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# Sailor Today

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## Let Me Retire

Look how fast life goes by  
From joining the work first day,  
To walking away on the last  
Looking back at the Neon sign, that once  
Announced the place of my work  
First few day will sure be strange  
No urgent emails to respond  
Or any phones calls to answer  
No early morning rushed tea  
Or newspapers left unread  
Neither any deceptive respect  
When walking by desks in office  
Or annual target that need reaching  
Business trips on red eye flights  
It's a long distance that's traversed  
From somewhere beyond the horizon  
Brown cardboard boxes stand in a row  
Filled with memories and stationery  
Embraces all around with colleagues  
Occasional tear drop escaped an eye  
Old images kept flooding the mind  
An ache crossed as the sunset neared  
Twilight stealthily crept in unnoticed  
End of day brought in night's beauty  
Full moon rising painted a silvery path  
Upon the waters of a choppy ocean  
No longer in despair sunsets I watch  
But look ahead for the night's allure

Ranjit Narayanan



Preamble: This series of articles from Navguide Solutions, one every month, will focus on Rightship Inspection requirements, eventually going deeper into the subject and helping the industry phase into the RISQ regime.

## RISQ Series | Article 7 | | August 2024

**Author: Capt. Robert Vaz**, Chief Operating Officer, Navguide Solutions

# BANG FOR THE BUCK

In this contemporary world, we are all looking to make profits and ensure we get the most out of what we invest. The same applies to ship management companies, charterers or other interested parties. The underlying financial goal is maximising profit and value for the stakeholders. However, in this process of economic gains, the safety of the ship, crew, and environment are essential factors to consider.

Similarly, when we enter a supermarket or a convenience store, most people will look for the deals of the day, supersaver offers, customer loyalty discounts or other promotional offers. It's simple: we all want the best deal or **"Bang for the buck"**.

I feel the Rightship system is the same. They offer a fantastic platform and provide detailed insights into a vessel. The safety

score is a great way to help customers select the correct ship. It also allows you to improve and see where you stand amongst your peers. Indeed, this is a competitive world, and there is no place for complacency, but the Rightship platform helps charters make the right choices.

Simply put, **"If you ain't hiring this truck, they aren't hiring the vessel."**

Recently, I addressed third-year students (BBA shipping and logistics programme) at a seminar. To break down this concept of **"Bang for the buck,"** I made an analogy of hiring a truck to transport furniture and other belongings from one state to another, similar to how a charterer charters a ship. Though some comparisons can't be literally made, surely, at the end of the talk, their concepts were clear. **The table below will help to sum up the analogy.**

Truck 1	Truck 2	Vessel 1	Vessel 2
Well-painted, well-maintained and very clean	Hardly maintained, dirty	Hull Well-painted, decks, superstructure and accommodation very clean	Poor appearance, hull corroded missing coating, dirty decks & accommodation, no PMS
Driver documents and truck documents are intact, valid and safely stored	The driver experienced but no official licence, the truck insurance expired, & no pollution check documents	All the ship certificates are Valid, and well indexed; the crew certificates in order and valid	Some ship's certificates expired, and the crew don't hold valid COC



Truck 1	Truck 2	Vessel 1	Vessel 2
The drivers were in uniform and well groomed, and no smoking and drinking policy while on duty adhered to	The driver was shabby; cigarette butts and beer cans were found in the truck cabin	All crew wore uniform boiler suits and strictly adhered to the No smoking policy.	Crew in flip flops, jeans and teeshirts, cigarette butts all over the accommodation and even on deck
The company ensures the drivers go through a medical examination every 6 months and supports them with health care.	The company doesn't provide such facilities, all they need is a paper saying that the driver passed some medical test	The manager insists on an ILO medical certificate in addition to sending them for extra tests and ensuring they fit	The managers are very lenient and are not strict as long as they can produce a medical certificate even if they turn up limping or with a broken arm, they are hired
The company always rewards the employees for safe driving, positive feedback from clients, on-time deliveries.	The companies do not reward and don't bother, it's up to the driver; even if he is delayed, there are no issues	The company rewards the crew members for positive feedback from terminals and other 3 <sup>rd</sup> party inspections.	The company doesn't bother about this as long as the ship is moving; the welfare of the crew is the least of their concern.

Well, just these few pointers were enough for these students, who could easily understand the importance of proper maintenance, management, and efficient running of the vessel.

I feel it is the duty of every party involved to do their best to ensure the vessel is performing at the optimum level. This, in turn, will provide financial gain, which will benefit the global economy and help each one involved in this chain, including the crewmembers.

As seafarers, we surely need to step up our game. Yes, we are competent and have the qualifications required by STCW, but we can surely go way above and beyond. Our profession is such that we learn a lot of on-the-job skills from our seniors; we could closely observe third-party inspectors and, of course, just by sharing our experiences,

but then a question arises: what if I don't have good mentors? What if there is no time due to work constraints? What if I am scared to ask my seniors as it exposes my weakness?

Well, there are tools in the market that will give you that cutting edge and help you optimise your time while preparing for inspections. It gives the crew the advantage of going through various inspection scenarios before the actual inspection. Of course, if you do not have proper mentorship, it provides training videos, step-by-step guides and pictorial modules, which will make you confident to face any inspection.

Here is an example:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.navigatorsguide.app>

Superintendents, too, could optimise their



time when on ship visits. Instead of spending valuable time filling in details such as running hours of various machinery and collecting similar data, all this could easily be done in the office, and time onboard could be spent on actual inspections, interviews, and discussions with the crew and together, finding the best way forward.

We all speak about teamwork, but we need to ensure that each of us carries out our duties meticulously to ensure that each link turns precisely and that we are eventually firing on all cylinders.

