



STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT, GROWTH, SUSTAINABILITY AND VISIBILITY OF MARITIME WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

“Empowerment” is the process of giving an inner strength and wherewithal to reach a goal in spite of the obstacles. An empowered person will endeavor to face all obstacles with the tenacity of mind to emerge victorious. This paper attempts to haul out strategies to empower maritime women first by identifying the barriers which lie in the career growth of maritime women, next by taking measures to systematically surmount the barriers with the support of maritime individual and industry, then by imparting the necessary techniques to empower the maritime women. Barriers which lie in the career of women in general and maritime women in specific are mostly identical but with a greater magnitude and potential to dent or damage the career in the case of maritime women. These barriers intentionally or inadvertently develop due to cultural, social, psychological and organizational factors. The suggested strategies when implemented have the potential to propel the upward mobility of maritime women in their career and will ensure their growth, sustainability and visibility in global marine industry eventually leading to the fulfillment and crowning of their marine career.

Key Words: Maritime Women, Victim of Presumptions, Transformational Leaders, Barriers and Bias, Strategies, Empowerment, Self Esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Since the last decade onward maritime industry is witnessing a gradual influx of women mariners despite the continuation of inequality in both social and family responsibilities. Although these women are as educated and trained as their male counterparts, they are not entering the ranks of senior management at comparable rates.

According to the IMO, the estimated number of women at sea in the world remains as low as two percent (women on board – ten years of the IMO Women in Development program(2000) – Article by Mrs. Pamela Tansey.. Research studies show (Bevan and Thomas (1992) that women enter the work force at levels comparable to their male colleagues and with similar credentials expectations, but it seems that once a maritime women embarks into her sailing experience her career oaths begin to diverge soon after that point. The reason for such divergence happens to be due to the compromising attitude which can be more attributed to the common psychology of women in general. At times they unintentionally acquire such attitude because of existing in a male dominated environment both at sea and ashore. From the days of yore humans have accepted to survive in “*Men to lead and women to follow*” type of social system. Although the western parts of our world have managed to change such belief to a considerable extent the central and oriental nations are still trudging their way to achieve progress in overcoming such belief. Women oriented aspects such as child bearing and its related pre-natal and post-natal considerations followed by domestic commitments are like a quagmire in the career path of maritime women when compared with men. It traps and sucks them so deep to an extent that their career progression virtually comes to a still. They also remain to be one of the cardinal causes for the greater inequalities occurring between men and women as they get closer to organizational hierarchies both at sea and ashore. This also suggests that organizations however, have been slow to capitalize on the potential of their female workforce.

In particular to a recognizable extent maritime industry has left undeveloped the human resource provided by their competent and promising women mariners. To remain globally competitive, the maritime nations at the first instance must recognize the valuable resource that maritime women represent in management and administrative positions and use them effectively at all levels.

This paper will reveals how women’s capability is construed in the maritime industry which is often to the extent of doubting their capability to perform the shipboard operations ultimately leading to their under-representation and under-utilization.

The author finds maritime women as transformational leaders of the 21st century, technologically advanced shipping, wherein the traditional male dominated traits of the shipping such as labor and industry will be taking a back seat paving the way for maritime women to be at

the helm of maritime industry. However such an opportunity can be best utilized by maritime women only if they have the tenacity of mind to surmount the barriers which lie along the course of their maritime career.

Hurdles to the upward mobility of maritime women as mentioned in this paper are predominately visible and generally present in the career of a working woman, regardless of the industry to which they cater. While in other professions, where the disposition of men and women employees in a working environment are fairly equal or otherwise, if male-dominated, still a woman can establish herself because of her family and friends who are available at her beck and call which provides the necessary motivation to muster courage and strength to surpass the hurdles. Whereas in a male-dominated aloof sailing environment a maritime woman may not have a female shoulder to empathize with her emotions.

Unless a maritime woman possesses a determination to realize the crowning of her maritime career it is much unlikely for her to scale the barriers in her career growth.

