



There has to be a co-ordination between the training institutes and the shipping companies for the institutes to know about the incidents on board the ship and adopt educational patterns to deal with these occurrences and promote safety and environment in the shipping industry, said Capt. Pradeep Chawla, Chairman of GlobalMET and Managing Director of Anglo Eastern Ship Management, in a tete-a-tete with Maritime Destination. Speaking on the sidelines of the GlobalMet conference, he was of the opinion that since members of this organization were imparting education to the seafarers, it was an ideal platform for educating and enlightening them about the rules and regulations.

Co-ordination between shipping cos and Institutes necessary to promote safety in the shipping industry: Capt Chawla

GobalMET will help promote safety and environment in the shipping industry

Excerpts from the interview

As the chairman of GlobalMET, what are your plans to make it the premier body of the industry?

Global MET is, at present, a small organization with about 100 members. This is a very small percentage off the number of training institutes around the world. Increasing the number of members is our priority. The membership drive is on and the institutes are evincing keen interest in joining the organization when they realize our objective is to build a bridge between IMO (International Maritime Organisation), and industry organizations and the seafarers.

Since our members are imparting education to the seafarers by conducting short term as well as long term courses, our body is the ideal one to act as a platform between the industry organizations and the seafarers by enlightening and updating them about the rules and regulations. It may be mentioned that several institutes are not in touch with the shipping companies and are thus not able to get the feedback about the incidents occurring aboard the ship. For this purpose we have signed an MoU with Nautical Institute and Intermanager and efforts are being made to involve more industry organizations so that we can impart their day-to-day concerns to the upcoming seafarers through our member institutes. This will result in improved safety and environmental understanding. Since GlobalMET plays an important part in this chain,

our objective is to increase the membership for improved working of the industry.

You are also connected with the Nautical Institute. What is your role there?

At present, I am a Fellow of the Nautical Institute. I was the Vice-President and a Council Member but now that I am associated with GlobalMET, as its Chairman, it would be difficult for me to do justice to both.

But don't both of them have the same objectives?

There are some overlaps. But the objectives are not identical. Both are working for the betterment of the industry and the seafarers. I do not hold any position in NI but I do work closely with NI.

Speaking about seafarers, what would be the percentage of seafarers that Anglo Eastern would be actively involved with?

In India, at present, we employ about 18000 seafarers on board about 400 ships. This, I believe, is more than the total number of seafarers aboard Indian ships. In fact the number of ships we serve are more than the fleet operating under Indian flag.

We are the biggest foreign employer in India. According to our crew recruitment department we employ about 20-25 per cent of the total seafarers in India.

I may add that according to DG Shipping there are 1,44,000 active seafarers in India, which would work out to about 13, per cent but since all of them are not employable but are merely



registered our recruitment dept has arrived at this figure.

As far as training is concerned, we train about 440 students of the 2000-3000 recruits. This works out to about 20 per cent.

We are proposing to enhance the number of ratings and we would like to train them ourselves. The reason for this is that when you select people whom you have not only trained but also inculcated in them the company spirit they become ideal seafarers for your company. One must understand that training is not merely educating them in technical details of ship operation but also about building teams and spreading company culture. When this is done, we will not only improve the teamwork between the ratings and the officers but also the company culture of the ratings. I may mention that most of the ratings work with us for about 15-20 years and it would be nice to have everyone thinking along the same lines.

AUTOMATION

What is your take on automation in the shipping industry?



Automation is inevitable in any field. It is a continuous process and has been going on in the shipping industry since the last 50 years. However, as autonomous ships and self driving cars are something that attracts public attention there is an overdose of media attention and publicity for automation causing more curiosity in the layman. In shipping industry, automation has been increasing at a steady pace and, at some stage, it will reach semi-autonomous and possibly autonomous operation of ships.

I don't know how long it will take to have a ship operating without any crew

So who will be more effected as far as the seafarers are concerned – the deck or the engine segment?

Both will be affected. I believe that first we will have semi-autonomous ships which will travel on semi-autonomous mode from pilot station to pilot station. Since they would travel in an autonomous mode in the open seas the ship owner may contemplate on reduction in manpower. This may result

in one deck officer, one engine officer and one or two ratings being reduced.

Let us take the case of a jetty. If you have a pneumatic or magnetic system installed to bring the ship alongside there wouldn't be much use of moorings rope; they would reduce the AB's.