When we speak about getting the best **Bang for the buck** as seafarers, we too look at the long-term benefits, wages, allowances, perks, promotional prospects, etc, while choosing our company, so yes, quality matters. Whether it is the crew, managers or chartering a ship

## IN CONCLUSION


Since we all like that value for money, ask yourself one question: am I doing my job to the best of my potential? If the answer is yes, fantastic. If it's not, it's okay; reflect on what is missing or lacking; is it confidence, training, execution, mentorship or something else? Work on that aspect. Eventually, you will turn up a stronger person. You will be a vital team member who motivates and encourages others and will not be a weak link in the team.

Let's do our best to ensure our ships are charter-ready at all times, and in case you find something lacking, dare to speak up and get help. Let's work together to make the global shipping industry safer so that every associated party feels they have the best **"Bang for the Buck."**


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# New Report by Maritime SheEO Highlights Progress and Challenges in Gender Equality within India's Maritime Industry

A new report, titled the **"Survey on Gender Equality in Indian Maritime Industry (2024),"** has been released on August 12th, shedding light on the significant strides and ongoing challenges for women in the Indian maritime sector over the past five years. The report is developed by **Maritime SheEO**, with financial support from the **Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mumbai**. This survey is a follow-up to a survey conducted in 2019.

The report was formally launched at the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Mumbai, in presence of Capt. Daniel J Joseph (Nautical Surveyor-cum-Deputy Director General of Shipping), Consul General Bart de Jong and Deputy

Consul General, Thierry van Helden.

The key findings highlights progress and persistent challenges faced by women in the maritime sector. Since 2019, female participation in the sector in India has witnessed a substantial growth. Notably, the representation of women CEOs has surged from **3.9% in 2019 to 21.4% in 2024**. Similarly, the adoption of gender-neutral practices by companies has also risen from **80% to 92.7%**, reflecting the industry's efforts toward greater inclusivity. However, the report highlights that despite these advancements, challenges remain. The rate of women seafarers has seen only a marginal increase, from **89% in 2019 to 89.5% in 2024**, signalling the need for more

targeted interventions in this area. Additionally, while adherence to global standards like the UN Women's Empowerment Principles has climbed from **25% to 89.3%**, inconsistencies in the application of these practices underline the need for clearer communication and enhanced support mechanisms.

## A CALL FOR CONTINUED ACTION

The report underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to improve working conditions and job opportunities for women across the maritime sector. It calls for specific actions to address the barriers to career advancement and the creation of more inclusive workplaces, particularly in seafaring roles.

**Sanjam Sahi Gupta**, the founder of Maritime SheEO, stated, "Despite the industry's crucial role in the nation's economy and global trade, women remain significantly underrepresented in key maritime roles, both onshore and offshore. With this report, we aim to delve into the challenges faced by women in the Indian maritime sector, analyse the existing gender gaps, and propose strategies to promote gender equality and empower women within this vital industry."

**Mr. Bart** de Jong, Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Mumbai said "The Netherlands has been an advocate of gender equality, including the maritime sector. Various initiatives and policies have contributed to a rise in the number of women working in this field. We are happy to support Maritime SheEO's

recent study on women's participation in the maritime sector in India. It reflects a significant progress made in gender diversity in this crucial industry."

He also added that "The findings of the study indicate a positive trend, with more women entering and contributing to the maritime workforce, suggesting a shift towards greater inclusivity. However, it also highlights the challenges, particularly in career advancement and workplace inclusivity, which hinder full and equitable participation"

Continuing to address these issues will be essential to ensure sustained progress and create a more equitable environment for female professionals in the maritime sector, suggested Mr. De Jong.

## THE MARITIME SHEEO CONFERENCE 2024

The findings of this report will have a dedicated panel at the Maritime SheEO Conference 2024 in Mumbai, where industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders will gather to explore strategies for promoting gender equality in the maritime sector.

### Download the Report

The full report, along with case studies from industry leaders like Mrs. H.K. Joshi, Bhagyashree Ogale, and companies such as Synergy Marine Group, Seaspan Corporation, and Anglo-Eastern, is available for download on our website: <https://maritimesheeo.com/research/>





# STCW COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW WORKSHOP

The Directorate General of Shipping, in collaboration with the Company of Master Mariners of India (CMMI) and the Institute of Marine Engineers (India), IME(I), successfully conducted a workshop on 27th August 2024, to review and refine the STCW (Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) Convention

and Code. This workshop focused on integrating emerging technologies and addressing contemporary maritime challenges, with the outcomes to be submitted at the International STCW Working Group (ISWG-STCW1) session in October 2024.





The event, hosted at the MSC Crewing Services Pvt. Ltd. in Mumbai, served as a crucial platform for discussions on India's preparations for the upcoming ISWG-STCW1 session. The workshop brought together a diverse group of maritime professionals, regulators, and stakeholders, all committed to enhancing the STCW Convention in light of evolving industry needs.

An introduction of the workshop was given by **Mr. David Birwadkar**, Chairman, IME(I) Mumbai Branch. He also introduced the Chief Guest **Shri. Shyam Jagannathan**, IAS, Director General of Shipping and other dignitaries including **Capt. M.P Bhasin**, Chairman, CMMI and **Shri. Senthil Kumar**, MMD, Mumbai. The workshop commenced

with an opening session led by which included a cultural rendition of Saraswati Vandana. This was followed by a presentation outlining the key areas of focus for the ISWG-STCW1 session and India's proactive measures in preparation.

**Shri Jagannathan** Director General of Shipping, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the critical importance of the STCW convention in maintaining global maritime safety standards. He underscored India's commitment to fostering a high standard of seafarer training and certification, aligning with international expectations and emerging technological trends.

