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IIRE Journal of Maritime Research and Development

Maritime sector has always been influencing the global economy. Shipping facilitates the bulk transportation of raw material, oil and gas products, food and manufactured goods across international borders. Shipping is truly global in nature and it can easily be said that without shipping, the intercontinental trade of commodities would come to a standstill.

Recognizing the importance of research in various aspects of maritime and logistic sector, IIRE through its Journal of Maritime Research and Development (IJMRD) encourages research work and provides a platform for publication of articles, manuscripts, technical notes, papers, etc. on a wide range of relevant topics listed below:

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SAILING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN MERCHANT NAVY

Dr Poonam Kapoor¹.

Abstract

This paper addresses the paradigm shift towards gender equality in the Merchant Navy, focusing on initiatives like the 'Women in Maritime' program by the International Maritime Organization. Despite progress, challenges persist, with only 9% of executive leadership comprising women, highlighting the need for more inclusive policies and increased awareness. The advantages for women in the Merchant Navy, such as equal pay and global experiences, align with the industry's gains in diversity and innovation. To overcome barriers like biases and demanding work conditions, the paper advocates for strategies including increased role models, inclusive policies, and enhanced awareness and education. While acknowledging positive strides, the conclusion stresses sustained efforts for a truly inclusive future in the maritime sector.

Keywords: Gender equality, Maritime industry, Women seafarers, Challenges, Opportunities, Diversity, Inclusion, Equal pay, Career advancement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Merchant Navy has traditionally been a male-dominated profession, but recent years have seen a significant shift towards gender equality and inclusivity in the industry. Women are now being welcomed into the profession, and more efforts are being made to make the industry more welcoming and inclusive for all. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has recognized the importance of gender equality and inclusivity in the maritime industry and has been working towards achieving it. According to the IMO, the maritime industry has recognized that there is a need to increase the number of women in the industry, as this can improve the industry's overall competitiveness and sustainability. Additionally, gender equality can lead to better economic

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growth in countries, and companies with more women leaders perform better, according to a study by Catalyst. The IMO has adopted the Women in Maritime program, which aims to promote gender equality and empower women in the maritime sector. It also provides training opportunities for women in the industry.

According to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), there are around 2% of women seafarers in the shipping industry worldwide and 1% in India, and most of them work in the cruise industry or in administrative positions. However, the trend towards increasing the number of women in the maritime industry is on the rise. In 2019, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) launched its 'Women in Maritime' program to promote gender diversity and empower women in the maritime sector. The program aims to increase the number of women in maritime-related fields to 30 per cent by 2030.

In recent years, many countries have taken steps to promote gender equality in the maritime industry. For example, in India, the government has launched several initiatives to increase the number of women in the maritime sector. The maritime industry has been making efforts to attract women to the profession by promoting gender diversity and inclusivity. The industry has started to recognize the value that women can bring to the profession. Women bring unique skills and perspectives to the industry, which can help to improve the industry.

The industry is also making efforts to create a more inclusive work environment. This includes addressing issues such as sexual harassment and discrimination, which have been a problem in the industry. The industry is now taking steps to ensure that all employees are treated with respect and dignity.

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) has been adopted by the International Labour Organization to ensure that seafarers are protected from discrimination and harassment. The MLC provides specific guidelines on the treatment of seafarers, including the provision of equal opportunities and the prevention of discrimination.

The industry has also been working towards creating a more supportive environment for women in the profession. This includes providing access to maternity leave and flexible working hours. The industry is also providing mentoring and training opportunities for women in the profession.

2. STATUS OF GENDER DIVERSITY

Gender equality and inclusivity in merchant navy is a topic that deserves more attention and action from all stakeholders in the maritime sector. As discussed earlier, there are many challenges and opportunities for women in merchant navy, both onboard and ashore. However, the female population is still very low, especially in senior and leadership positions. According to a report by Spinnaker, only 9 per cent of the executive leadership team members in maritime companies are women. This indicates that gender diversity in maritime is taking a long time to achieve. Some of the possible reasons for this slow progress are:

Lack of awareness and exposure: Large population is not aware of the career opportunities merchant navy offers. People in general not aware about the scope and benefits of working in merchant navy, there is a lack of knowledge about career for women on board a ship. There may also be a lack of awareness and education among men about the value and importance of gender diversity and inclusion in the maritime sector.

Barriers: Misconceptions about the nature, requirements of the job and life on board a ship creates social and cultural barriers that discourage women from choosing this field.

Gender bias and stereotypes: Women may face discrimination and harassment from their male counterparts or superiors who may doubt their abilities or suitability for the job. They may also face challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives, especially if they have family responsibilities or plan to start a family.

Physical and mental stress: Working in merchant navy involves long hours, harsh weather conditions, isolation from family and friends, and constant adaptation to different cultures and environments. It is preconceived notion that women may find it difficult to cope with these factors.

Lack of role models and mentors: Women do not have enough exposure to successful women leaders in the maritime sector who can inspire them, guide them, and support them in their career aspirations. There is a dearth of guides and mentors who can provide young women encouragement, knowledge, advice, and opportunities for growth and development in this field.

