

Sagar Sandesh

Guiding Spirit to Shipping Industry

Maritime Tabloid English Bi - Weekly E - Paper

In association with R L Institute of Nautical Sciences, Madurai, Tamil Nadu. | RNI No. TNENG/2012/41759 | Monday, July 12, 2021 | Voyage 10 Wave 43

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Diversity in the Indian Maritime Industry :

Ms. Sanjam Sahi Gupta , Director, Sitara Shipping Ltd. & Founder, Maritime SheEO.



Sanjam Sahi Gupta

Representation of women in shipping: An Indian perspective:

A first baseline survey was conducted in India in 2019, with the support of the Director General of Shipping, to:

- Identify challenges of women working onshore and offshore
- Evaluate the ground reality of gender bias and inequality in the maritime industry
- Examine the status of women in the top 3 levels of management in the industry
- Make recommendations to organizations and government to include women employees in every segment of the industry

This survey encompassed 205 companies employing over 100,000 people across all verticals. It found that women are underrepresented in the maritime industry in India, particularly in decision-making positions, (Figure 1). Even from the 20% women working within organisations, most of the women were in “supporting positions” rather than key management functions.

Hurdles in hiring and retaining women in the Indian maritime industry:

(Hiring more women for profitable businesses)

Although the maritime and oceans industry offers a variety of career opportunities at land and at sea, and despite a dearth of appropriate reports, and statistics about women employment and challenges, **there is no doubt that women are underrepresented in the maritime industry in India.**

This article summarises findings from surveys, in-depth interviews with CEOs and HR heads from maritime companies and research conducted in India between 2019 and 2020 aimed at understanding better this problematique, with the aim to find possible avenues to overcome it.

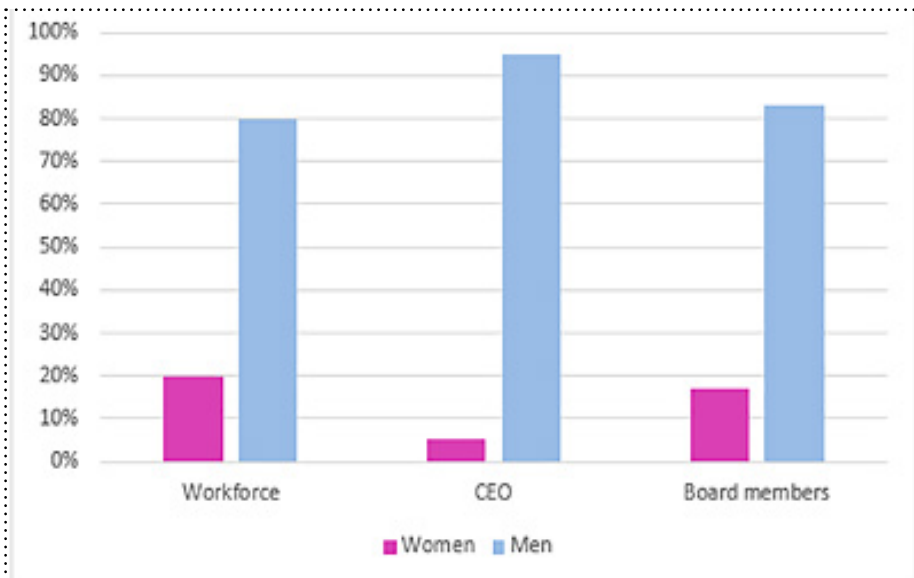


Figure 1 Representation of women as share of the workforce

The 2019 survey suggests that companies are not creating an environment that supports hiring and retaining of women. 90% of the companies stated that they received very poor applications from women during recruitment. **In fact, we often hear companies complain that they want to hire women but were not able to find these women. The survey results suggests that companies are not looking hard enough.**

In fact, a lot of companies had an “unwritten” policy not to hire women, especially onboard ships. We found that although maritime training institutions offer a waiver of up to 50% on their fee for female candidates, they were often turned down when they approached

companies for placements to complete their sea time. There should be policy measures in place deterring companies that openly discriminate. However, in cases where an “unwritten policy” existed, women's applications were accepted but their applications were not considered. To curb this, a mandatory course for gender sensitisation / managing unconscious bias was recommended for manning and ship owning companies. However, implementing such initiatives was challenging and received a lukewarm response.

