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FACTORS INFLUENCING MARINERS' TRANSITION TO SHORE JOBS IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT-AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Ninety percent of the World's cargo is moved by shipping mode. Shipping Industry is one of the vital industries of the World. The economic power of a Country has always been proportional to its Maritime Power - for ex. the British Empire. Also seafaring career is one of the top earning careers in any Country.

With the advent of globalization and opening up of the Indian economy to international competition, the importance of this Sector has only increased mani-fold. There is a clamour for taking up shipping-related education among the present generation of students & parents. Thus, no doubt Maritime occupation has all the attractions of a golden career. It is also widely known that seafaring has many abiding attractions concomitant with the job itself – like the waves, winds, aromas, high value of the cargo and connected transactions, competent & tough colleagues, the uniforms, the thrills of reaching and leaving ports, the thrill of uncertainties & risks, the mighty ship itself etc. There is a great self- actualization too, since a spell at sea equips the mariner to be self- reliant and gives scope for fullest exploitation of potential talents under challenging circumstances. Thus it is one of the careers that cannot be performed without fullest involvement and has the tendency to bind the incumbent soulfully with it. As Capt S V Subhedar, Director, Indian National Shipowners' Association (INSA) puts it, a career in shipping is "fulfilling, challenging, and non-boring".[1]

But it appears that the mariners have shown inclination towards shore job at different stages of their career for various reasons, though the maritime career is absorbing and enchanting, also being lucrative.

This article explores the factors that egg-on seafarers to give up such an attractive career and make a transition to shore jobs.

KEY WORDS- Engine side, Deck side, Shore jobs, Seafaring, HR aspects.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

In the early days of seafaring, i.e. at about 50 years ago, there were some misconceptions about the seafaring career – that it is suitable for either bachelors or those who did not have any commitments in life. It was also believed that they may not come back at all – at the worst they may perish at sea and at the best they may settle in some other distant land; a few who came back

were totally changed persons, who looked down upon land dwellers. However, in all these cases, they came back loaded with wealth!

But the basic fact is that it calls for great training and preparation to become a seafaring person aboard a ship either then or now.

There are examples of other avocations where the incumbents start a career and complete it in the same

path – like an officer in a Government department, a banker, a teacher, a policeman, an auditor, a manufacturing engineer, a construction expert etc. But is it the same with marine personnel on board? How often we find, say a 60 year old sailor on-board? Mostly not, because it appears they have already come ashore and settled on a 'land job'.

Settling in a shore job for those who had sailed for more than 15 to 20 years will not be a cake walk. There is world of difference between the two. However, it is a great paradox that most of the seafarers of all hues and shades, do not remain there for a life time. Sooner or later, they migrate to shore jobs, either to an allied field or to a totally different field of activity.

This study aims to examine whether such a migration is just one- off or really a universal phenomenon in-built in the career trajectory of a mariner. If so, what could be the reason for such a migration, like -personal, family, the rigours of the job or other factors?

2.0. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is in the nature of an exploratory study; an initial attempt at studying and putting on-board the factual position pertaining to this phenomenon. It includes personnel from both Marine (engine) side and deck (navigating) side. Personnel from Port side, Traffic, Cargo Management or similar allied careers, but not actually on-board, have not been included. The study includes both migrated and yet to migrate samples, to know both sides of the coin. The study aims at promoting awareness thru' a scientific & systematic enquiry, the extent & dimensions of the subject matter.

It could bring about conceptual insight and help in developing standards while analyzing and finding solutions to this phenomenon; this could be of use to serving and migrated mariners, career planners, HR professionals of shipping companies and the top management of such companies as well as the employers who hire these mariners on migration. It could also help in families of Mariners and Mariners' associations in understanding, clarifying and rehabilitating mariners for the second career.

While examining this article, it should be borne in mind that some of the inputs listed here are in the category of axiomatic knowledge for mariners but equally enigmatic to the non-marine World!!

The authors find that there have been very few studies about HR aspects of marine careers and fervently hope that the present study may trigger many more studies in this sphere.

