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# Focussing on Fisherfolk



An Empirical Investigation Into The Ocean Navigational Practices Of Tamil Nadu Deep-Sea Fishers

09

A Study on Government Initiatives for Fishermen: Challenges in Implementation

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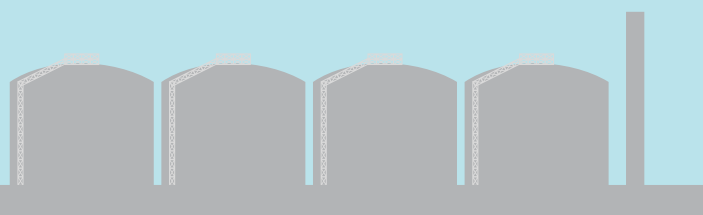
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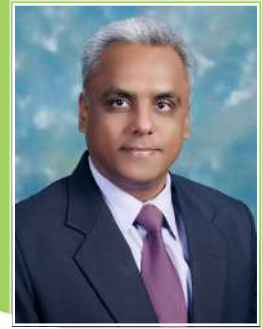


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# EDITORIAL

*Anyone who lives within their means  
suffers from a lack of imagination*  
Oscar Wilde



Shipping has been in the news for more and less.

First is the Vadhvan Port approval. The estimated cost for the Port is ₹76000+ crores. A few of the fantastic features planned include a 20m deep berthing facilities which will be from almost 14+ Sq. Km. reclaimed land. The Port will accommodate container vessels (9 berths/1000m ea.), liquid cargoes, Ro-Ro vessels etc. This is a much needed space considering that the global trade has moved into boxes (about 15-17% of maritime trade is by containers). It is expected that this mega port will serve a vast hinterland by handling 20+million TEUs by 2030. The project will be enabled through a SPV and participation from JNPA and Maharashtra Maritime Board, while the policy drifts of allowing FDI etc., helping the cause.

To aid such projects and more, the policy revamp for ship leasing, ship building and repair is also on cards. Considering that the share of cargoes carried by Indian ships have dropped steeply and hovers at below 10% (<7% will be realistic), supportive financing models are imperative. While the posturing and assurance have stayed positive, the budget for shipping as a share of the overall spread has stayed at 0.05%. With mega projects like Vadhvan and the global trade demanding more gates on our coastlines, we won't need much imagining to push the outlays. The FM had stressed on utilising the apportioned funds completely. Guess the growing shipping can do that and seek more.



## In this issue...

We focus on the fisher folk in this issue. The first article by Ca. Viswanathan et al., discusses the navigational capability of fishers. The sample population has been drawn from Tamil Nadu and from the surveys, the Authors put up a case for better training of the fisherfolk. The brighter side of this simplistic study is that it tries to look at the psychological aspects. Fisherfolk have traditionally handed down navigational skills and what could be the intent is to modernise and upskill. Whereas the knowledge of fishing, knowledge of mechanised boats etc., are more crucial from the subsistence and macro

aspect of fishing industry. This is an easy read to get an insight into few aspects of fisherfolk and their vessels.



The second article focusses on the Schemes of GoI, particularly awareness of these amongst the fisherfolk; the challenges in implementation. Srikanth and Dr. Sekar had sampled the fisher population in the hamlets near to the University and carried out survey similar to the earlier Authors. The data and projections are all nominal sans any statistical analyses. The cursory study provides a few directions only, though such studies are needed for spreading awareness of schemes and benefits that are being meted out to coastal populations. Inclusion of female members in the study, reports from Fisheries University and wider sample population (sample is too less representing... >10 lakh fisherfolk of the State) would have helped the case better.



Following the fisherfolk talks, we turn to AI and ML. Ca. Anand Subramaniam and Tirth vakil take us through explaining the types of AI and ML and the merits of these while adopting to Maritime Education and Training. This is an easily digestible read.

We intend to bring on more articles related to AI and ML and this could be the pre-sequel.