MARITIME WOMEN – VICTIMS OF PRESUMPTIONS

There is a presumption in the maritime industry that women have fewer opportunities to be promoted to senior management positions because of the lack of women or family friendly policies as well as instances of prejudice. All of this means that women are still under represented in the higher echelons of marine management.

Progress towards achieving equal access and representation of women to choose sailing as a career has been least in developing countries where women as a group have poor access to educational opportunities to prepare them for a career in sailing. Further there has been a tendency to push them to ‘caring functions’. To some extent this process is a reflection of social stereotypes of desired female behavior and of the failure to provide effective choice at school. The fact that we are more likely to find a female fleet personnel director than a master mariner or a chief engineer is much more likely to be the product of these earlier factors than later career development in any particular maritime organization.

Among the highly industrialized and developed countries also women face greater difficulty in attaining management level positions both at sea and ashore because of the inherent doubt about

their capability by ship owners who are reluctant to offer such positions to women claiming tough, demanding and competitive sailing conditions.

Taking a parallel with other industries where women have advanced into management it has often been in specific spheres involving either individual skills or qualifications as for example, in medicine where more objective criteria for advancement exist, or in areas linked with women's stereotypical expertise in caring responsibilities. But within these categories there is also an organizational effect.

A variety of explanations for these developments may be advanced. First would be that the disproportionately fewer women managers reflect women's actual competence or their own natural career choices, next women's level of training and education may at least in the past, have been lower and it is possible that women who have spent time out of the labor market have actually lost skills. Finally, the presumption that, whereas men possess assertiveness women do not.

Supporting the career aspirations of talented and successful maritime women is essential because of the technological advancement happening in the maritime industry. Present day maritime technologies have made the shipboard operations to rely more on brain power rather than muscle power hence the maritime women feelings of frustration and being stuck, based on gender discrimination and physical capability is fading into obscurity.

Successful maritime women who realized the crowning of their career at sea should be given managerial position ashore since they will be better able to relate effectively to women in their organizations and create a favorable image to potential clients. Organizations that are women friendly may encourage such initiatives in their clients as well and service as models and agents of organizational change.

MARITIME WOMEN - TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

Pamela Tansey, Senior Deputy Director, Technical Cooperation Division, IMO said in the film 'Women at the Helm' launched by IMO (2013) *"This year (2013) witnessed the 25th anniversary of the establishment of a special program for the women in development, the integration of women in the maritime sector through IMO and we can safely say that empowering women fuels*

thriving economy across the world. Its spurs growth and development and it benefits every single stakeholder in the global maritime community.”

As it is evident from the technological revolution which is currently happening in the 21st century one cannot deny the fact that it has brought in and will continue to bring an upheaval to the traditional leadership patterns in the maritime industry. Moreover the present day mariners who are sailing through a sea of regulations, inspections and surveys are expected to possess an assertive attitude rather than aggressive. Traditional leadership patterns are getting obsolete and are forcing master mariner and chief engineer to consider non traditional styles of behavior which makes it possible for women to fit in better in leadership positions. The traditional male managerial model (firm and aggressive) of leadership is gradually beginning to disappear. (As inferred from “Women at Helm” a video created by IMO to promote gender equality and empower women)

Changes in competition and technology are demanding a different style. As the shipboard working culture changes, so does the need for different styles of leadership which includes participation and team work that are traditionally associated with a female style of management. Managing flexibility has become the hall mark of the successful contemporary manager and the concept of ‘androgyny’ has become popular. There has been a growing acknowledgement of the benefits of both ‘female’ and ‘male’ managerial styles – the androgynous manager.

All men and women have a mixture of both masculine (task oriented) and feminine (relationship oriented) personality characteristics. Leaders who are androgynous are able to respond more effectively to a wide variety of situations. Research by Korabec and Ayman (1989) asserts that women managers are more androgynous and possess more flexibility in leadership, a greater ability to be empathetic and to create a more productive work climate.

According to a leadership survey conducted by Rosener (1990) men perceive job performance as a series of transactions with subordinates exchanging rewards for services rendered or punishment for inadequate performance – what managerial experts call ‘transactional leadership’. On the contrary, women managers describe themselves as ‘transformational’ leaders who encourage participation, share information and enhance others’ self-worth.

