessity to have an international conference dedicated to these important and relevant issues. So this year the GlobalMET Conference was held on a larger format to step into the void left by the Lloyd's conference.

The theme, “Today and Beyond” also signifies that we must look ahead and forget about the past and the mistakes that we may have committed back then. We should be geared for the new training requirements not rue about what has happened in the years gone by.

For this conference, we had several speakers from abroad. Normally, we have speakers from India to deal with issues that are relevant here. However, it was time we looked outward to gauge how far the world has progressed. We were insular, discussing only about the progress that was being made within the country and, in the process, were content

with patting our own backs with whatever we had achieved. So this time we decided to discuss issues on international level.

One of the important issues that the DG Shipping Dr Malini V Shankar brought into focus was the fact that the number of active Indian seafarers was portrayed wrongly by BIMCO-ISF Study and it is grossly underquoted compared to the actual figure of 150,000 Indian seafarers.

This shows that the global shipping industry is receiving an erroneous representation of the availability of Indian seafarers to the world market. The idea of inviting a large foreign contingent, comprising of who's who in the industry, was twofold, one to learn what the leading maritime nations of the world are doing to enhance the quality of their seafarers and second, was to project a correct image of the Indian industry to the men and women who matter in the global shipping scenario.

People responsible for making decisions at the IMO, ITF, ICS, INTERTANKO, BIMCO, etc were all there. They would not only be able to inform us about the future plans of the global shipping industry but would also be able to see what India is doing to enhance the quality of maritime education and training and, in doing so, provide quality manpower to the world shipping fleet. From that point of view this conference was a resounding success.

What was the response of the foreign delegates?

Their response was extremely positive. They visited some

pre-sea training institutes and they have realized that Indian institutes are good; but more importantly they have come to the conclusion that the faculty here is much more motivated and qualified thereby ensuring a higher quality to training to the seafarers. For instance, in most of our courses the teachers are either ex-Master Mariners or Ex-Chief Engineers and not Third Engineers or Second Officers as is found in some other countries. The positive conclusion that they have arrived at is that India is a very strong contender for the next 20-25 years as a prime manpower supplier to the ocean going ships.

Could you elaborate about the proceedings at the conference?

The Conference was divided into 5 sessions, and spread over two days, each session dealing with a different theme or topic. The first session dealt with Maritime Training Standards: Regulatory Framework. We had Capt. Ashok Mahapatra, the director of Maritime Safety Division, who gave a detailed account of the regulatory amendments brought out by the IMO Committees, MSC (Maritime Safety Committee) and MEPC (Maritime Environmental Protection Committee) that affect the seafarers. He highlighted about 10 areas where new regulations would become applicable.

The next person to speak was MsMayteMedina, Chairperson of HTW (Human Element Training and Watchkeeping) sub-committee of IMO and Chief of the Maritime Personnel Qualifications Division of the



U.S.C.G. She is well versed about the requirements of training and she elaborated extensively on what she envisioned would be the regulatory requirements and changes that would come about in the STCW in the next 5 years.

Both the speakers, thus, enlightened the industry's training sector about the regulatory requirements that would be necessary in the next 5-6 years.

Our next session dealt with "Manning & Training in Premier Crew Supplying Countries". This enabled us to know about the methods being adopted by other premier manpower supplying countries for training their future seafarers. This would be a good eye opener for India and a benchmark to strive and exceed. We had Ukraine, represented by the Rector of Odessa National Maritime Academy, Prof Miyusov, China, represented by the vice president of the Dalian Maritime University Prof Liu Zhengjiang, Philippines represented by COO of PTCI, Manila and delegates from Shanghai, Thailand, Malaysia and Myanmar who gave a detailed account of the education being imparted for training manpower not only for its own flag ships but also for

world market. I am sure, their inputs provided valuable tips to our manning and training institutes.

Besides this, we had delegates from Shanghai, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Myanmar who also conveyed their view points, during the discussions among the delegates and attendees at the seminar. It made everyone realize that all these countries were also playing an important role as far as supplying maritime manpower to the world was concerned.

All these institutes are members of GlobalMET?

Yes, most of the leading maritime education and training institutions are members of GlobalMET. In India, the Indian members, have set up IndiaMET, a Section 8 company, to spearhead the enhancement of quality training of India seafarers. There is a need for India to tighten its belt or else it would lose the advantage that it has, in this sector.

Do you believe that such seminars would pave the way for more Indian institutes to join Globalmet?

Yes, I believe it would.

PROBLEMS OF THE INSTITUTES

Amitabh Kumar, Additional DG Shipping, has given a clarion call to Indian institutes to raise their standard of education. The DG

shipping was also requested by AEMTC and other top quality institutes to help other institutes in raising the bar. How do you see this development?