The workshop proceeded with chapter-wise presentations by team coordinators, each providing a detailed overview of specific aspects of the STCW convention. These presentations aimed to identify gaps,





propose amendments, and incorporate contemporary developments in the maritime sector, such as digitalisation, automation, and sustainability.

Following a networking lunch, the afternoon sessions resumed with continued chapter-wise presentations, fostering rich discussions among participants. The workshop featured a dynamic Q&A session where members and participants shared their insights, offered feedback, and posed questions on critical topics. This interactive segment facilitated a constructive exchange of ideas, addressing key issues and generating innovative solutions to contemporary maritime challenges.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks that summarised the day's



discussions and highlighted the importance of collective efforts to refine the STCW Convention. The next steps were outlined, emphasizing the preparation for India's contributions to the ISWG-STCW1 session in October 2024.

The vote of thanks was proposed by **Mr. Sunil Kumar**, Head, Training & Assessment, The Great Eastern Shipping Co. Ltd. The workshop achieved its goal of fostering a collaborative environment for reviewing and enhancing the STCW Convention in response to emerging technologies and evolving industry demands. Key recommendations and outcomes from the workshop will be documented and presented at the upcoming ISWG-STCW1 session, reinforcing India's proactive stance on maritime safety and regulatory compliance.



# Navigating the Future: Revamping Maritime Education in India through Legislative Reform



**Capt Ramji S Krishnan**

Sloan Fellow, London Business School

*“Education is the kindling of a flame,  
not the filling of a vessel.”*

– **Socrates**

179,828 ratings and 105,626 officers. However, to maintain and enhance this position, India must ensure that its maritime education system evolves to meet the changing demands of the industry. This need for evolution resonates with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of skill development, vocational training, and the integration of technology in education. The NEP advocates for a holistic approach to education, ensuring that curricula are responsive to the needs of the industry and society. The maritime sector is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by technological advancements, increasing environmental regulations, and changing operational paradigms. In this context, the need to update India's maritime education framework through legislative reform has never been more pressing. For readers short on time, an executive summary on the proposed legislative reforms is also provided at the end of the article.

## INTRODUCTION

India's maritime industry stands as a cornerstone of the nation's economy, contributing significantly to trade, employment, and national prosperity and security. As global trade continues to expand, the demand for skilled seafarers is on the rise, presenting both an opportunity and a challenge for India. The country has long been recognized as a major supplier of competent maritime professionals to the global shipping industry. As of 2023, the total number of Indian seafarers is reported to be approximately 285,454. This figure includes

*“Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” – Steve Jobs*

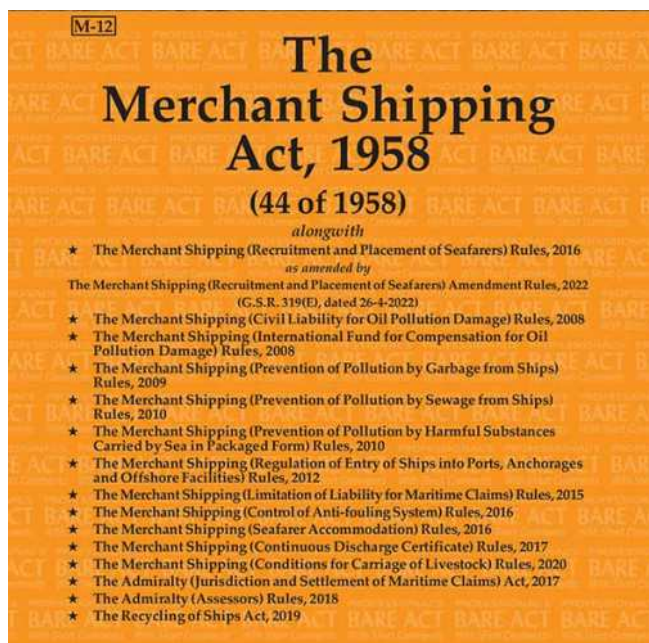


## Current Landscape of Maritime Training in India

The maritime training ecosystem in India operates under a regulatory framework primarily governed by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958. This legislation, while foundational, has seen only incremental changes over the decades, struggling to keep pace with the rapid evolution of the maritime industry.

At the helm of this regulatory structure is the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), which plays a pivotal role in overseeing maritime education and training in India. The DGS is responsible for approving maritime training institutes (MTIs), setting curricula standards, and ensuring compliance with international regulations such as the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention. IMU has made tremendous progress in this area of setting / revising curricula standards.

India boasts a diverse range of MTIs,



including government-run institutions, private academies, and in-house training centres operated by shipping companies. These institutes offer various programs, from basic safety courses to advanced specialized training for different roles aboard ships.

The current certification process for seafarers involves completing prescribed courses at approved MTIs, accumulating sea time, and passing competency examinations conducted by the DGS. While this process has produced many competent seafarers, it faces challenges in adapting to the changing needs of the industry.

Recently, an Advisory Board comprising expert members with proven experience in the maritime domain was established. This board aims to leverage the distilled knowledge, insight, and experience of its members to benefit the mercantile marine sector. The Director General of Shipping has highlighted that the Advisory Board will engage in ongoing discussions through an online forum, allowing members to freely associate with Directorate officials. This collaborative approach is intended to ensure that the maritime interests of the nation are prioritized.

## CHALLENGES FACING MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTES IN INDIA

Despite the robust framework set by the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), specifically the regulations in STCW 7.03, maritime training institutes (MTIs) in India grapple with several significant challenges:

*"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." –*

**Benjamin Franklin**



### **A. Outdated Curriculum**

Many MTIs struggle with curricula that have not kept pace with technological advancements and evolving industry practices. This gap can leave graduates ill-prepared for the realities of modern maritime operations.