A study conducted by Jago and Vroom (1982) on women as leaders confirmed that women managers have better skills for managing the demands of the global workplace. It was also revealed that the behavior of female managers is in greater agreement with the prescription of a normative model of decision making, a measure that has been found to be predictive of attitudinal measures of leader effectiveness. In general, compared with men, women have a different attitude to power. While men see power as an ability to control, women, tend to view power as a capacity stemming from community, therefore, women's view of power is less individualistic and more rational. They exercise power more collaboratively, utilize human resources more effectively, encourage credibility and change hierarchical structures. Women executives have greater concern for relationships, disdain complex rules and emphasize process over product or task. They have got charismatic power and they discipline their employees through that. They will meet the emotional needs of the employees and intellectually stimulate them.

BARRIERS AND BIAS IN THE CAREER PROGRESSION OF MARITIME WOMEN.

Maritime Nations have to seriously look at issues related to the under-representation and under-utilization of women in the ranks of merchant navy cadets and officers. The under-representation and under-utilization is due to the cumulative outcome of cultural, social, psychological and organizational biases which continue to prevail at all the stages of their career development.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

During the early career growth the main problem that comes up is at the time of marriage. It is a cultural phenomenon that marriage influences a woman career more than the career of a man. Beginning with relocating herself to her husband place followed by child birth and immediately thereafter she gets caught into the whirlpool of domestic chores. It is often the woman who has to make the change to suit the needs of her husband which is an age old tradition in many countries. In fact, it is in her 20's that a woman has to put her best efforts to create a good initial track record in an organization, to build up her career later. She has to demonstrate her drive and initiative so that her capability to push and get things done is not doubted. Unfortunately it is between the ages 20 to 30 years a maritime woman is bound to face the tallest and strongest

impediments of her maritime career which has the potential to bring her career to a virtual stop. The age between 20 and 30 years in a women life is considered to be the prime fertility period of her life. Three quarters of all the babies are born to mothers between the ages 20 and 29. Further if a maritime woman wish to have two children then approximately five peak years of her career growth gets compromised. In many cultures across the world it is often a practice that a woman had to get succumbed to the wish of her spouse and extended family members when it comes to career development and succession planning. Unless a maritime woman is determined about the course of her maritime career it will be too difficult for her to make a progress abreast with her male counterparts.

In a recent conference held by the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) which had an impressive gathering of women seafarers, whose participants originated from 15 different countries, the association called for unions to improve pregnancy and maternity provisions besides greater attention to be paid to issues such as job prospects and discrimination and further asked for new guidance on bullying and harassment.

SOCIAL BARRIERS.

It is during the second stage, namely the mid-career build up another major problem for career development of maritime woman arises more of societal nature when the children's arrive. Unless one has help at home in the form of elders who are willing to take care of the children, the woman generally faces the problem of a break in her mid-career. On the other hand, this is just the time when her male colleagues are getting exposed to different functional responsibilities, which is the critical input to career at this stage. Survey statistics expounds a generic trend that half of the career oriented women who take maternity leave return to their jobs late or not at all. Even if a maritime woman manages to handle such problem and resumes her career after a prolonged break unless there is a fine understanding and support for her career growth her separation can takes its toll on her personal and social life, in respect of the time they can give to their growing children at home. This is true of men as well. But with both pursuing their careers vigorously, the time available for children from the parents becomes alarmingly low and especially with their mother away the children feel rudderless and the home is in disarray.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS.

One problem that many young women encounter is the degree of assertiveness they can demonstrate in the workplace. A woman officer who has sought employment in a traditionally masculine career is faced with a dilemma. If she exhibits feminine traits of being expressive, nurturing or sympathetic she is perceived as “too soft”, “not tough enough” to be at sea. This way her confidence suffers and affects her ability to work effectively. On the other hand, if she shows what are considered typical masculine traits such as dominance, control or hard hitting logic, she is made to feel as if she is being too masculine and too aggressive. These perceptions affect her sense of feminism and make her feel that she is in some way rendered less of a woman by displaying these traits. For example, some women have difficulty in expressing anger in public, or stating an opinion forcefully in male dominated workplace. Others hesitate to delegate work to subordinates (and end up doing it themselves), while yet others find that they cannot express dissatisfaction freely, for example firing a subordinate for a job badly done. Many are unwilling to pay the price of assertiveness that could involve loss of popularity, exclusion from male camaraderie etc.