When you are conducting training in an institute some of the key factors that should be taken into consideration are the curriculum, the infrastructure and the equipment that the institute has for training, the knowledge and experience of the faculty and the techniques used by them for training the students. These are areas where Mr. Amitabh Kumar envisages that good institutes can pass on their expertise to other institutes so that they could also raise their standards. The plan is that under DG's umbrella we will be holding a few maritime trainer courses for the faculty of the Indian maritime institutes. Some topics like various methodologies of teaching, how to conduct practical training in the workshop, how simulator exercises should be conducted, what training tools could be used for easier grasp of the subject by the students, could be covered in these programmes.

What are the issues which you feel should be addressed immediately and in the long term?

On the immediate basis the faculty issue is very important because even if you have a superlative infrastructure and well written course handout, if the faculty is not up to the mark, if they are not motivated, they would not be able to make

the student understand the intricacies and nuances required for success aboard a ship; so faculty is the most important aspect. The faculty should not only be qualified but also have motivation and enthusiasm to teach. The educators should also possess the knowledge of the latest developments in their respective fields. Once you have got a capable faculty you have to develop their techniques so that they can impart that knowledge at the right level. Covering both these areas is an important aspect which needs to be paid special attention to in India. Most institutes have faculty who are above sixty. They have left sailing years ago, they are unaware of the latest developments and possess knowledge which is outdated. They come to the institute as visiting faculty for a few hours and thus remain unconnected with the students' needs and difficulties. There is no continuity and no bonding with the student. Also, today's students are digital media savvy while the faculty is not, which creates a gap between the learning style of the student and the teaching style of the faculty. We need to raise the profile and respect of the faculty, so that they enter the teaching field as a first choice and not after they retire from their vocation as a surveyor or an operations manager.

You can get good young faculty members only when the differentiation between salaries on board a ship and ashore is small. The advantages of being close to relatives and friends can then outweigh the difference in salaries ashore and offshore. If there is a difference of only

about 20-30 per cent between the salaries paid to the faculty and those paid aboard a ship then you will find more capable, younger and enthusiastic seafarers entering this field.

Another factor is the number of institutes. There are at present 130 institutes. The DG has now opened up the sector and there are 50 applications lying with DG Shipping, which means that the institutes will, shortly, increase to 180. So the seats will increase but the number of candidates is not increasing. The increase in the number of Indian seafarers, over the last 5 years has increased from 7% to 9%, while during the same period, the training institutes have mushroomed. So the only way institutes can attract students is to undercut the other institutes with the result that you will compromise on quality, underpay the faculty and have below standard infrastructure.

If we want quality, one has to break this vicious circle.

CHANGES IN TEACHING MODE

When we talk of automation aboard the ships, won't the training at the institutes also have to undergo a change?

Yes, definitely. That is the reason why on the second day of the conference we had a session on use of e-technology in navigation, communication and training. There were informative, enlightening and instructive presentations by market leaders in the field which showed the future of e-navigation and

communication by means of satellite. The digital media will result in a paradigm shift in the overall methods of training of the seafarers. The virtual reality mode will result in wider and cheaper mode of "reality" training as the institutes will not be financially burdened with installation of simulators. With gaming technology you can be immersed in a scenario and carry out role play of say, fire-fighting or launching a survival craft. Even gain knowledge at your own home with the aid of a PC. If this 'destructive technology', as it is called, comes to India what will the 180 training institutes do is a relevant and pertinent question that needs to be contemplated on.

With new technology do you believe that the tenure of training would be reduced?

Yes. That is what even the DG shipping is saying. Let us see how we can do blended learning, where e-learning can be done from any venue and then the students can be brought into the classroom for discussions on case studies and practical training. This way, the competency courses contact time could be reduced by one-third.

ROLE OF AEMTC IN EDUCATION

What has been the role of AEMTC in promoting the career options of aspiring seafarers and helping the industry getting capable seamen?

Right from the inception when Anglo Eastern set up its first

training institute in 1994, the management had only one objective: Safe and efficient operation of a ship. We were the first ship management company to start a training institute in India. We started as a value-added training for in-house requirement. But in due course we felt that we should contribute to the Indian shipping industry as a whole and hence in 1996, opened up for all seafarers. Right from those initial days, Anglo-Eastern has been a pioneer in developing new training courses as per the latest technology and keeps pace with the current requirement of the maritime industry.

Anglo-Eastern has clients from over 40 countries and we have an obligation to provide the best manpower to them. Over 70% of Indian seafarers sail on foreign flag ships. To the shipowner, the nationality of the seafarer is immaterial, as long as he gets value for money. It would be in the interest of India, and the Indian maritime industry, to ensure that Indian seafarers are highly trained and qualified to become the preferred choice of ship managers and ship owners for placing on foreign flag ships. This will make the base of the Indian seafarers grow. Thus it is to the country's benefit for improving the training provided at the institutes.