This misalignment

underscores the need for a curriculum that not only meets STCW 7.03 requirements but also aligns with the NEP's vision of skill-oriented education that prepares students for the challenges of the modern workforce.

### **B. Quality of Training**

The quality of education varies significantly among the 147 maritime institutes in India, with some institutions failing to meet the standards set by the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS). This inconsistency can lead to a shortage of adequately trained personnel in the maritime sector.

### **C. Regulatory Oversight**

While the DGS is responsible for the operational development of the maritime industry and oversees the training institutes, there are concerns regarding the effectiveness of inspections and the quality assurance processes. Some institutes may receive ratings that do not accurately reflect their training quality, leading to issues of corruption and mismanagement in the evaluation process.

### **D. Placement Opportunities**

Many graduates from these institutes struggle to find employment due to an oversupply of trained seafarers compared to available positions. This situation can discourage potential candidates from pursuing maritime careers and may tarnish the reputation of the training institutes.

### **E. Limited Integration of Emerging Technologies:**

The rapid evolution of technologies such as automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) in maritime operations is not adequately reflected in many training programs. This can lead to a workforce that is ill-equipped to handle contemporary maritime challenges.

### **F. Inadequate Faculty Training and Development:**

Faculty members often lack ongoing professional development opportunities to stay updated with the latest industry trends and teaching methodologies. This can affect

*"The good of the people is the greatest law." - Cicero*





the quality of education delivered to students. A low pay-structure brought upon by many constraints including limited capacity of MTIs to charge market-based rates have been major detractor in attracting talented faculty.

#### **G. Insufficient Practical Training Facilities:**

There is a notable lack of modern simulation tools and hands-on training facilities in many MTIs. This limits the practical experience students can gain, which is crucial for developing the skills required in real-world maritime scenarios. Additionally, there is a dire need to explore online learning considering that connectivity with ships is expected to improve by leaps and bounds in the near future.

#### **H. Bureaucratic Hurdles in Certification Processes:**

The certification process for seafarers can be cumbersome and slow, leading to delays in obtaining necessary qualifications. This can discourage potential candidates from pursuing careers in maritime fields.

#### **I. Complex Examination Process:**

The current examination process for seafarers is cumbersome and needs simplification. There is a need to allow seafarers to choose

their examination timing and split modules for convenience. Usage of simulators may be an option which is worth exploring. Additionally, at least some part of the examinations can be MCQ (Multiple Choice Questionnaire)

#### **J. Inadequate Technology Integration:**

There's a lack of modern technological tools, such as web-based simulators, in the evaluation process. This gap hinders the preparation of seafarers for technological advancements in the maritime sector.



## **GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN MARITIME EDUCATION**

To address these challenges, it is crucial to look at global best practices in maritime education.

Leading maritime nations have implemented innovative approaches that India can learn from.

***"Experience teaches only the teachable." – Aldous Huxley***

In summary, addressing the challenges faced by MTIs in India requires a concerted effort to update curricula, enhance training quality, improve regulatory oversight, and ensure better placement opportunities for graduates, all while adhering to the standards set by STCW 7.03.

#### A. Case Studies:

1. Singapore: Known for its state-of-the-art maritime simulation centre and strong industry partnerships.
2. Netherlands: Emphasizes practical training and research collaboration between academia and industry.
3. Norway: Focuses on integrating environmental sustainability and digital technologies into maritime curricula.

What is indeed illuminating is the different approaches taken by the above-mentioned countries in enhancing their maritime education.

#### B. International Maritime Organization (IMO) Standards:

The IMO continually updates its standards to reflect industry changes. The latest amendments to the STCW Convention emphasize competency-based training and the integration of new technologies.

#### C. Innovative Approaches:

1. Blended learning models combining online and hands-on training.
2. Virtual and augmented reality tools for immersive training experiences.

3. Emphasis on soft skills and leadership training alongside technical competencies.



### THE NEED FOR LEGISLATIVE REFORM

The limitations of the current Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, have become increasingly apparent in the face of rapid industry changes. The Act, while providing a solid foundation, lacks the flexibility to quickly adapt to new technologies, changing skill requirements, and evolving international standards.

#### Legislative changes can address current challenges by:

1. Providing a framework for rapid curriculum updates.
2. Establishing clear standards for the integration of new technologies in training.

***“Law; an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community.” - Thomas Aquinas***



3. Setting robust quality assurance mechanisms for MTIs.
4. Facilitating easier collaboration between industry and academia.
5. Developing a comprehensive code of conduct for seafarers.
6. Establishing formal grievance mechanisms for both seafarers and companies.

**Updating the regulatory framework can yield significant benefits such as:**

1. Enhanced global competitiveness of Indian seafarers.
2. Improved safety standards in maritime operations.
3. Increased employment opportunities for Indian maritime professionals.
4. Greater alignment with international best practices and standards.

## KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN MARITIME EDUCATION

To address the challenges and align with global best practices, several key areas need improvement:

### A. Curriculum Modernization

- Regular review and update of curricula to reflect industry needs.
- This approach should also reflect the NEP's emphasis on interdisciplinary learning and the incorporation of emerging technologies into the educational framework.

- Inclusion of modules on emerging technologies and sustainable practices.
- Emphasis on practical, competency-based training.

The regulations require this to be done every 2 years. However, a continuous improvement methodology can also be adopted (as proposed by IMU).

### B. Technology Integration in Training Programs:

- Incorporation of simulation-based training for various maritime operations.
- Introduction of courses on digital systems, cybersecurity, and data analytics.
- Use of e-learning platforms for theoretical knowledge dissemination.

### C. Faculty Development and Qualifications:

- Establishing stringent qualification criteria for maritime educators.
- Mandating regular industry exposure for faculty members.
- Providing opportunities for continuous professional development.