Under Spanner in the Works column, Ramesh Vantaram presents an interesting case of azimuth thruster failure. This would be of immense interest to practicing marine engineers. I would invite a few discussion points on this repair incident.

MER Archives nests a Transaction on Steering Gears, proceeding on the IMCO's (now IMO) deliberations on steering capabilities, particularly on a single failure. The philosophy was that a single failure of the steering's pressure system must not render the system inoperative. The transaction discusses how the arrangements were optimised, especially for tankers, which is an engineering solution all of us would relish.



With golden hopes from Paris, here is the August issue of the MER...

**Dr Rajoo Balaji**  
Honorary Editor



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# An Empirical Investigation Into The Ocean Navigational Practices Of Tamil Nadu Deep-Sea Fishers



S. Viswanathan,  
Ashutosh Apandkar, K. Sivasami

**Abstract:-** A total of 405 deep-sea fishers from Tamil Nadu, India, were selected from six fishing harbours located along the Coromandel, Arabian Sea, and Gulf of Mannar Coast and interviewed. The purpose of the interview was to evaluate their ocean navigational practices and determine their preparedness to transition from coastal fishing to deep-sea fishing. Through this study, the present navigational practices, fisher's psychology, and their demographic characteristics were analysed. The result revealed that many of the fishing harbours are being used for multi-day fishing activities, along with the fishers having sufficient psychological strength and navigational abilities, such as technical and non-technical skills for ocean navigation [1].

However, the results showed the lacuna in navigational knowledge, technical, non-technical skill, and procedure compliance among the fishers, and this led to many navigational-related accidents at sea [2]. This was due to the absence of structured training programs for the fishers and their poor awareness of navigational knowledge and procedure compliance. This has caused the fishing industry to lag in coping with the technological developments taking place in ocean navigation, adapting

to the changing weather pattern due to global warming, and reducing navigational-related incidents involving fishing vessels.

**Index items:** - deep-sea fishers, navigational practices, ocean navigation, psychological factors, and structured training.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The sea serves as a vital resource for a wide range of activities, including the transportation of commercial goods, offshore engineering projects, fishing, recreation, and water sports. Marine fishing is considered one of the most important activities due to its significant contributions to both the country's food supply and the livelihoods of fishermen. Marine fishers typically focus on coastal fishing, but some also venture into the high seas and participate in deep-sea fishing in the Indian Ocean [3]. Additionally, they serve as the first line of defence for the country against threats from the sea. Deep-sea fishing is carried out using various types of fishing vessels that are specifically designed to operate under the challenging open sea conditions. These crafts are built to ensure the safety of the crew and to optimise the efficiency of the fishing process. One of the functions performed by these vessels is navigation.

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) governs maritime navigation under the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea Convention (COLREG-1972). The maritime education and training is regulated

and driven by the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW). However, the Indian fishing industry lacks such a regulated mechanism. As a result, navigation on fishing vessels becomes disorganised and based on the fisher's personal experience, resulting in numerous navigational accidents documented in several reports [4].

Proficiency in navigational knowledge, abilities, and adherence to procedures is essential for ensuring the safety of fishing vessels during sea navigation. The lack of these capabilities results in navigational incidents specifically affecting these vessels. An in-depth examination of the navigational methods employed by fishermen might uncover the gaps in their knowledge and aid in identifying the appropriate steps to enhance the safety of their navigation at sea. This study aims to highlight the current level of navigational knowledge, abilities, and compliance with procedures among the fishermen of Tamil Nadu in ocean navigation and to provide strategies for improvement.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ocean navigation is a primary function of vessels engaged in deep-sea fishing and the fishing vessels go beyond the sight of the land and engage in multi-day fishing. The ancient fishers were technically skilful in using the visual triangulation method of position fixing for coastal waters and used celestial objects [5,6], wind and wave direction to recognise time, direction and position at sea for ocean navigation. Nowadays, modern electronic navigational systems such as Global Navigational Satellite System (GNSS), Radio Direction and Ranging (RADAR), Automatic Identification System (AIS), Electronic Charts (ECs) and Echo sounders [7,8] are commonly used by fishers for navigation in coastal waters besides distant waters.