3.0. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There is an obvious paradox in that seafaring is a rewarding career but not a life-long one. People undergo extensive learning, preparation and experiential training to enter the field and to continue in the field (like facing a series of examinations for moving from one rank to higher in the career), but do not apparently continue in it. Hence the study focuses on the following research questions:

Primary Questions:-

- a) Exploring the paradigm that mariners tend to transition to shore jobs; is it a one-off phenomenon or a universal one?
- b) Are there serious hardships on the job? Again, is it one-off and exaggerated or is it very real?
- c) What are the main reasons for the transition & allied factors?

Secondary Questions:-

- a) What is the impact of marine career on family members and family life?
- b) Do the mariners really plan for such transition or does it happen without their deliberation, under force of circumstances?
- c) What are the opinions of Mariners who have migrated on shore life?
- d) What are the opinions of mariners still serving on board?

4.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

Material both printed and on line have been collected, strictly adhering to the research questions. The collected survey is sorted out and presented here, based on major premises that arise out of the objectives.

Premise 1: is it universal?

The Maritime site: An informal analysis of graduates from a maritime academy's alumni directory, revealed that less than 10% of graduates from 1975 to 1995, are still actively sailing on their licenses. The reasons for leaving the mariner's profession are as numerous as the reason they decided to take up sailing in the first place [2]

This study makes a distinction between engine side (Marine Engineers) and deck side (Nautical) personnel; for merchant marine engineers, the transition to shore employment can be relatively straightforward; after all, engineering in general is a discipline equally (if not more) in demand on shore or afloat. In contrast, deck officers and crew are often faced with tougher challenges as their skill sets don't always appear to translate over into shore side positions.

Premise 2: Is the career fraught with hardships?

- 2. George phillipose-2005^[8] has listed many hardships and dangers including accidents, piracy, harsh treatment from bosses, working in ships which does not have minimum facilities, power outages, problems of alighting & leaving ports, seemingly endless procedures to be completed in a short time under great stress, problems of girls accosting & trapping mariners, home sickness, water& food rationing, undue listing of the vessel, home-sickness, burn-outs, working in confined spaces inability to bathe and change clothes as at land, getting caught in war zone, receiving death news from home town, delayed payments to various creditors by ship owners, and piracy. In fact these are not written by hearsay-but he had experienced all of them first hand
- 3. The same facts have been written independently in a Tamil book by Ganesan 2012 titled "Katrathu Kadalalavu" (meaning "What the sea taught me") with added experience of abandoning ship & handling stowaways ^[4] 4. Capt. Pankaj Bhargava 2013, has written in "marine insight" site also enlists a similar list with additions of physical fitness, not falling sick during voyage, ability to perform continuously on two shifts non-stop ^[5]
- 5. The same site also carries an article by Capt. Mohit, 2010, that this job is not for the weak hearted, for those who get homesick easily or those who find it difficult to work in a harsh environment^[6]
- 6. In an article in Marine insight website, Raunek 2013, lists out 12 main resaons $^{[7]}$
 - I. Unsettled Lifestyle
 - II. Hectic Life
 - III. Onboard politics
 - IV. Lack of Social Life
 - V. Being Away from the Family
 - VI. Personal/Family Problems
 - VII. Rise in Maritime Piracy
 - VIII. Health Issues (including accidents)
 - IX. Reducing shore leaves
 - X. Lack of Shore Jobs (so that they quit early)
 - XI. Reducing crew members (and increasing work load)
 - XII. Stringent Maritime Laws

Premise 3: Is the transition easy?

 Capt. Pankaj Bhargava has carried out a study and posted it on Marine Insight website ^[5].

"According to this study, merchant navy is a great career option, which is both financially rewarding and professionally satisfying; but there are several reasons why seafarers quit a promising and well-rewarding life at sea. Leaving an active sea career is not an easy decision, yet hundreds of merchant navy officers have dared to

trespass to shore jobs and have not only conquered them but also remained undefeated in their new endeavors."

Premise 4- What the family feels?