### D. Enhancement of Practical Training Facilities:

- Investment in modern simulation centres and training ships.
- Collaboration with shipping companies for on-board training opportunities.
- Development of specialized training facilities for emerging technologies.

**E. Streamlining of Certification Processes:**

- Digitalization of certification procedures to reduce bureaucratic delays.
- Implementation of a competency-based assessment system.
- Regular review and update of certification standards in line with international norm
- Simplification of the examination process, including allowing seafarers to choose their examination timing and splitting modules for convenience

**F. Technology Integration in Evaluation:**

- Implementation of web-based simulators for evaluations.
- Use of technology to enhance training effectiveness and prepare seafarers for technological advancements.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1958

In the ever-evolving maritime industry, the need for continuous improvement cannot be overstated. As Winston Churchill noted, "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often." This principle is especially relevant when considering the necessary updates to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, through the upcoming Merchant Shipping Bill. The following amendments are proposed to ensure that India's maritime sector remains competitive, compliant, and forward-thinking.

**A. Comprehensive Standards for Maritime Training Institutes (MTIs)**

Under the new Act, the Central Government needs to prescribe comprehensive standards for maritime training institutes, which shall include:

- **Alignment with International Standards:** Ensure courses meet the minimum requirements of the STCW Convention, both in content and duration.
- **Competency-Based Assessments:** Implement clear criteria for evaluating trainee competence.
- **Enhanced Training Facilities:** Set safety and operational standards for training equipment and infrastructure.
- **Effective Learning Environments:** Introduce guidelines for optimal instructor-to-student ratios.

**B. Structured Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms**

The proposed amendment needs to ensure that the DGS establishes a structured framework for the monitoring and evaluation of approved maritime training institutes, which shall include:

- **Annual Inspections:** Conduct yearly assessments to ensure adherence to STCW standards, performed by qualified personnel.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Develop comprehensive benchmarks, including student performance and facility adequacy.
- **Penalties for Non-Compliance:** Introduce a tiered penalty system, from warnings to revocation of approval, for non-compliant institutes.



- Quality Assurance Body: Establish a dedicated body to oversee the evaluation process.

### C. **Trainer Qualifications and Competencies**

The proposed amendments to ensure that all trainers at MTIs are equipped to provide high-quality education and shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Educational Background: A relevant maritime degree or equivalent qualification recognized by the Central Government.
2. Industry Experience: A minimum of five years of seafaring experience in a relevant capacity.
3. Pedagogical Training: Completion of a pedagogical training program focused on adult learning principles and instructional design.
4. Continuous Professional Development: Participation in at least 40 hours of relevant professional development activities every two years.
5. Competency Assessment: Trainers must undergo a competency assessment process to evaluate their teaching effectiveness.
6. Mentorship and Support: New trainers shall be paired with experienced mentors for a minimum of six months."

### D. **Integration of Emerging Technologies in Curricula**

The curriculum for maritime training shall include mandatory training modules on emerging technologies, which shall cover Digital Navigation Systems:

- Include mandatory training on Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS).
- Automation and Cybersecurity: Integrate modules on autonomous systems and cybersecurity practices.
- Sustainable Shipping Practices: Educate on environmental regulations and sustainability in shipping.



### E. **Stakeholder Engagement in Curriculum Development**

Amendments need to propose that the Central Government establishes a framework for regular stakeholder engagement in the development and revision of maritime training curricula, which shall include

- Regular Consultations: Engage with industry associations, employers, and seafarer unions biennially.
- Student Feedback: Implement mechanisms for student and graduate input on training programs.
- Curriculum Reviews: Conduct periodic reviews to align with technological and industry advancements.

### F. **Promoting Research and Development in Maritime Education**

The Central Government shall establish a Maritime Education Research and Development Fund to:

- Support collaborative research projects between MTIs and industry partners.
- Facilitate the development of innovative training methodologies and technologies.
- Fund pilot programs for testing new approaches to maritime education and training.
- Provide grants for MTIs to upgrade their facilities and integrate cutting-edge technologies in their training programs.

#### **G. *Emphasizing Safety and Environmental Standards in Training***

The curriculum for maritime training to include mandatory training modules on safety protocols and environmental regulations, which shall cover:

- International safety management systems and practices.
- Environmental protection measures, including pollution prevention and waste management.
- Emergency response procedures and drills

#### **H. *Collaboration with International Maritime Organizations***

To establish a framework for collaboration with international maritime organizations, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to:

- Facilitate the exchange of best practices and resources for maritime training. Ensure that training programs are aligned with international standards and conventions

#### **I. *Focus on Soft Skills Development***

All maritime training institutes need to include modules on soft skills development in their curricula, which shall cover:

- Communication skills, teamwork, and leadership.
- Conflict resolution and problem-solving techniques relevant to maritime operations.

#### **J. *Mandating Digital Transformation in Training***

Maritime training institutes shall integrate digital tools and technologies into their training programs, which shall include:

- E-learning platforms and virtual simulations for practical training.
- Use of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) and other relevant technologies for immersive learning experiences.

#### **K. *Addressing Gender Diversity in Maritime Training***

The Central Government needs to promote gender diversity and inclusivity in maritime training programs by:

- Implementing initiatives to encourage the participation of women in maritime careers.
- Establishing mentorship programs for female trainees to support their professional development.