Vessel navigational calculations such as courses, distance and estimated time of arrival at a point are found by using GNSS, besides obtaining real-time positioning on the chart plotters. AIS is also being used for knowing the other vessel's information, the closest point of approach and time to the closest point of approach to avoid collision at sea [7]. Interpersonal skills (leadership, communication and teamwork) and cognitive skills (situational awareness, decision-making and work management) are the non-technical skills that influence a vessel's navigation and safe bridge watches at sea [1]. The vessel's navigators shall be trained, mentored and encouraged in non-technical skills for safe

navigation of the vessels [9]. The majority of fishing vessel collision accidents involve merchant vessels as these vessels are huge and unable to detect the fishing vessels at far distances. Besides, the fishing vessel's crew is too involved in the fishing operation and no lookout is being kept during that time [2]. Thus, bridge activities such as poor lookouts and poor watch-keeping practices play a key role in fishing vessel accidents [10].

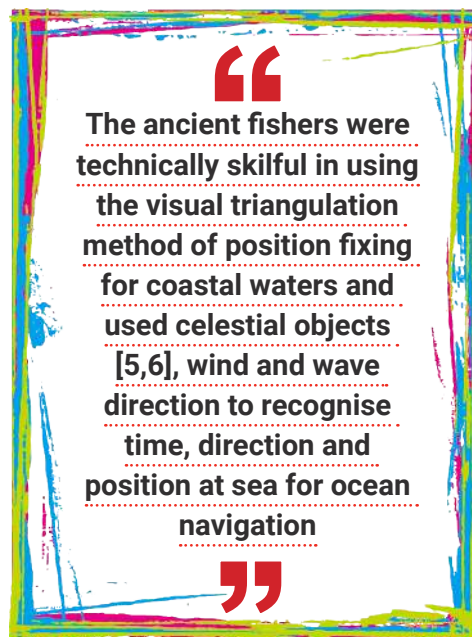
The fishers of Tamilnadu develop skills from their own experience and their ancestors. Due to this, they could gain a high confidence level to use the craft even in rough weather conditions. Irrespective of their schooling, the fisher's children learn and are trained in basic skills at a very young age and develop fishing skills when practicing fishing at sea [11]. Accumulation of these skills from generation to generation and tough competition for survival with limited fisheries resources made them innovative to improvise in fishing in a continuous process [3]. Further, they could increase their skills in vessel operations to the extent of their exposure at sea. Thus, the skills of the fishers are geographically distributed and developed according to their area of operation.

## III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted among the Tamilnadu fishers from the Coromandel Coast (Chennai, Nagapattinam and Cuddalore fishing harbours), Gulf of Mannar Coast (Tharuvaikulam fishing harbour) and Arabian Sea Coast (Thengappattinam and Colachel fishing harbours) covering 405 deep-sea fishers. Stratified random sampling was employed to select the fishing harbours and about 20% of the fishing vessels from each fishing harbours were selected for data collection.

A pre-tested structured interview schedule was utilised to collect data on demographic characteristics, psychological factors, navigational knowledge, skill and procedure compliance. And descriptive analysis was carried out to analyse these characteristics of the fishers. Demographic characteristics age of the fisher (X1), educational status (X2), experience at sea (X3), length of fishing vessel worked (X4), fishing distance (X5), duration of voyage (X6), training attended (X7) were kept as independent variables and navigational knowledge, navigational skill and navigational procedure compliance were kept as dependent variables and analysed by using regression analysis independently.