8. The Hindu News Paper dated 14-12-2000 $^{[8]}$

Adaptability, acquired through experience of being onboard, enables mariners to settle down almost instantaneously, within any social set-up. While accepting the local warmth, colour and flavour of their adopted city, they also share with its people the richness and variety of their myriad experiences of life at sea and in distant lands.

- It is a sure thing that the sailing mariner misses his family and they miss him too. For example, eight-year old son of a sailor says to the Hindu, "I miss my father especially when he has just gone, or when he is not with me to celebrate my birthday." A 4 year old daughter says, "When daddy goes on the ship, mummy is our mother and father."
- There are associations like The Institute of Marine Engineers (India), The Company of Master Mariners, and The Merchant Navy Officers' Association (MNOA), which conduct seminars, symposia and publish journals for dissemination of knowledge, and also organise social get-togethers to foster inter-personal relationships between members of the marine community.
- Perhaps due to this bonding, the Mariners feel that even when they are away on duty, they are certain that someone will be around to help their families during an emergency.
- Wives of many mariners do take up jobs like teaching, party-catering and event management
 entrepreneurship is also a favorite option for them

Premise 5 - What happens after they leave sea?

- 9. www. **gCaptain.com-**Faststream, the UK-based maritime industry recruitment firm, has carried out a study, by conducting a survey, titled "Perception vs. Reality", covering over 600 seafarers. The following are some of the questions addressed in the report.^[9]
 - What sort of career paths are available?
 - Where do the best opportunities lie?
 - Do ex-seafarers make good office people?
 - N How much money will they make? Fast stream asked seafarers what they thought starting salaries were, for an officer with 10 to 15 years of experience coming ashore in a variety of professions. Responses found that most of them hugely underestimated what starting salaries might be, in almost every profession.



The survey shows that seafarers are far more attracted by those shore professions to which they have had some contact in their day to day work. Career paths such as operations manager, surveyor and fleet manager proved to be much more attractive to seafarers coming ashore

than a career in insurance, law, or even sales. The study has also identified a number of allied trades and services available to a seafarer for transition viz-a-viz their attraction levels (ref: diagram below)

Attractiveness of various shoreside career paths to seafarers

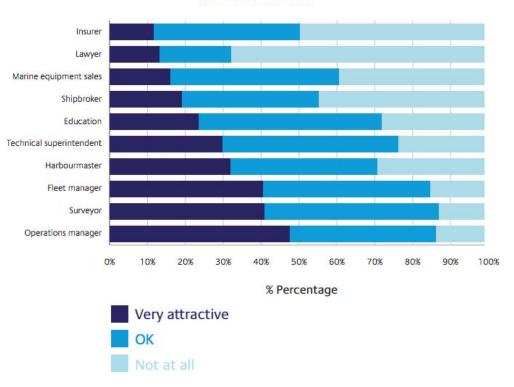


Fig.1 Attractiveness of various shore jobs

Premise 6: Are there well developed guidance/ support mechanisms

- 8. Shore job portals: There are International Portals for guiding Mariners to shore based shiprelated jobs. For example, Shore Marine Jobs is a popular portal; their goal is "to assist candidates in finding their perfect shore based jobs along with allowing clients to advertise their shore based shipping jobs"- including technical shipping jobs, commercial shipping jobs, P&I
- shipping jobs, Fleet personnel jobs, Ports& Agency jobs, HSQE Marine Jobs & sales jobs " ^[10].
- 9. OtherPopularsitesarehttp:wavesnewsletter.com/ ,http://careers.chevron.com,ww.shine.com/, www.careerage.com/, shipshorejobs.com/ etc. They list out jobs available to mariners coming ashore which are indicated below:

Table: 1 Shore jobs available to mariners on transition

Tubici I bilore jobs availe	able to marmers on transition
Marine Transportation	 Voyage manager Area operations coordinator Repair superintendent Riding superintendent Operations superintendent Safety/environmental specialist Procurement and contracting Auditor
Marine Services	 Construction manager Naval architect Project manager Hull and systems engineer Marine engineer Marine consultant/advisor Marine Superintendent Marine Operations Manager
Commercial	 Charterer Voyage Manager Business Manager and Analyst Demurrage analyst Clearance specialist/representative Marine superintendent
LNG Shipping	LNG project manager/coordinatorCommercial advisorBusiness analyst
Strategic Planning and Analysis	Financial analyst Commercial analyst
Human Resources and Global Manning	 HR business partner HR analyst Manning manager Manning representative Training and development manager