#### **L. *Financial Support and Incentives for MTIs***

To ensure sustainable funding for maritime education, the Central Government needs



to establish a Maritime Education Research and Development Fund to:

- Provide financial support for maritime training institutes to upgrade facilities and integrate cutting-edge technologies.
- Offer grants and scholarships to students pursuing maritime education.
- Mandate that shipping companies contribute a percentage of their gross revenue or a fixed levy per ton of cargo transported or a fixed levy for every Indian seafarer employed to the fund, ensuring a sustainable financial resource for maritime education and training initiatives

#### **M. Simplification of Examination Process**

The Director General of Shipping needs to establish a committee to simplify the examination process for seafarers and redesign the syllabus to better align with industry expectations. This shall include:

- Allowing seafarers to choose their examination timing.
- Splitting examination modules for convenience.
- Implementing web-based simulators for evaluations

#### **N. Development of a Comprehensive Code of Conduct**

The Central Government needs to develop a comprehensive code of conduct for seafarers, which shall address:

- Gender diversity in the maritime sector.

- Safety violations and compliance standards.

- Professional conduct and ethical behaviour

#### **O. Establishment of Grievance Mechanisms**

The Director General of Shipping to establish a comprehensive grievance module to:

- Address complaints from both seafarers and companies.
- Ensure accountability and fair treatment for all parties involved in the maritime sector

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed amendments to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, through the upcoming Merchant Shipping Bill, represent a significant step towards modernizing India's maritime education system. By addressing key challenges such as curriculum outdatedness, technology integration, and quality assurance, these amendments have the potential to transform the landscape of maritime training in India. As Drucker put it succinctly, “The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic.”

***The implementation of the following reforms could yield substantial benefits:***

1. Enhanced global competitiveness of Indian seafarers, leading to increased employment opportunities.
2. Improved safety standards in maritime operations, reducing accidents and environmental incidents.

3. Greater alignment with international best practices, solidifying India's position as a leader in maritime education.
4. Increased innovation in the maritime sector, driven by a more skilled and adaptable workforce.

Incorporating the principles of the NEP into maritime education reform will not only enhance the quality of training but also ensure that Indian seafarers are equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing global maritime landscape.

However, the success of these reforms will depend on the collective effort of all stakeholders in the maritime industry. Government bodies, training institutes, shipping companies, and seafarer unions must work in concert to implement these changes effectively. These changes will help ensure that the article aligns with the National Education Policy and emphasizes the importance of modernizing maritime education in India.

The Directorate General of Shipping is committed to building a roadmap based on recommendations and deliberations from various stakeholders, including the newly established Advisory Board. This collaborative approach, combined with the proposed legislative reforms, promises to address the current challenges and propel India's maritime education system into a new era of excellence and global competitiveness.

As we navigate towards a future of increasingly complex and technologically advanced maritime operations, it is imperative that India's maritime education system evolves to meet these challenges. The proposed amendments offer a roadmap for

this evolution, ensuring that Indian seafarers remain at the forefront of the global maritime workforce.

The time for action is now. We call upon all stakeholders in the maritime industry to support these crucial reforms, contributing their expertise and resources to shape the future of maritime education in India. By doing so, we can ensure that India not only maintains but enhances its position as a maritime powerhouse in the years to come.

As we reflect on our interconnectedness and the challenges facing our maritime industry, let us heed the call to action; for the bell tolls not just for one, but for all of us. Just as John Donne reminds us that "no one exists in isolation; we are all part of a greater whole," stakeholders must unite, put their shoulders to the wheel, and drive meaningful change together.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1958 AND MERCHANT SHIPPING BILL, 2020

### 1. *Comprehensive Standards for Maritime Training Institutes (MTIs)*

- Alignment with international standards, competency-based assessments, and enhanced training facilities





## **2. Structured Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms**

- Annual inspections, comprehensive evaluation criteria, and penalties for non-compliance

## **3. Trainer Qualifications and Competencies**

- Minimum qualifications, industry experience, pedagogical training, and continuous professional development

## **4. Integration of Emerging Technologies in Curricula**

- Mandatory training modules on digital navigation systems, automation, cybersecurity, and sustainable shipping practices

## **5. Stakeholder Engagement in Curriculum Development**

- Regular consultations with industry associations, employers, and seafarer unions

## **6. Promoting Research and Development in Maritime Education**

- Establishment of a Maritime Education Research and Development Fund to support innovative training methodologies and technologies

## **7. Emphasizing Safety and Environmental Standards in Training**

- Mandatory training on safety protocols and environmental regulations

## **8. Collaboration with International Maritime Organizations**

- Exchange of best practices and resources to align training programs with

international standards

## **9. Focus on Soft Skills Development**

- Inclusion of modules on communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving

## **10. Mandating Digital Transformation in Training**

- Integration of e-learning platforms, virtual simulations, augmented reality, and virtual reality

## **11. Addressing Gender Diversity in Maritime Training**

- Initiatives to encourage women's participation and establish mentorship programs

## **12. Financial Support and Incentives for MTIs**

- Establishment of a Maritime Education Research and Development Fund to provide financial support and scholarships

## **13. Simplification of Examination Process**

- Allowing seafarers to choose their examination timing and splitting examination modules

## **14. Development of a Comprehensive Code of Conduct**

- Addressing gender diversity, safety violations, professional conduct, and ethical behaviour

## **15. Establishment of Grievance Mechanisms**

- Addressing complaints from seafarers and companies and ensuring fair treatment



# Columbus Travel sets its footprint in India

*Following its launch last year in Europe and Philippines, Columbus Travel is delighted to be expanding its presence in India.*

**Christis Marcoullis**, Managing Director of Columbus Travel

An IATA-licensed business division of Columbia Aurus Ship Management – India (CASM), Columbus Travel, part of the Columbia Group mirrors the excellence of Columbus Travel Malta, offering specialised travel and logistics solutions tailored for both maritime and corporate needs.

Columbus Travel (CT), with its headquarters based in Malta and strategically located offices in Cyprus, Italy, Manila and Greece, is well placed to act as a reliable, quality and cost-effective travel partner. This expansion allows Columbus Travel to cover additional time zones and provide enhanced support to its Asian clientele.