I believe the role of seafarers will keep changing. Like you have the US forces using drones. So in the pilot's place you have a drone operator. They too have to learn about all the intricacies of operating an aircraft. They are as good as the pilot, only they are not aboard the plane. Similarly if we had autonomus ships the role of seafarers would change. Instead of going out to sea the seafarer may have to go to the control room. That will happen eventually but it will be at a slow pace. It is not something that is going to happen in a couple of years.

Complete automation in a ship is a long term goal. It will happen at a very slow pace and, according to me this is going to take at least 30-40 years.

IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS OF STUDENTS

Additional DG Shipping, Amitabh Kumar, had suggested that the standards of students should be improved. He had also suggested that Anglo Eastern should take the lead and try to coax others to improve their standards of training. What steps are you taking in this connection?

The process for this is already underway. Capt. Deboo, Capt Narang and Capt. Vinayak participate in industry meeting to understand the needs of the industry and get updates about their requirements. As far as AESM institute is concerned, it is open for inspection at anytime by anyone.

The people at my institute participate these meetings to update themselves about all the latest happenings at IMO, DG Shipping and IMU and transfer this knowledge to the students. Capt Deboo is on Academic Council and he visits other institutes to try and equate the educational instructions in the institutes. Besides, the meetings at GlobalMET also bring together representatives from various companies. At this seminar too there were people not only from Anglo Eastern but also from V Ships, Fleet Management and others.

I am sure if all the institutes undertook to do better training, we would have fewer accidents.

Anglo Eastern has always been keen to improve the standards of our students and this has brought the country into focus. The result is that we, as a country, have been successful in even attracting colleges from China, Philippines and Ukraine for this conference. We also have delegations from several other countries like Thailand, Myanmar, Bangla Desh, etc..

When Mr. Amitabh made the comment about improving education standards in institutes, I believe it was for small institutes who are

out to make a fast buck. How would you try to curtail such institutes?

It is for the DG to cut down unethical institutes. I believe that if any institute is not teaching well, the market forces will force them out. Many of them are closing down. It must be remembered that quality wins!

You stated that technology would come at a slow pace. The industry, I believe has fixated itself to this paradigm. What happens if technology comes at a fast clip?

I don't think the industry will want the regulations to come too fast. Everybody likes a change but it has to come at a steady pace so that the people are able to adapt themselves to the change. Once in a while there is a big disruption like self driving cars but even here people seem to forget that the change has been slow and in stages. Initially it was a gearless car; and then a car which maintained a constant speed on an open road. It has taken 30 years to come up with a self-driven car. In shipping too the changes would be there – maybe at a more speedier pace – but they cannot be instantaneous or even in a couple of years. They will come in slowly.

EFFECT OF REGULATIONS

How do regulations affect manning and training in the industry?

I believe that the regulators are constantly trying to bring in rules that would benefit the industry and I think that this is good for the progress and safety of the industry.

RELEVANCE OF THE THEME OF SEMINAR

What was the reason for selecting “Future and Beyond” as the theme of the seminar?

Everyone who comes to conferences and seminars is aware of the problems that the industry is facing today. He is dealing with them on a day-to-day basis.

When you start a discussion about the future you collectively have everyone's attention. Also we are training people who have to be aware not only about the problems being faced by the industry today but they must also know how to tackle the future problems. Education has thus to be imparted in such a manner that the seafarers would be able to deal with problems that may arise 30 years hence.

The future seafarers will have to deal with huge data, be analytic and also be able to adapt themselves to quick changes. As new technology comes in, they will have to learn new skills quickly and adapt themselves to these changing environments. They will have to learn to work in teams and also interact more with shore remote support teams.

The examinations have to keep up with the changes taking place in the industry. The syllabus and examinations have to be on the basis of training the candidates need to tackle problems that would arise a decade or more hence.



Looking to the future is what the industry is interested in, on all fronts; hence the above mentioned theme of the Seminar.

ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

What would be your comment on the role that the administration is playing?

I think it is playing a positive role. The NA and the CS are important wings in the DG and I believe they both play an important role in ensuring safety and maintaining eco-balance.

However I feel that they should participate more in international events and encourage more manufacturing of marine products

MESSAGE TO THE SEAFARERS

What would be your message to the seafarers?

The seafarers must remember that every nationality is competing with others. Whichever nationality has less accidents, works harder and is competitive in their wages will get more jobs. [MD](#)