5.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design: The study is exploratory -cum -analytical in nature. The structure of the study involves t is an objective based study that involves traversing the connected literature, framing the research questions, determining objectives, constructing data collection instrument that would capture field data in consonance with objectives, analyzing the data with suitable techniques and presenting the findings.

As already stated under scope of the study, the study targets only marine engineers & nautical personnel who have already transitioned to shore jobs as well as mariners who are presently sailing, who may transition to shore jobs in future.

Sources of data: The study has been conducted on the strength of both primary and secondary data.

Sampling field & method: The study has covered the population of persons with a profile of on board experience of at least 10 years' experience before migration; data was collected from respondents who are still serving on-board. The samples included any Indian mariner whatever be his service location or shipping company. Since the population is scattered all over the world, convenient sampling was adopted; however care has been taken to represent diverse age groups, shipping companies and locations.

Data collection method: Data was through well structured questionnaires administered along with interview. Two questionnaires were employed; one questionnaire for samples who have already migrated & another questionnaire for samples still on board. Both were tested with initial respondents and further refinements were made before administering to respondents

EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review

Sample size: The sample that actually responded were 23 mariners who have transitioned ashore and 10 mariners who are still serving on-board

Analytical tools: The collected data was analyzed with percentage analysis, weighted averages and correlation coefficients.

Limitation: The study is an initial effort at fathoming the causes for the stated phenomenon. It has been built on the basis of data collection on a limited scale with Indian respondents.

Further research: The study would also indicate leads for further research, like a similar study on a larger

scale, what is the job satisfaction level of erstwhile mariners on the shore jobs, factors to be considered before making the transition etc

VI. Data analysis:-

The data collected from respondents has been analysed and presented in this section

i) Up side (Plusses) of Seafaring career as revealed by migrated mariners –. The analysis carried out thru weighted average is shown in the table below:

Table: 2 Evaluation of up-side (merits) of marine career - Mariners already migrated

Item Description	5	4	3	2	1	No. of Respondents	Weighted average
Good Remuneration	20	3	0	0	0	23	4.86
Challenging Job	20	1	2	0	0	23	4.78
Opportunity to visit various destinations/ countries of the world	17	3	2	1	0	23	4.56
Multi-national, transnational colleagues & work mates	15	3	3	2	0	23	4.34
Opportunity for fullest self development, self reliance, self confidence, utilising skills, initiative	18	3	1	1	0	23	4.65
Working with high quality people	11	7	2	2	1	23	4.08
Great value of goods/ services involved in the job	13	3	3	3	1	23	4.04

Inference: The data reveals that the no.1 factor is good remuneration

ii) Up side (Plusses) of Seafaring career as reported by mariners who are presently serving on board

Table: 3 Evaluation of up-side (merits) of marine career - Mariners who are still sailing

Item Description	5	4	3	2	1	No. of Respondents	Weighted
Good Remuneration	6	4	0	0	0	10	average 4.6
Challenging Job	4	6	0	0	0	10	4.4
Opportunity to visit various destinations/ countries of the world	8	2	0	0	0	10	4.8
Multi-national, transnational colleagues & work mates	2	8	0	0	0	10	4.2
Opportunity for fullest self development, self reliance, self confidence, utilising skills, initiative	2	6	2	0	0	10	4
Working with high quality people	0	4	6	0	0	10	3.4
Great value of goods/ services involved in the job	2	6	2	0	0	10	4

Inference: The data reveals that again the no.1 factor is good remuneration

iii) Analysis of down side (demerits) of Marine career. The analysis of responses as told by migrated mariners is presented in the table below:

Table: 4 Evaluation of downside-side (de merits) of marine career - Mariners already migrated