Focussing on the maritime industry, Columbus Travel recognises the vital role played by shipping companies and its seafarers. It also understands the unique challenges of crewing departments and offers optimal travel solutions that can result in both time and cost savings.

CT India's specialist teams can offer a high standard of service covering marine fares; published/online low-cost fares; hotel accommodation; transport arrangements, as well as any other travel logistics.

Utilising the latest advancements in travel management software to streamline processes and enhance efficiencies, the travel services provider can meet customer needs round the clock and guarantees unparalleled flexibility and swift response times while securing the most competitive fares available.

Christis Marcoullis, Managing Director of Columbus Travel Group, said: "We are delighted to be expanding Columbus Travel to India. With strategic offices in several locations, we have a strong global footprint and are in a good position to offer companies in India cost -effective and reliable services to cater for all their travel

# MULTI-CULTURAL MENU FOR CREW MEMBERS IS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP THEM HAPPY, SAYS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SOLUTIONS AND MCTC

- **CHARLES WATKINS**

Clinical Psychologist and CEO, Mental Health Support Solutions



**Christian Ioannou**  
CEO of MCTC

Crews are in danger of walking out and striking if companies do not ensure they are provided with traditional meals from their home

countries, says Mental Health Support Solutions (MHSS).

The leading mental health support service, a member of the OneCare Group, has expressed concerns over the crucial need for a fully diverse menu for multi-cultural crews, following an incident where crew members declared they would go on strike if they did not receive more choice over their meals.

Clinical Psychologist and CEO at MHSS, Charles Watkins said: "Reports of crew

members walking out or going on strike due to a lack of choice over their meals is extremely concerning.

"In an increasingly multi-cultural shipping industry, crew members come from many different backgrounds and it is essential they are provided with their own traditional cuisines. Food can be a big driver for mental health and can really help boost seafarers' morale and mental health, so it is essential shipping companies ensure this is a priority for crews."

MHSS says the brain requires specific nutrients to function optimally and dietary choices can have a significant impact on mental wellbeing, so it is essential they have access to not only a variety of cuisines, but also a choice of tasty and nutritional meals.

Leading catering management provider



MCTC, which offers the full spectrum of catering management services, says although it is a huge challenge for crews to ensure traditional cuisines for all different nationalities, it is crucial for seafarers to have access to meals that remind them of home.

MCTC offers training courses in a number of cuisines, including Indian, Filipino, Asian and European, and it encourages the crew members it works with to attend the courses, as well as health and nutrition webinars and conferences.

When constructing a weekly menu for a vessel or fleet, MCTC takes into consideration the different nationalities on the vessel, explained Culinary Training Consultant, Costas Georgakoudes. While it aims to include as many recipes as possible that are loved by the crew members, it also respects the ethnic preferences of the seafarers.

As well as the challenge of ensuring all cooks are provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide a range of cuisines onboard, the provision of some ethnic items can prove challenging in certain ports, MCTC said.

Chief Cooks working with the catering management company are also encouraged to always ask for feedback from crew members. They can also adapt menus via MCTC's online Learning Management System (LMS) ESTIA, as

necessary, and the team of nutritional experts aim to provide alternative recipes to avoid repetition and boredom of meals.

MCTC has also implemented a signature dish initiative which is a culinary creation that uniquely identifies a specific company. The dish is an innovative interpretation of a classic interpretation recipe or a completely original concept that highlights the company's history, geography, and the different ethnicities of the current members of the company.

Health and Wellbeing Consultant/Dietitian Nutritionist at MCTC, Nichole Stylianou said:

"Crew members come from diverse and multi-national backgrounds with very different food preferences. We need to respect and support their cultural heritage through providing menus that will satisfy everyone onboard. One of the main factors in ensuring happy and satisfied seafarers is providing good and healthy food, and cultural dishes they love.

"Not being able to enjoy the food you would normally have at home is associated with negative feelings and can really affect a person's mental health. Traditional recipes from a seafarer's home country can evoke happy memories, help connect them with their crewmates as they discuss the food and memories of home; and is a way of celebrating each other's heritage and understanding different backgrounds."





## INDUSTRY LEADERS COULD SURGE AHEAD AS SMALLER COMPANIES STRUGGLE WITH FUELEU COMPLIANCE WARNS EMISSIONLINK

**PHILIPPOS IOULIANOU,**  
Columbia Group Director of Energy and Renewables

As the January 2025 implementation of the FuelEU Maritime Regulation approaches, industry leaders are rapidly positioning themselves to thrive under the new rules, while smaller companies risk falling behind, facing steep penalties and potential loss of market share, says EmissionLink.

This warning comes ahead of the 31st August deadline for shipping companies to prepare and submit their FuelEU Maritime Monitoring Plans.

EmissionLink, member of Columbia Group, says there are concerns that while industry leaders are investing in low-carbon technologies, optimising their operations, and ensuring compliance strategies are in place, some companies, particularly smaller operators, are clinging to outdated practices and also face limited resources, lacking the expertise and financial capability to understand the compliance and submit their plans.

"A significant number of shipowners and operators have yet to submit their FuelEU Monitoring Plans, citing complexity of the compliance and the lack of clear guidance and inconsistent support from regulators

about the correct steps to take," warned Philippos Ioulianos, Columbia Group Director of Energy and Renewables.

"Although there is some leeway to do this by the start of next year, we expect there to be a huge rush later in the year, so the earlier companies get their plans submitted and verified, the better."

Columbia Group is an active member of ship management trade association InterManager, and, on behalf of its members, InterManager has taken part in extensive discussion with the EU in relation to FuelEU and EU-ETS.

InterManager members have stressed to the EU the need for it to employ a 'polluter pays' approach to environmental legislation. The association points out that, in effect, ship managers are the facility managers and not the factory owners.