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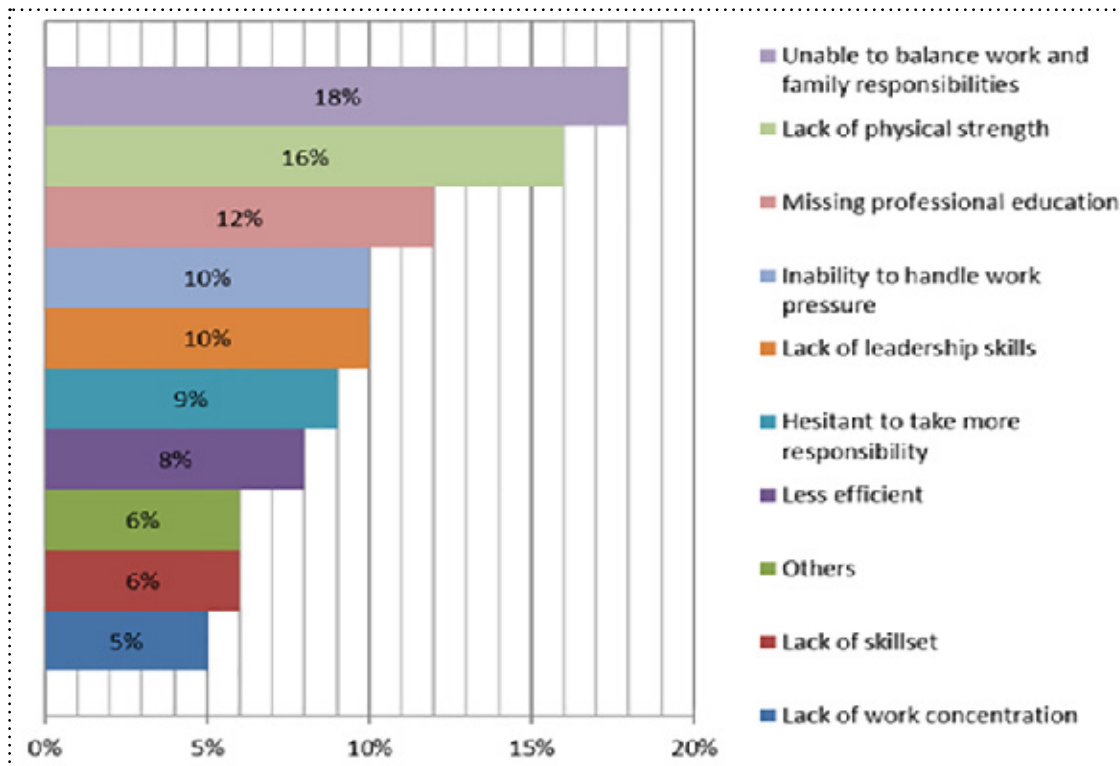


Figure 2 Reasons cited by companies to reject women's applications

Two additional surveys were conducted to understand the issues faced by women at sea and onshore. These were answered by 781 women working at shore and 112 women working at sea. Findings from these surveys painted the ground realities with 71% women seafarers and 63% women working ashore stating that they had difficulties in

finding a job and they did not feel safe nor secure in their working environment. The respondents also revealed reasons that companies cited for rejecting them (Figure 2), which they stated were incorrect.

Companies stated that retaining women was also an important hurdle. The reasons for this were made abundantly clear

by the fact that, despite 86% of companies reporting they had a Gender Equality policy and 80% stating their jobs were gender-neutral, very few had policies supporting women and their retention.

In the absence of support mechanisms and clearly defined goals, it is not surprising that recruitment and retention of

women is deemed problematic. The surveys also revealed that all women (at shore and seafarers) believed the following measures should be further incentivized at the Government and employer level to improve working conditions and retention of women in the maritime workforce: flexible working hours; maternity benefits, improving safety and security, regular training programs, stringent action in case of sexual harassment, on-site childcare, and room for wellness.