Today AEMTC conducts various bespoke courses tailored to the needs of different segments of the industry. It has collaborations with various OEMs, the latest being the fit out of two fully operational Ballast Water Treatment plants.



In 2009 Anglo-Eastern started its own cadet academy, because we felt that proper training should be provided from initial stages, when the mind is fresh and the company culture could be ingrained from inception. Our intention is to be able to provide training from the junior trainee level right up to the seniormost officer level. We have achieved up to 70 per cent of the target. The 30 per cent where we are not there is in some of the competency courses and a few STCW modular courses. Our absence in this segment is due to the fact that we are unable to compete with other training institutes in terms of fees, as we believe in providing quality training, and so offer higher remuneration to our faculty to attract the best talent.

There are many institutes which have political support and don't adhere to the rules and regulations. How would you address these issues?

India is a democratic country. Anyone is free to set up an institute. All rules should equally apply to all, whether they are a government institute or they have political backing or they have been set up by business barons. The DG Shipping has made standard guidelines for each course so that they conform to STCW regulations, and IMO model courses. The DG does not get influenced while laying the regulations. In fact the guidelines are made in consultation with the industry so that the seafarers get good education to ensure that Indian seafarers are more eligible for jobs on all global ship management and shipowning companies and ship owners. In fact our guidelines are always perceived as slightly higher than the IMO requirements.

The lacuna lies in the implementation and the monitoring of these courses. With 130 DG approved institutes and more on the way, the situation is grim. Drastic action is needed if we have to get the Indian MET back on track.

NON-AVAILABILITY OF NA

At present there is no nautical advisor. How will it affect the industry?

I believe that the NA has not been there since the time Capt Panda retired. The burden falls on other officers who, besides doing their own duties, also undertake to do the job of NA without much appreciation. The situation today is so bad that the DG Shipping is not able to

function efficiently since the top person in the nautical division is not there. Besides this there is also the shortage of surveyors which adds to the woes of the DG Shipping. Unless all the vacancies have been filled up it is not possible to have proper monitoring to ensure that all the rules and regulations are being observed. I am not able to understand why it is taking such a long time to bring in a Nautical Advisor. In case the RR (Recruitment Rules) do not allow sufficient choice, then they must be revised.

The industry too was aware of the problems that would arise if there was no Nautical Advisor, then why didn't the industry take some action?

The industry has made representation right up to the ministerial level. ShriGadkariji has assured that they would get a NA quickly but it has still not happened.

Is the problem the same as that of the institutes - low salaries and people not willing to join government services?

No, the problem is not of salaries. There are many people willing to join government services as there is security, stability, after-retirement benefit etc. Plus being in an authoritative position you can change the system, unlike being a faculty member of a training institute.

SOME MAJOR ISSUES COVERED BY THE CONFERENCE

Would you like to add anything ?

Coming Back to our GlobalMET Conference we covered another area – that of the oil majors' requirements. If the ships have to trade with them they have to follow their requirements, which are sometimes in addition to the IMO standards. There were excellent presentations on this subject by INTERTANKO and BIMCO which gave an insight into the new Competence Management System for Tanker officers which would replace the TOTS (Tanker Operators Training Scheme) and also the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which would be used to benchmark one tanker with another.

We finally rounded off with the seafarers' welfare topic which outlined the difficulties faced by the seafarers on board, the requirements of the Gen Y (since they are brought up in the internet age and would want to be connected to their near and dear ones). These welfare issues were very nicely brought out by Kimberly Karlshoej, the former head of ITF seafarers trust. In fact we should be now be getting ready to accept Gen Z, who will come with a different set of expectations.

Another interesting topic was on women in shipping. MsSanjam Gupta, President of WISTA India, and pioneer women seafarers Capt Radhika Menon, SunitiBalaShravani Mishra and were on the panel which had

an interesting discussion on the biases faced by women and how the industry should support them so that they too could rise up in ranks without being discriminated against. I was glad to hear that now there are about 3000 women seafarers in India; of course the majority being on cruise ships.

Six of the girl cadets had a round table meeting with these three senior lady seafarers who assured the young cadets that they have the strength to overcome all problems and difficulties aboard a ship and once you have risen in the ranks and are good in your job the juniors will learn to respect you irrespective of your sex. After this meeting I could see the shine on the faces of these young cadets. These lady stalwarts have recently formed a Women Seafarers foundation, which will go a long way in reassuring and motivating those ladies already in the field to be strong and resilient.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I may state that this Conference was a big success and we hope to repeat the same every two years. The GlobalMET conference would be held every year but the manning and training part would be every two years.

In India we have a GlobalMET India chapter which is registered as IndiaMET and we hope to have many more institutes from India to be our members so that we will be able to voice the opinion of the training institutes to DG Shipping and other regulatory bodies, mentioning the difficulties faced by the institutes. At the same time, we shall also provide the assistance in the development of curriculum, DG course guidelines, syllabus, etc. [MD](#)