Ship managers are not responsible for decisions in relation to the origin of the fuel, its supply, or procurement decisions, or the technical specification of the ships they manage, Columbia says.

However, they are responsible for checking that the fuel delivered to the vessels conforms to the specifications ordered by owners or charterers and are also responsible for ensuring the fuel is handled properly onboard the vessel and, where different qualities are on the vessel, for ensuring the right fuel is burned at the right times. This is in line with the obligations placed on ship managers under the ISM Code.

Ship managers are therefore also concerned that the proposed FuelEU legislation makes them the responsible party and have warned that, as the ruleset currently stands, there is a high risk of litigation once the scheme is implemented.

To help ship owners and operators navigate the challenges posed by the new FuelEU Maritime Regulation, EmissionLink was launched by Columbia Group as a one-stop shop platform using AI to streamline processes and ensure compliance with the evolving regulatory landscape including FuelEU requirements and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

The platform offers transparency in managing the fuel life cycle and helps companies collect, clean, analyse, and forecast emissions data so clients can create long-term green strategies and reduce their emissions.

The FuelEU Maritime Regulation, a key component of the EU's "Fit for 55" package, is set to reshape the shipping industry by enforcing strict greenhouse gas (GHG) intensity reductions. Starting in January 2025, all ships of 5,000 gross tonnage (GT) and above will be required to significantly lower

their GHG emissions, with incremental targets leading to an 80% reduction by 2050.

The regulation requires companies to submit detailed Monitoring Plans that outline how they will measure and report their GHG intensity. This includes tracking 100% of energy used on voyages between EU ports and 50% on voyages between EU and non-EU ports. Failure to comply by the deadline could result in severe financial penalties and operational setbacks, putting lagging companies at a significant disadvantage.

"The FuelEU Maritime Regulation creates new challenges that require foresight and agility and shipowners must be ready to steer through the challenges ahead," said Mr Iouloulianos. "Non-compliance isn't just a financial risk—it's a strategic risk. As the industry moves toward greener practices, those who lag behind will find it harder to compete, not just in terms of meeting regulations, but in maintaining market share."

For companies struggling or looking for a company to enable them to meet the FuelEU requirements, EmissionLink offers A to Z services to address all the challenges such as essential support, providing a deep understanding of the regulatory landscape, expertise in emissions monitoring, data management and decarbonisation solutions.

"EmissionLink is here to ensure that no company, regardless of size, is left behind," said Mr Iouloulianos. "We provide the tools and expertise needed to develop, submit, and approve Monitoring Plans, ensuring compliance with the FuelEU Maritime Regulation and helping companies stay competitive in a rapidly changing market."



# Alphard Group Celebrates 15 Years of Excellence in Maritime Logistics and Marine Services



Alphard Group, a leader in maritime logistics, maritime offshore and marine services, proudly announces its 15th anniversary. Since its inception in 2009, Alphard Group has been at the forefront of delivering bespoke solutions and comprehensive services underpinned by a team of highly qualified and experienced maritime professionals. During this journey, Alphard Group has been agile and evolved into newer business models and segments within the maritime sector.

With operational and representative offices in India, U.A.E., and Singapore. Alphard Group has established a robust global presence. The Group is recognized for its commitment to excellence and continuous improvement.

Captain Alok Kumar, Chairman of Alphard Group, shares, "Our 15-year journey has been marked by a steadfast dedication to delivering professional and cost-effective solutions. We have instilled core values that prioritize dependability and professionalism, ensuring that we meet and exceed the unique requirements of our clients. As we look ahead, we are committed to sustainable practices, advancing our services, and maintaining our leadership in the maritime industry."

Prity Kumar, Group Managing Director of Alphard Group, reflecting on this significant milestone, adds, "Celebrating 15 years is a testament to our unwavering commitment to quality, efficiency, and innovation in the maritime industry. Our success is driven by our dedicated team, whose expertise and professionalism have been the cornerstone of our growth. We are proud of our journey and

excited about the future as we exceed our client's expectations with bespoke maritime solutions."

Alphard Group offers extensive capabilities in the marine logistics sector, specializing in transporting construction and project cargo for both onshore and offshore projects. The company also provides a wide range of supporting maritime services on a global scale. The offshore division of the Group works with the leading services providers to world-class energy companies across various projects and geographies. Alphard Group's mission is to become an integral partner to its clients, delivering high-quality, efficient, and economical solutions tailored to their specific needs.

Alphard Group's commitment to excellence is reflected in its strategic approach to meeting the evolving needs of the maritime logistics and marine services sectors. The company continues to innovate and adapt, positioning itself as a dependable partner in the global maritime community. The group is expected to embark on further new adjacent business segments to ensure continued growth.

## ABOUT ALPHARD GROUP

Alphard Group is a premier Maritime Logistics, Maritime Offshore, and Marine Services Company offering a comprehensive range of assets, services, and solutions. With a presence in key global markets, Alphard Group provides expert, professional, and cost-effective solutions that cater to the specific needs of its clients.

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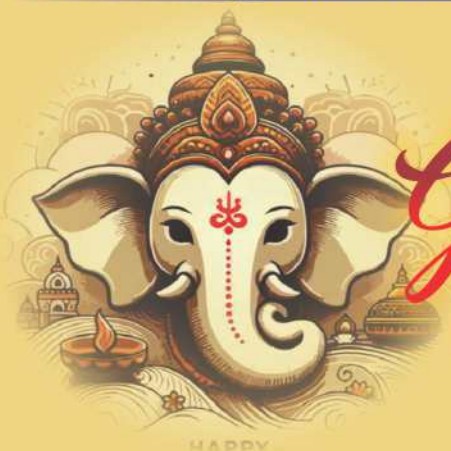


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