The navigation knowledge was assessed through 10 navigational-related questions. Each correct answer was given one mark and



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**“ Psychological components such as innovativeness, self-confidence, scientific orientation, risk orientation, economic motivation and safety orientation are the factors that affect their psychological practices in carrying out vessel operations at sea ”**

the average marks of all the respondents were calculated in percentage for finding knowledge level. Navigational skill was assessed for technical (vessel navigation skill and navigational equipment operation skill) and non-technical (cognitive skill and interpersonal skills) skills through 40 questions, 10 questions each, on an ordinal scale ranging from 1 to 4. The average of all the respondent's marks was converted to a percentage for each skill. Navigational procedure compliance was assessed through 10 questions pertaining to navigational regulation compliance and calculated on an ordinal scale ranging from 1 to 4 and the average of the entire respondent's marks was converted to percentage.

Psychological components such as innovativeness, self-confidence, scientific orientation, risk orientation, economic motivation and safety orientation are the factors that affect their psychological practices in carrying out vessel operations at sea. The indices were assessed through 5 questions each and each question was assigned with marks on an ordinal scale ranging from 1 to 3 and an average of all the respondent's marks was divided by 1.5 to get the indices. Further, the factors were named as low when the index value was less than Mean-SD, high when the index value was Mean + SD and medium when the index value was within and including Mean ± SD.

**IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

**A. Demographic Characteristics**

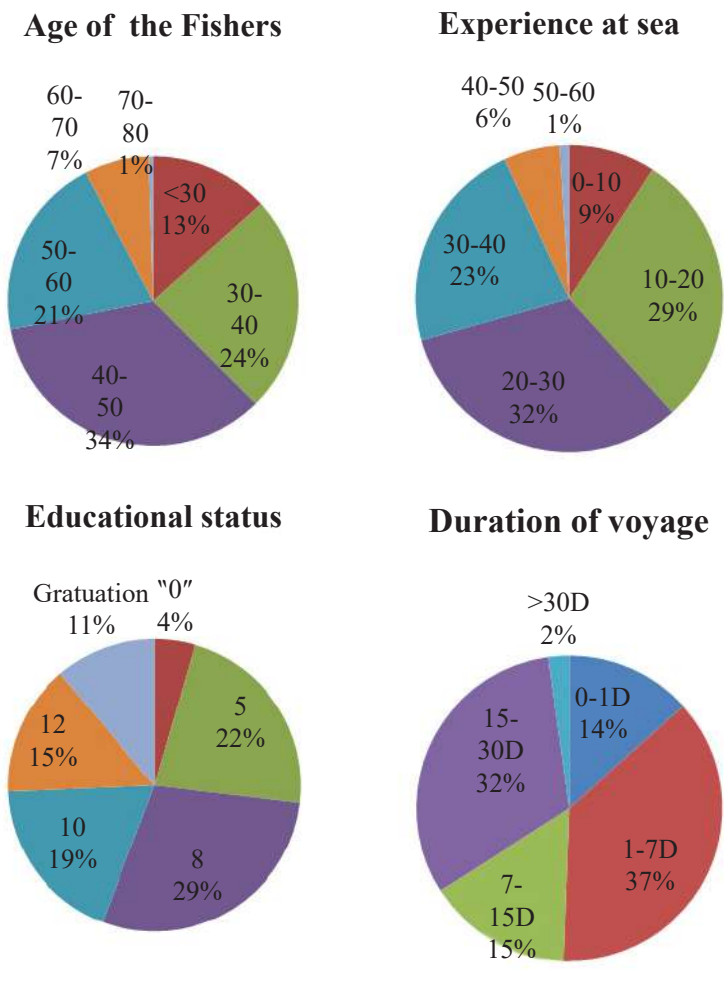
Figure. 1 reveals that 58% of the respondents are in the age group 30-50 years. The fisher's population has remained nearly the same in this region since 2004 [3]. More than half of the respondents (55%) have not crossed the 8th standard, including 4% of them who have never gone to school. On the other hand, 11% have completed graduation. This poor education brings an inferiority complex within the fishing industry that the fishing industry is only suitable for poorly educated youngsters.