It is equally true that many women unconsciously invite stereotyping from their colleagues by their behavior. They reinforce the status of male-leader, female-follower in many ways particularly in their speech and language patterns. For example

- (a) By using overly polite speech (“would you be so kind as to...”)
- (b) By frequently endorsing or supporting men’s opinions.

On the other hand, men often tend to use speech patterns and language to establish their dominant status (especially in a group). They do this by talking louder, talking “over” or by changing female initiated subjects, ignoring or interrupting women or simply forcing them into passive listening roles once more relegating them to secondary non-powerful positions.

ORGANIZATIONAL BIASES.

Needless to say shipping has been male dominated all through because of the nature of the shipboard operation which involves labor and industry. Basically it is more of a biological problem that hampers women from taking up a maritime career. Although there is a gradual

change happening to such trends from the last decade onwards due to the advancement of technology, the organizational policies and beliefs are yet to become maritime women friendly because the impact of maritime women performance is feeble and not yet to a recognizable extent. There still exist an organizational bias with respect to maritime women that can be identified as follows:

- Stereotyping and preconceptions about women's abilities and suitability for leadership positions.
- Lack of planning job assignments catering to the career growth of maritime women.
- Exclusions of maritime women from informal networks of communications.
- Absence of effective management training and failure to hold management accountable for developing and advancing female employees.
- Absence of succession planning to identify and monitor the progress of high potential women.
- Inflexibility in defining work schedules. *Even while designing the work and rest hour criteria's whether the biological conditions of maritime women were taken into account or not needs to be questioned?*
- Absence of programs to enable female employees to balance work/family responsibilities.
- Often there is no firm commitment in the company's training and development policy to induct especially maritime women which is a clear sign that employers are still reluctant about giving a wide berth for women seafarers.

STRATEGIES TO SURMOUNT THE BARRIERS AND BIASES.

In order to surmount the cultural, social, psychological barriers and organizational bias there are certainly more than a few expectations from a maritime woman by the global maritime industry and vice versa.

EXPECTATIONS ON A MARITIME WOMAN.

At the outset it needs a high degree of commitment and determination from a maritime woman to realize the crowning of her maritime career regardless of the discouraging influences from her

culture and society. There should be radical change in the women opting for a career at sea in their ways of speaking and behaving if they wish to underline their equal status. The women at sea should be conscious about the following:

- (a) To recognize language and speech patterns that invite stereotyping and to change them.
- (b) To address self-defeating thoughts that stops risk-taking or assertive behavior and deal with them squarely.
- (c) To get honest feedback about assertive behavior whenever possible.
- (d) To anticipate difficult situations and prepare for them.
- (e) To set verbal and behavioral limits in the workplace (especially sexual ones)
- (f) To evolve a support group of peers who share similar problems elsewhere.
- (g) To increase exposure to female role models: senior experienced women who have successfully dealt with similar problems.
- (h) Not to surrender your career either to the demands of child bearing or to your husband's career.

Aspiring women cadets, if they wish to evolve into an effective leader, they will need to become more assertive, more forceful in their exercise of legitimate power and authority and should be completely aware about the sacrifices (family, friends and festivals etc.,) they are faced with because of choosing a career at sea. This will entail a greater responsibility in their parenting, maritime counseling, and organizational support, social and cultural acceptance.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE GLOBAL MARITIME INDUSTRY.

Maritime nations that are really concerned about promoting a maritime career for a women should be committed to provide a sustainable career growth for them so that they can realize the crowning of their sea career within the shortest possible time. The maritime nations are expected to reconsider the following in their national shipping policies to facilitate the career growth of maritime women.

- a) National shipping policies should frame exclusive procedures to safeguard and facilitate the maritime career growth and sustainability of women seafarers wherein procedures should be available to accept and offset the mid-career break suffered by a maritime

woman due pre-natal and post- natal reasons which is otherwise called as the maternity break and resumption of their career without compromise on their seniority.