The need to overcome biases to leverage diversity as a driver for innovation and business:

The findings of the above report led to the conclusion that our industry lacks inclusivity. What was disturbing though was, at times, employers perceived "women" as being the problem rather than the actual issue on hand. It is easier to include people who we think would look and think like the majority because creating a culture or environment conducive to diversity would need some changes and efforts on behalf of the management. For instance, costs would go up by offering onsite childcare and other facilities and, in absence of data showing a positive relation between increased diversity, companies do not wish to go the extra mile to set goals. Simply

put, with our own internalized biases, we have chosen to go for comfort over inclusivity.

But there is a business case to boost female expertise in the industry. Our in-depth interviews with CEOs and HR heads led to the conclusion that an improved gender balance contributes to more diverse workplaces, with positive effects both internally and externally. Moreover, it positively influences the attractiveness of jobs and the competitiveness of the sector.

Most industry stakeholders want a more prosperous industry with higher profits. But there is a contradiction between maritime industry concerns about the lack of talent or labour pool available and having women who want to work, with the right motivation and education that are not given equal opportunities.

Today, we are missing out on 50% of the talent, 50% of the new ideas, 50% of the potential progress this industry could be making. And probably quite a lot of profit too. Not letting women work is a crime against economics and common sense. If we want to make our industry better, we need to let women participate more actively.

Accredit UNCTAD being the source of the article/ first published in UNCTAD Transport newsletter.

To Be Continued in Next Publication 17th July.



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Container Ship Suffers Suspected Missile Attack in Indian Ocean

The 8,600 TEU container ship, CSAV Tyndall has suffered a possible missile attack when it was sailing in the Indian Ocean from the Port of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia to Dubai's Jebel Ali Port.

Israeli media report the Liberian-flagged vessel was attacked on 3 July in the Northern Indian Ocean by unidentified weaponry. It is suspected that the ship was perhaps hit by a missile, although the specifics are not yet confirmed.

At the moment, reports are quite contradictory; some claim there is a fire on the cargo deck area, while others claim the 2014-built boxship sustained no major damage. The crew is reported unharmed, while the

vessel is also reported to have proceeded with its trip following the attack.

Given the CSAV Tyndall's prior association with an Israeli shipowner, Eyal Ofer, defence analysts immediately put the finger at Iran as the most likely suspect.

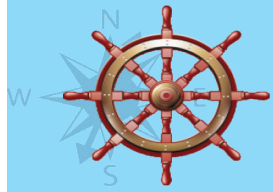
Iran has been accused of coordinating past assaults on Israeli ships in the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean, as part of a long-running feud of alleged retaliation between the Israeli and Iranian governments against the commercial fleets of one another.

Additionally, the Tyndall incident occurred just after an Israeli drone attack successfully targeted an Iranian uranium centrifuge production facility,



CSAV-Tyndall

as part of Israel's effort to deny Tehran from establishing a nuclear arsenal. Wall Street Journal stated that at least 12 ships, most of them shipping Iranian oil with mines and other arms, were attacked by Israel in March this year. Source Container News.



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A new offshore LNG terminal in India....

Diversity in the Indian Maritime Industry :

Ms.Sanjam Sahi Gupta, Director, Sitara Shipping Ltd. & Founder, Maritime SheEO.

(Hiring more women for profitable businesses)

Continued from Last Publication on 12th July..

Unpacking the linkages between workforce diversity, company performance and work culture:

While companies look at diversity as a moral issue -the "right thing to do"- they do not always recognise that diversity also makes good business sense. In 2020, we sought to understand the business case for diversity in the Indian maritime Industry and conducted research to understand linkages between workforce diversity, company performance and work culture, covering 104 companies representing over 65,000 employees.

The first challenge was understanding if companies had data that connected diversity to business performance. We spoke to 5 HR heads and 5 CEOs and experts across all verticals and gathered information on their processes for recruitment, promotions and performance measurement. In most cases we found that companies did not measure this in financial terms or were not able to share hard data (e.g., an increase in women led to an increase in X% sales or profits).

Based on these in-depth interviews with 10 experts we created a questionnaire which companies would answer based on their data without sharing any confidential information about sales or profits. We also interviewed 5 women achievers to understand what set these women's career paths apart from others -what did these women do differently or what were the conducive environments

that made them achieve their positions.

