

2nd Mate's topper and NMDC Award winner opines

Shipping industry offers better opportunities than engineering



A seafaring career is, according to me, more preferable than an engineering one as you could become a Third Officer by the age of 23-24 years, earning a handsome remuneration. To establish yourself as an engineer takes about 10-15 years. By the time you succeed in this career, you have reached the mature age of about 30-35 whereas in the shipping industry you could achieve the distinction of being a Captain at the age of 30, said Maritime Destination Vicky Jha, a topper at the 2nd Mate's DG Shipping examination, having secured the highest marks for the

year 2017. He was presented the NMDC Award at the hands of the SCI CMD on Seafarer's Day function held on 25th June 2018. Below is his interview with Maritime Destination.

Excerpts from the interview:

Why did you choose this career?

After completing my 12th and securing good percentage in JE, I was examining the options for further studies and my career. Since my passing percentage was good, I could secure admission in engineering colleges but on making an in-depth study I found that if one did not graduate from IIT

of NIT it was a hard struggle to make a success of one's career and life. You have to struggle for 10-15 years to be able to establish yourself. But when I looked at the prospects of taking up seafaring as a career, I discovered that I could become a Third Officer at the age of 23-24 years and start earning a good income to support my family and live a decent life. These objectives could be achieved in the engineering arena only at the age of 30-35. In the seafaring industry you could become a captain at the AGE OF 30!

Did you research all this or did someone guide you?

Well, my uncle, who is also in shipping, gave me a know-how about this industry and enlightened me about its prospects.

How did you join Anglo Eastern?

I had gone for an interview at various maritime institutes and was selected at most places. But several people around did not project a very favourable image of those institutes and I was told that there could be immense waiting period. People in the industry including my uncle advised me to join Anglo Eastern, as it was the best and the leading shipping company in India. So I



opted for Anglo Eastern.

How was your experience with Anglo Eastern?

I did one year DNS (Diploma in Nautical Sciences) in 2014-15, at Anglo-Eastern Maritime Academy, (AEMA) Karjat. Though I was away from home during this period, the faculty was very supportive.

Each of the faculty members had about 20-30 years experience at sea and they conveyed to you first-hand experience about life aboard a ship. They were always motivating but they also cautioned that one should not expect seafaring life to be a cake walk. We were presented with conditions that actually prevailed at sea. AEMA is like a ship on land. Professional captains with their vast experience makes you a hardcore seafarer. The AEMA days can be said as the best constructive days in my career.

How many types of ships have you sailed on?

Sir, Anglo-Eastern provides each cadet opportunity to

sail on three or more different types of ships. This enables us to get varied experience. I have sailed on bulk carrier, gas and chemical tanker. The toughest was chemical, but there's lots of learning and you become expert and your advice is taken seriously if they know you are a chemical hand. After completing my exams I would be assigned aboard a chemical tanker.

How has been your sailing experience with Anglo Eastern?

The sailing experience has been extremely good. I gained lot of varied experience, with the benefit of a very strong safety culture on board and the use of best management practices.

The first few days on ship was emotional though I was trained at AEMA for it, but exactly when you are in that situation its different and hits you suddenly. But all the seniors on board and fellow cadet were very helpful and motivating. When in their company I used to talk and take their advice. Never be lonely or else one would have tough time adjusting onboard. Try to be active in your work but always follow safety, remembering all the good practices we learnt at AEMA.

You said that you had a feedback of other institutes. You must have received feedback about Anglo Eastern too from your colleagues. What was the feedback here, ashore ?

The feedback was very positive. Most of the other companies are facing the crunch that the industry is facing and there is a hire-and-fire rule policy adopted by most of them. But Anglo Eastern retains their staff. If you are good they will retain you till the end and help you nurture your career even after you have attained the distinction of becoming a Master. If you are capable you don't fear losing your job.

Several companies having 10-20 ships have shut down due to the economic crunch. Anglo has 600 ships so the chances of losing your job are miniscule. Unless you create an extremely unfavourable image and situation, the chance of losing your job does not arise.

How did you prepare for the exam?

2nd mates exam is like turning point in your life. Its the distinction between your cadet rank and officer, you should realise its worth.

I did not really imagine that I would be a topper, though it was my dream. My preparation did not entail getting up early in the morning and pouring over your books. I believe that if you study meticulously for four months in the functions course, 85% of your work is done. You should devote a few hours regularly to revise what you have learned during the day, after you reach home. During the 15 days that you get for preparation of exams you have to be on your toes.

For my exams, I had prepared daily schedule of study, on rotational basis.

From where did you do your Function?

It was done from Anglo-Eastern Maritime Training Centre, Mumbai. The teaching is very good and the captains prepare you well for the examination, as to how to answer the questions. If you do your functions from there and pass their internal tests, you are sure to pass the DG written exam. Basis you pay attention in class and do study your work daily.

What would be your advise to others, as far as preparations go?

I would say that they should not treat these four months like they are in prison. I would say that you should study regularly. You don't have to study 8-10 hours per day. Just 2-3 hours would suffice. The duration is only 4 months. In engineering, people study for 4 years and at the end they end up getting a pay packet of Rs.18,000-Rs.20,000. However, if you put your best forward, as a Third Officer you would earn much more. You have to be focused.

Each exam has its own toughness, XIIth boards and then IIT-JEE for career choice. But 2nd Mates written's for obtaining third officer rank and the orals is the ultimate. The toughest one I would think is orals since you don't know how much is expected out of you and how much you

have to study. It's like you have to prepare 100%, if you leave anything for chance then you are responsible for your own failure.

You have a desire to also do your IAS?

I am from Bihar and everyone from there was to do IAS. I too have a desire for this. It runs in my blood. I have a natural tendency to do serve others and IAS enables you to do beneficial things for the society.

I will not say that any field is bad but here, at the end you earn for your family, but IAS would provide me with a platform to do something good for the society.

I am not contemplating on this now but maybe a couple of years down the line.....

What was the reaction of your family, friends, institute and others on topping the examination?

I have always been a topper from school days. In my school, I was representative for Times of India students edition and used to take part in their events and report writing. My family was appreciative that even after two years of sailing and not appearing for any exams, I did well. My sir, Capt Deboo, appreciated me a lot and I felt that irrespective of the position you hold, you get appreciated if you do well.

Comments by Capt K.N.Deboo, Director and Principal, Anglo-Eastern Maritime Training Centre

Vicky Jha is a model student. He comes from a humble background. His father works as a driver for Nestle legal advisor and his mom is a housewife. Yet, he has the make up of a born leader. He is so focused on his goals, that no amount of difficulties will waiver him from achieving his dreams. He is so motivated that he wishes to be placed on board the most difficult of ships. As one knows, maximum experience is gained when working on tough ships in challenging environment.

He has been a positive influence on our other cadets, and we have had him give talks to his juniors at both Anglo-Eastern Maritime Academy, Karjat and to the participants of the Cadet Mid-term course and the II-Mates preparatory course at Anglo-Eastern Maritime Training Centre. I wish him all the very best in his career and may he one day rise up to be in a top position to be able to contribute to the maritime fraternity.

It's important that we identify and nurture top talent in our industry. Each company should identify its "Star performers" and groom them so that they can be our future leaders. We need young role models, who can show to the world that Indian seafarers are by far the best and most suited for the higher end of the market. Semi-autonomous ships are already on the horizon, and I would want that Indian seafarers are there, armed with the requisite skill set, to take over the operation of those ships. **MD**