Item Description	5	4	3	2	1	No. of Respondents	Weighted average
Separation from family and connected relationship issues	20	3	0	0	0	23	4.86
Perils at sea like piracy, & hazardous materials , other uncertainties like problems in ports (PSC) & such other risks	1	17	5	0	0	23	3.82
Hardships of working conditions aboard ship like long working hours, temperature, differing climates, physical & mental strain Accident- prone situations etc.	1	20	2	0	0	23	4.82
Too many procedures / regulations	2	5	16	0	0	23	3.39
Problems of hierarchy/ bossism on the ship, rough treatment	1	19	0	1	2	23	3.73
Problems of interactions with the company Management	0	3	15	1	4	23	2.73

Inference: The data reveals that Family factors and connected relationship issues is the no.1 factor

iv) The analysis of downside factors as revealed by mariners still sailing is presented the table below:

Table: 5 Evaluation of downside-side (de-merits) of marine career - sailing mariners

Item Description	5	4	3	2	1	No. of Respondents	Weighted average
Separation from family and connected	8	2	0	0	0	10	4.8
relationship issues							
Perils at sea like piracy, & hazardous materials , other uncertainties like problems in ports (PSC)& such other risks	0	4	4	0	2	10	3
Hardships of working conditions aboard ship like long working hours, temperature, differing climates, physical & mental strain Accident- prone situations etc.	2	6	2	0	0	10	4
Too many procedures / regulations	2	2	4	2	0	10	3.4
Problems of hierarchy/ bossism on the ship, rough treatment	2	4	0	2	2	10	3.2
Problems of interactions with the company Management	0	2	6	0	2	10	2.8

Inference: Again, family factors and connected relationship issues is the no.1 factor

v) Why the mariners move to shore jobs- here the question was what prompted them to give up seafaring career and make a transition. The data collected from both groups are analysed and presented below:

Table.6 Factors prompted to give up seafaring career - Mariners already migrated

Item Description	3	2	1	No. of Respondents	Weighted average
Desire to stay with family	20	2	1	23	2.82
Career growth	17	4	2	23	2.65
Equal status	15	5	3	23	2.52
Illness In the family	12	7	4	23	2.34
Work pressure	17	5	1	23	2.69
Introduction of Higher technology	19	3	1	23	2.78
Health reasons (Stress, Tough working	19	4	0	23	2.82
conditions, long hours)					
Other issues	10	8	5	23	2.21

Inference: As could be seen, family factors and health reasons top the list.

Vi) Factors prompted to give up seafaring career - mariners who are presently serving on board- Here the question was - "what could be the factors that would eventually prompt them to give up sailing career?"

Table 7. Factors to give up sailing career - mariners who are presently serving on board

Item Description	3	2	1	No. of	Weighted
				Respondents	average
Being away from family	8	2	0	10	2.6
Age factors	6	2	2	10	2.4
Health reasons (Stress, Tough working	6	4	0	10	2.6
conditions, long hours)					
Working standard/ timings	2	2	6	10	1.6
Other factors	4	2	6	10	2.2

Inference: The analysis reveals that again family factors and health reasons are cited as no1 & 2 reasons

vii) A question arises, at what point of time the sailing people decided to give up sailing career. The data reveals the following trend

Idea of shifting to shore job

any other
13%
planned right
at the time of
entry
35%
in the last few
years
39%

Fig.1: When the idea of shifting to shore job occur?

Inference: It could be seen that 39% of the people thought of moving ashore in the last few years of the sailing career, nearly 1/3 of the people planned had planned to move to the shore right at the time of entry and 13% of the people decided to move after a mishap or accident.

viii) The next issue taken up for analysis is that – are the migrated mariners able to fit into the shore jobs and what is their satisfaction level?