To the question "Has increased gender diversity / participation of women in your organisation helped enhance your business outcomes?" a whopping 67% provided a positive reply. Qualitative individual feedback suggested that there is a wide belief that diversity leads to better business operations. However, we were unable to support this with hard figures given the absence of measurement systems. To get actual figures, companies would have to link diversity measures to performance drivers in all parts of the organization and ultimately to organizational overall performance. However, our survey did reveal interesting results:

level of creativity and innovation at work as diverse teams generate more ideas" (Figure 3)

- 49% of the respondents believed that "By increasing women's participation in the organisation, departments have become more cohesive and open" (Figure 3)

- 36% of the respondents agreed there is more effective decision-making by increasing women in decision making roles and 49% were neutral (Figure 3)

- 49% of the companies agreed that increasing women's participation in the organisation led to a positive impact on the company's image and brand, potentially impacting sales and retention

- A substantial proportion

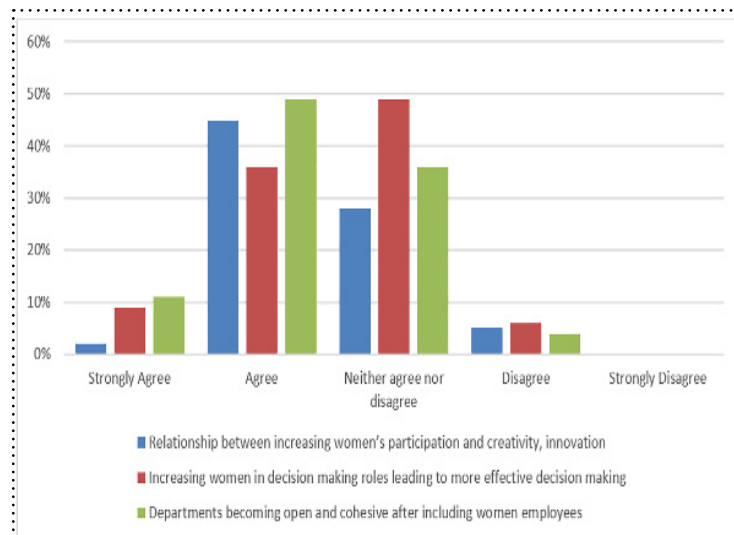


Figure 3 Responses to questions assessing the perception of companies regarding the impact of diversity

- 45% of the respondents agreed that "By increasing women's participation in the organisation, there was a greater

of the sample (83%) responded that it was not a challenge for the company to retain women employees. This suggests that



Ms.Sanjam Sahi Gupta

the general assumption that organisations are unable to retain women employees due to their perceived inability to balance work and home responsibilities might be false.

Although 37% of the respondents confirmed their company adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Policy:

- 19% skipped the question about benefits offered to the women employees (from which we can infer that they do not offer any benefits)

- 42% offer maternity benefits for the female employees but only 2% of them said a creche facility was available

- 17% granted flexible working hours

- Committees with mandates against sexual harassment were only available in 13% of the respondents' companies.

It is evident from these survey results that gender issues have been taken seriously by some of the respondents. Some companies believe in diversity for diversity's sake and those cynical enough not to certainly pay attention to it, as it improves their bottom-line. The employees and management are aware that business productivity, company image and overall performance are linked to a gender inclusive workplace.

As the quantitative and

qualitative evidence grows for a gender inclusive workplace, the next step would be designing a measurement system. It is important to mention that a few companies indicated they had tools in place but did not share them due to company policies. **Companies need a measurement system to measure the gender dimension in connection from a performance perspective. Only once measured, companies will understand that diversity improves performance and profits and thus promoting it will be viewed as a key competitive strategy.** From a social perspective and from a human resource perspective, a company that devises policies using the tenets of inclusivity and diversity principles would reap the benefits of goodwill and returns in the market. A strong customer base, dynamic work conditions and optimally managed human resources would undoubtedly make a huge impact. **Having women participate in the maritime industry would be beneficial to companies but also to India and will enable us to achieve excellence in the global maritime industry.**



Woman-In-Maritime - Ms Sanjam Sahi Gupta

Accredit UNCTAD being the source of the article/ first published in UNCTAD Transport newsletter.