- b) Efforts should be made to keep in touch with women officers who left earlier, to relocate them and bring them back into the mainstream later.
- c) Employment breaks. This will allow maritime women to take time off to look after their children, elderly relatives, travel or study and will still ensure them to have a guaranteed job when they return.
- d) “Maritime women empowerment planning” has to be done which can involve several aspects commencing from counseling wherein top women officers from various nationalities and from various professions who are doing very well and who are practically adored by people in their organizations. They have a fine sensitivity to people and matters, having come through the fire. History was made in October 2010, when the all-woman crew of the **MV SA Agulhas**, South Africa's ice-strengthened polar research vessel, sailed into Durban harbor from Cape Town, guided into port by a female harbor pilot, as part of National Water Week. A pool of such exemplary women officers at sea and ashore can be garnered and their experiences can be used to guide the budding women officers in their sea careers. This is arguably one role which is yet to be performed in an adequate and impressive manner. It may be necessary for them to evolve ways of guiding women in their organizations as to how they can harmonize their efforts. It is here that the successful women at sea have a big role to play for the women posterity.
- e) Companies need to be working on a variety of fronts for promoting maritime women’s upward mobility. They have to develop a clear policy statement directed at increasing the number of maritime women officers and accompany it with procedures and monitoring processes.
- f) Selection processes and selection criteria are to be reviewed in order to control. If not eliminate, bias against maritime women.
- g) A system is to be implemented to remove cultural, social and environmental barriers to maritime women’s advancement and to identify and monitor for the progress of high potential women and to ensure that they acquire a broad range of experience in core

maritime business areas so that they will be able to compete with men for leadership positions.

- h) Training programs on gender awareness and diversity management need to be implemented. A systematic approach to advancing is needed since biases against maritime women are deeply embedded in corporate culture. Organizational leaders must have the will to act that comes from the belief that advancing maritime women is a maritime business imperative.
- i) Procedures should be available in the company policies which will enable a maritime woman to report inappropriate sexual advances against them. Such procedure shall ensure them to provide the highest degree of confidentiality and courage to report any acts of sexual harassment or discrimination caused to them.
- j) Procedures should be available to inquire incidents of sexual harassments and discrimination against maritime women in such a manner that will enable maritime women to recover and restore their ambition to see the crowning of their career and reassure themselves about their safety and security.
- k) Decision taken by the companies against any acts of sexual harassment and discrimination should send a strong message in such a manner that it will percolate throughout their pool of officers and crew members and will weed out the thought to indulge in such activities.
- l) Company policy should define "Harassment" and "Discrimination" as acts of aggression intended to insult, injure, frighten or destroy the fellow human being. It is hostile, harmful and stems from the base motives like greed, deprivation and a desire eventually converted into a demand then anger".

STRATEGIES FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF MARITIME WOMEN.

Empowerment is the process of giving an inner strength and wherewithal to reach a goal in spite of the obstacles. In case of maritime women it is the maritime industry which has to provide them with the inner strength, support, solace, counseling and coaching to meet the challenges with tenacity of mind and endeavor to face them to emerge victorious and enable them to grow and glow in the chosen maritime career.

Every maritime woman has to develop skills for dealing with pressure. Perhaps focusing only on those factors which produce it is one strategy available to a Maritime woman. It is also possible to increase the ability to cope. Assertion is a key skill for dealing with difficult events. Assertiveness training is conditioning the individual to be less passive or fearful in certain situations.

Assertiveness is a familiar word these days. It is the style most appropriate for dealing with people in threatening situations. An assertive behavior has two elements. Verbal behavior which means is the choice of words and phrases and non verbal behavior which means the choice of gestures, body postures and facial expressions. Others can observe these two elements and influence their response. Assertiveness is for everyone. It is not just training for a group which is inherently disadvantaged. It is not for an individual who is passive. It is a developmental program which helps people of all ages and at all career stages to be more confident and able to say the right thing the right way, with an enhanced possibility of achieving the right outcome.