Fig: 2 Level of satisfaction on shore jobs

Inference: From the chart, it is inferred that 86% of the respondents are very much satisfied on shore job. A further analysis reveals - because they feel it has challenge, recognition of sea service at shore, responsibility, commitment, team work, they can take care of their health, lead to settled life and fixed timings to work

viii) The next issue is that – are there factors that cause dissatisfaction on the shore jobs? The collected reveals the following factors:

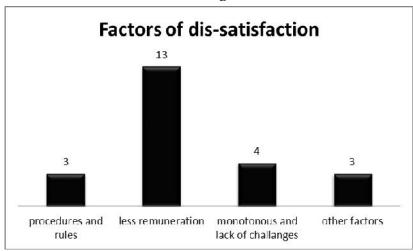


Fig: 3 Factors causing dissatisfaction on shore jobs

Inference: They are dogged by less remuneration followed by lack of challenge, procedures and other factors

ix) Is there a correlation between satisfaction on shore job and what stage/age they came ashore?

Table 8: Mariners who have migrated - Age Vs Level of satisfaction- Correlation analysis:

Age ((x)	Level of satisfaction (y)	X2	Y2	xy
30-40	0	0	0	0	0
40-50	8	6	64	36	48
50-60	2	3	4	9	6
60-70	13	14	169	196	182
70-80	0	0	0	0	0
	23	23	237	241	236

$$r = N + xy - x + y / N + x^2 - (x^2) + N + y^2 - (y^2); r = 0.9757$$

Inference: Since the value is 0.9757, there is positive relationship between levels of satisfaction on shore jobs irrespective of age

VI. FINDINGS AND INFERENCES

- Four paradigms about Marine career are revealed in the study with great degree of certainty:
 - I. The job is quite absorbing and calls for tough training and preparation
 - II. The career is certainly quite rewarding in terms of compensation
 - III. It is a challenging career, fraught with high degree of risks
 - IV. But the trend for transition is certainly therewithout any doubt, denial or dispute

- 2. Both the migrated and actively sailing people confirm that the compensation is the biggest attraction in a sailing job.
- 3. Both the categories have confirmed that separation from family & health issues (stress, accidents, long working hours) are the two down side factors in sailing career and are the reasons for transition to shore jobs
- 4. The families of mariners also feel the effects of such prolonged separation

- The trend of transition to shore jobs is universal
 and not a limited phenomenon, done by a few mariners on a limited scale
- 6. After migration, they are employed in marinerelated or totally unrelated fields. But display a high level of job satisfaction. Their versatile training & self reliant life on board could be the reasons.
- Their satisfaction levels do not vary with years of experience on board. Mariners are successful on shore jobs even after many years of sailing.
- 8. They are irked by rules and procedures, hierarchy, less remuneration and jobs with less challenges on shore.
- 9. 35% of the mariners who were sailing certainly knew that it is not a lifelong option and planned to move over, right at the time of entry- but 39% of the people thought of moving ashore in the last few years of the sailing career
- 10. After transition too, the mariners have longing for the sea and related experiences- like visiting many Countries, high quality teams, partying after a strenuous journey etc.
- 11. The senior mariners would like to exhort to the new entrants to be on the lookout for a smooth transition to shore, by proper planning and by considering the variables that are exclusive to each individual.

CONCLUSION

As already stated, the study was done on a limited scale, mainly due to the difficulties in data availability. However certain definite trends have been revealed in this study. The sailors do transition to shore jobs sooner or later; no one continues for a full career-life. While good remuneration is the single most factors on the up side, unsettled life style (separation from family) happens to be the deciding factor on the down side. While the mariners are uncomfortable with the work-style of shore careers, they do acquit themselves well after transition.

It is also seen that there are well established mechanisms and agencies that help mariners to find shore iobs

The study has made a contribution to raise awareness level of an important facet of marine career and mariners' life, which is common knowledge to mariners but have remained hidden to non- mariners; particularly the risk prone life on-sea and the travails of the family off-sea. It is also hoped that in future, that many other aspects of marine career would be studied and brought on-board, specifically with reference to Indian conditions.

Such studies would enable the senior mariners, the fresh entrants, the HR professional of Shipping Companies the owners of the Shipping companies, the employers on shore as well as the policy makers – formulate the right policies and take the right actions at the right times.

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