Lack of policies and practices: Industry needs adequate policies and practices to facilitate the entry and retention of women. These may include flexible work arrangements, maternity and

paternity leave, childcare facilities, anti-harassment measures, equal pay audits, gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion processes, etc.

2.1 Advantages for Women in Merchant Navy:

There are many advantages and incentives for women to join merchant navy, such as:

- **Equal pay and opportunities:** Women in merchant navy are paid equally as men for the same rank and position. They also have equal opportunities for promotion and career advancement based on their performance and qualifications.
- **Travel and adventure:** Women in merchant navy get to travel around the world and experience different cultures enriching their personal and professional lives.
- **Braking Barriers:** Women get an opportunity to prove their worth and potential in a male-dominated industry. Their career choice can inspire other women. They can also receive recognition and appreciation from their employers, clients, colleagues, and society for their contributions to the maritime sector.

2.2 Advantages for the industry for having women seafarers:

The industry can also benefit from including more women onboard ships, such as: Diversity and innovation: Women can bring different perspectives, ideas, skills, and experiences to the maritime sector. Their presence can foster a more inclusive, collaborative, and creative work environment that can enhance productivity, efficiency, and quality.

Safety and sustainability: Presence of women on board a ship can help improve the safety and sustainability of the maritime operations by promoting a culture of compliance, responsibility, accountability, and respect.

Reputation and competitiveness: Women can help improve the reputation and competitiveness of the maritime sector by showcasing its attractiveness, professionalism, and social responsibility. They can also help attract more talent, customers, investors, and partners to the industry.

Therefore, it is important to encourage more women to join merchant navy by creating awareness, providing education, training, mentoring, scholarships, incentives, policies, facilities, support systems, networks, role models, etc. that can help them overcome the challenges and leverage the

opportunities in this field. It is also important to create a culture of respect, equality, diversity, inclusion, empowerment, recognition etc. that can help them thrive and succeed in this field. By doing so, both women and the industry can benefit from each other's strengths and potentials.

it is important to address these issues and create a conducive environment for women to join and advance in the maritime sector. Some of the possible actions that can be taken are:

Increasing role models and mentors: Women need more visibility and recognition of their achievements and contributions to the maritime sector. They also need more opportunities to network with other women leaders and professionals who can share their experiences, challenges, and best practices. They also need more mentors who can provide them with guidance, support, and sponsorship for their career development.

Implementing policies and practices: Women need more policies and practices that can enable them to balance their personal and professional lives, protect them from discrimination and harassment, ensure them fair compensation and benefits, and provide them with equal opportunities for career advancement. These policies and practices should be aligned with international standards and best practices, such as those recommended by IMO.

Enhancing awareness and education: Women need more awareness and education about the scope and benefits of working in the maritime sector, as well as the skills and qualifications required for the job. They also need more access to quality training and education programs that can equip them with the necessary competencies and credentials for the job. Men also need more awareness and education about the value and importance of gender diversity and inclusion in the maritime sector, as well as the skills and attitudes required for working effectively with women.

By taking these actions, both women and men can benefit from a more diverse and inclusive maritime sector that can enhance its performance, competitiveness, sustainability, reputation, etc.

3. CONCLUSION

The efforts towards gender equality and inclusivity in the maritime industry have already started to yield positive results. Women are now being welcomed into the profession, and there are more

opportunities available for them. The industry is also benefiting from the unique skills and perspectives that women bring to the profession.

The maritime industry is sailing towards gender equality and inclusivity. There is a growing trend towards increasing the number of women in the maritime industry. The IMO and various countries are taking steps to promote gender equality in the industry, which will hopefully lead to more women sailors in the future. The efforts being made by the industry towards achieving this goal are commendable. However, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that the industry is truly inclusive for all. The industry must continue to promote gender diversity and inclusivity to create a better future for all seafarers.

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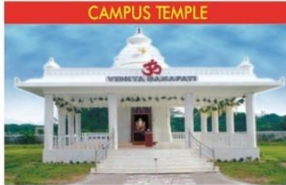
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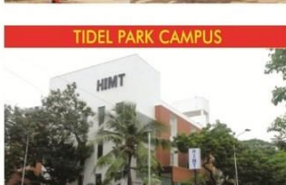
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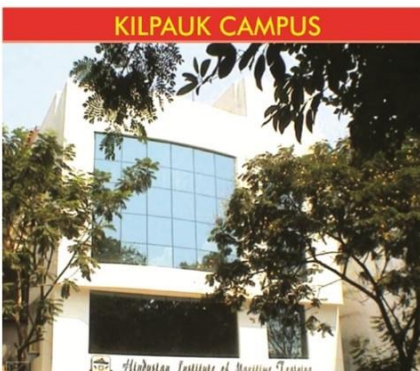


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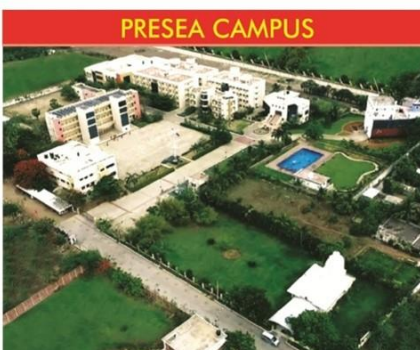


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