Assertive behavior has earned a bad connotation, because of its seeming association with aggression. Aggression is intended to insult, injure, frighten or destroy; whereas assertion helps individuals to manifest initiative, translate ideas into action, and maximize their potential. Assertion concerns itself with positive and decisive attitudes such as attacking problems, defeating obstructions, and mastering situations; it generates a state of mind which refuses to surrender to difficulties.

Prior equipping maritime women with responsibility and authority to perform the shipboard operations a psychological empowerment should be sowed into them which can transform them into an assertive personality to perform their job to the best of their ability amidst a male dominated work area. This phase of empowerment can be tagged as the “Psychological empowerment phase” wherein a maritime woman can be made aware of the techniques for being assertive. Taking it up further it can be made as a special part of their curriculum in their respective maritime academies and can be reinforced with personality development program during the course of their career.

EMPOWERMENT BY IMPARTING ASSERTIVENESS

Basic assertion is the most common type of assertion used in everyday shipboard situations. It is a way of saying what you think, feel or want in a straight forward and direct way. It is this type which helps a woman to say 'no' when not saying so becomes a problem. Being assertive is essential and advantageous. In fact it brings in many benefits to the individual and the organization. The opportunities to use assertion are to be recognized and the techniques well understood. But it takes time and effort. All the more it is essential to make a start. Holding back every time, regretting, blowing up and feeling guilty are negative outcomes resulting out of the inability to silence one's own inner critic. Negative outcomes can be changed only by changing the behavior. So one has to go in small ways and then in bigger ways thus moving towards the optimum pressure.

Listed below are some techniques which can facilitate a maritime woman to become assertive.

- A maritime woman should first be aware of her own job responsibility at various levels of her competency, such awareness will help her to assess whether the other persons request is reasonable or not.
- Asserting the right to ask for more information and clarification about the task to be performed so that there is no scope for ambiguity.
- Giving a direct and simple explanation instead of a long winded statement.
- Display assertive body language.
- Be flexible but at the same time be firm.
- Listen actively thus showing the other persons that what has been said is heard and understood.
- Overcome lack of confidence or the inability to find the right word at the right time.
- Point out inconsistency without confrontation. This will clear up misunderstandings before they escalate into big issues.
- Muster courage and express your negative feelings directly without attributing blame rather than showing angry feelings in an indiscriminative way.
- In threatening situations have complete control over your emotions and never become unassertive, passive or turn aggressive.

- Self-confidence is an important factor underlying the skill of assertion. If one does not believe that she can deal with a difficulty skillfully then her chances of doing so is remote. She will not optimize her stress level under such circumstances.
- If you are timid by nature, but you want to change yourself into an assertive person, in the first place you must convince yourself that you are born with some personal and inalienable rights. You need to define a personal “space” into which other people, regardless of rank and relationship, are just not allowed to intrude.

EMPOWERMENT BY IMPARTING HIGHER SELF ESTEEM

The following tips will facilitate a maritime woman to overcome the discouraging influences from her society and culture which has the potential to make her reconsider her career choices and can relegate it to a secondary position.

- Do not depend entirely on the opinion of others: There are times when you give a high premium to what others say but this may not be one of those times. If you are grappling with a failure, don't let the negative attitudes and outlook of others affect your sense of worth.
- Trust your gut feeling: Fulfilling your thought and intuitions gives you a sense of achievement. If people disagree or do not feel very good about it, that does not always necessarily mean that you are wrong. Make decision that you feel is right for yourself and if that turns into a success then pronto, your self-esteem rockets sky high.
- Appreciate yourself: Go easy on yourself. Life begins to take on a new beauty as you do this. This is the time when you can do with little less of modesty and a little more self-praise. Do not belittle yourself and your achievements, but instead, treat yourself well and tone down on modesty. You will become healthier, happier and will probably even make a significant contribution in life.
- Count your blessings: This means you stop comparing yourself with others who are better off than you. Instead how about trying to focus on the similarities you share with the others? This shift will help you realize that others too have their fair share of imperfections and shortcomings, and your complexes will then disappear like the morning mist.

- Set realistic goals for yourself: Do not create unreachable targets for yourself; instead, break down the big tasks into smaller ones so that you get a feeling of accomplishments at the end of the day. Develop your talents and abilities in order to nurture yourself.
- Surround yourself with positive people, who can be appreciative of you, despite your recent failings. Empathy goes a long way in keeping you alive, so make sure you do not associate with the 'sad sack' type characters. After all, you want to be around people who pick you up and not put you down.
- Turn mistakes into milestones: It does hurt when you fail and the compound feelings of low self-esteem, low self-worth and low self-confidence take a toll. Accept mistakes and look at them as opportunities to learn and grow and remember, if you learn from your mistakes, you have learned something for life. You probably will not repeat the mistake, or you may try harder next time.
- Truly successful people are those with the power of high self esteem. So, make this your goal. Sweet success will be your reward if you learn from your mistakes and thereby feel good about yourself and that's exactly what goes into making you a winner! Above all, do not waste your time complaining! Use the energy into being twice as good!

EMPOWERMENT BY IMPARTING TECHNIQUES TO DEAL WITH STRESS

Maritime adventure is potentially a stressful activity. Much stress in management is caused by conflicting demands placed upon the mariner by the job situation. Resolution of such conflicts requires a high level of interpersonal skill else it will result in stress. Stress has good and bad features. It gives the adrenalin required by human beings to sustain intense effort and handle several problems together. At the same time, it drains the physical and psychic energy. Though stress is not a measurable reality its presence is known only by its performance, how it affects individuals. Whether stress stimulates or debilitates depends largely on the background to the event, and duration of the experience.

There are several factors which cause stress but the predominant cause and almost familiar to everyone is anger. Anger is caused by and arises due to factors within the individual. A popular misconception is that anger is caused by external factors. It is the way in which you perceive the external factors, which either may cause anger or may not. Anger results when a desire is converted into a demand and the demand is rejected by another person.

Women in general are slow to anger when compared to men. However in case of maritime women whose work area is male dominated potential situations may often occur which can trigger anger and anxiety within them. Therefore a good method to control anger is to ask yourself, whether your expectation is reasonable or whether the conduct and behavior of the other person is not unreasonable. Seek consciously and deliberately alternative methods of dealing with situations, which otherwise contain fire and fury and which have the propensity to ignite anger; analyze your feelings, take deep breaths, learn how to relax, laugh and listen.

Today's shipping scenario is highly competitive and goes by a simple thumb rule "Survival for the fittest". There will be multiple demands and conflicting directives at times from the technical, commercial and the crew departments of a shipping company. In such situations it will be always wise to clarify all correspondences and to systematically attend to one issue at a time and delegating the jobs into the hands of trustworthy officers will prove worthy to ease out the accumulating pressure. It is the quality to endure and face the pressure that has the potential to consider maritime women as a primary human resource for the marine industry.

EMPOWERMENT BY IMPARTING VISIBILITY TO MARITIME WOMEN

It was impressive to note in a recent conference Ms. Jacqueline Smith, Norwegian Seafarer's Union, meeting chair and ITF representative for women seafarers saying to a group of strong women seafarers and trade unionists that *"We will harness the energy from this to build policies and education bringing those parts of the shipping community that have yet to see the value of women seafarers out of the dark ages."*

With the dawn of the 21st century an impetus has been created to provide the much needed visibility for maritime women. The initiative is gaining momentum with the efforts of various regional and international women forum such as:

- Women in Maritime Association – Asia (WIMA – ASIA)
- Arab International Women's Maritime Forum for Middle East and North Africa
- Women in Maritime, East and Southern Africa (WOMESA)
- Women in Maritime Philippines (WIMAPHIL)
- International Women's maritime Forum for MENA and Africa

- Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA)
- Pacific women in maritime (PacWIMA)

International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been working to provide an upward mobility and sustainability of maritime women and their career ambition by promoting gender equality and empowering women thereby strengthening its capacity-building program. Further IMO has invited the Member States to encourage the equal participation of women at all levels of maritime training and research, and to strengthen the national mechanisms for the employment of women in accordance with the stated objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Association like Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) which has over 1,800 members in 32 countries worldwide is an international organization for women in management positions involved in the maritime transportation business and related trades worldwide. It is a major player in attracting more women to the industry and in supporting women in management positions seeking to enhance member's competence and empower career success through networking, education and mentoring in focus. The formation of Pacific women in maritime (PacWIMA) is a step in moving ahead in the desired direction, bringing together women from the region's maritime sector to raise the overall profile of Pacific women in maritime.

CONCLUSION

SHIFTING THE LIMELIGHT ON MARITIME WOMEN

There is a Japanese saying that "*Do not aim for customer satisfaction but aim for customer delight*" similarly visibility to maritime women can happen only if the limelight is shifted on them. While much is happening through various regional and international women's forum campaigning for the promotion of women on water, the extent of awareness, impact and curiosity that it has created among the women fraternity is arguably insignificant. One reason which may be attributed to this is that the message is not reaching the potential women sector. Potential women sector belongs to those women who are in dire need of employment more than a desire

for employment. This potential women sector is normally prevalent in the rural areas of developing countries and the extent of reach and awareness they have for a career at sea is certainly not to the level of making a choice when compared to the awareness they have with any other profession. So the question now is how to make every single woman to include a career in shipping as a choice in their long list of career options.

To give an analogy software technology, banking, medicine etc., always tops the list of career options because of the automatic awareness they acquire through word of mouth inquiry, media, magazines and most importantly by seeing and listening from existing professionals the nature of life they lead. A similar feeling must happen to existing maritime women which will propel them to voluntarily promote and propagate the message to other women's in the society to opt for a career in shipping. However for such a phenomenon to happen the existing maritime women must first feel that they have not lost anything by choosing shipping as their career instead they should feel they have tremendously gained in their professional and personal life by making shipping as their career choice. The global maritime industry has a yeoman role to play for this to happen. The following are some suggestions, which can shift the limelight on maritime women.

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- a) Ensuring to provide the maximum level of safety and security for maritime women onboard and wherever they go ashore while on duty.
- b) Ensuring to provide a recognizable social status for maritime women.
- c) Ensuring to provide a substantial honor for those maritime women who can realize the successful crowning of their maritime career which will be becoming a Master mariner, a chief engineer or the head of a shipping enterprise.
- d) Ensuring to provide sustainable shore job for maritime women who are quitting sea.
- e) Ensuring to provide a working environment which will be free of Harassment and Discrimination.
- f) Ensuring to provide the maximum possible compensation for such accidents occurring to a maritime woman while on duty which has the potential to render her jobless at sea.

- g) Ensuring to release special financial assistance at reasonable interest rates for those maritime women who are venturing into maritime business.
- h) Ensuring to provide concession or remission of course fees and examination fees as appropriate for women's pursuing maritime studies at all stages of their career.

AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- i) IMO can consider coming up with special awards particularly focused to the contribution made by maritime women which will have a predominant potential to shift the lime light on women fraternity.
- j) IMO can invite member states for the development and ratification of a "*convention for the growth and sustainability of maritime women*" for implementation of procedures facilitating the upward mobility of maritime women.
- k) IMO can consider allotting berths especially to maritime woman in the safety, technical and environmental protection committees which will carry the highest level of recognition to maritime women.
- l) IMO can consider creating a special wing called the "*Maritime Women Wing*" in all international forums functioning under it auspices which can propel maritime women into the domain of exceptional administrators.
- m) IMO can convene annual international meetings to review the "*convention for the growth and sustainability of maritime women*" so as to monitor the growth and sustainability statistics of Maritime women.
- n) IMO can consider providing special status, recognition and release of funds for those flag states which encourages, promotes, propagates and employs maximum number of women mariners under their national fleet.
- o) IMO should encourage member states to report exceptional services contributed by maritime women regardless of the type, size and nature of vessel in which such service was performed. Further IMO should consider to announce via various kinds of media the contribution of maritime women not only to the global maritime industry but to the entire world.

Above all, sincere attempts should be made in a trendy yet contemporary manner to divert the power and potential of women to cater to the needs of global trade through its spinal cord – Shipping.

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