Poor education was due to the respondent's early start of their career at a very early age, as evident through this study. Few of them had higher education as the schools were available nearby, and this education helped them in operating modern electronic equipment [3]. Further, youngsters and educated fishers are only able to know the weather data and analyse it for decision-making onboard [12]. 61% of the respondents have work experience of 10 – 30 years and this remained nearly the same for the last 30 years [3].

Figure. 2 indicates that 94.8% of the respondents fish beyond territorial waters, and they are using fishing vessels of 50m or over (69.4%) in length. Due to their distant fishing operation, they stay at sea for up to 7 days (37%) and in some cases beyond 15 days (34%). Training attended by the respondents is very poor as 86.7% have never undergone any training related to their work.

**B. Psychological factors**

Figure. 3 reveals that the self-confidence index for the respondents is high (9.21) due to developing skills from their own experience and from their ancestors, and they are capable of handling different weather conditions at sea. Economic motivation (Index



**Figure 1. Demographic characteristics - age, experience, education and duration of the voyage of the respondents**



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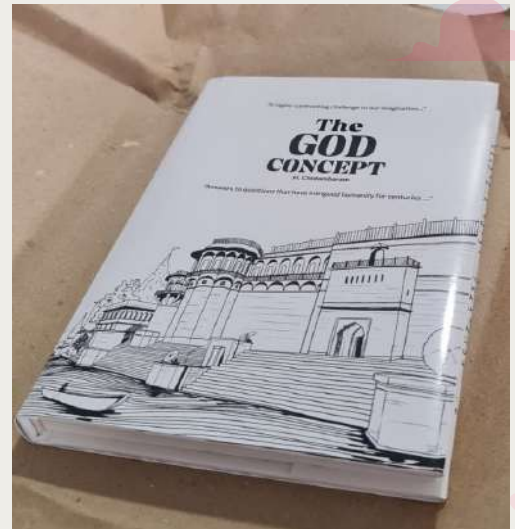
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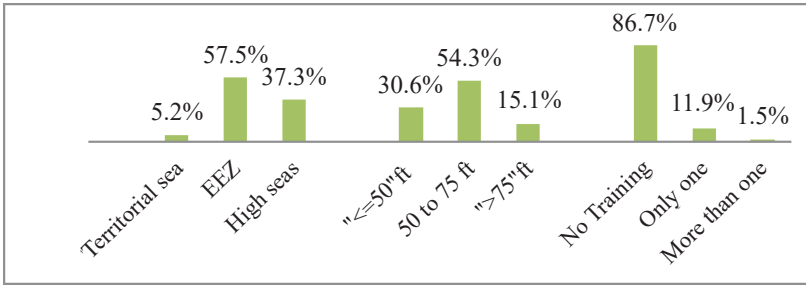


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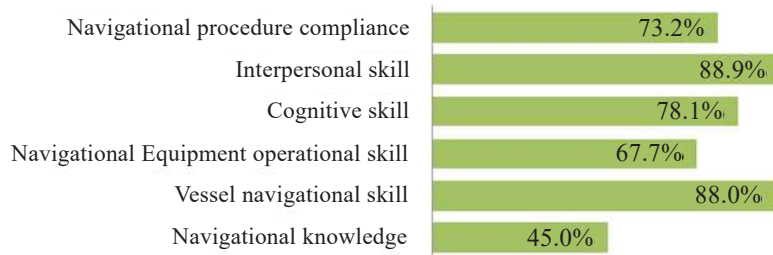
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**Figure 2. Demographic characteristics - fishing distance, length of the vessel and training attended by the respondents**



**Figure 3. Psychological factors of the respondents**



**Figure 4. Navigational abilities of the respondents**

value 8.95) is a factor that drives the fishing industry and directly related to innovativeness (index value 8.34) as the respondents are innovative enough to find a new way to increase the catch and reduce fishing net loss by fitting AIS in their nets (79.5%). Further, this technique was brought to the industry in their own efforts to avoid fishing net losses. On the other hand, their scientific orientation (index value 6.35) is low due to their poor educational level. Fishing is a risky job and fishers understand this (index value 7.14 - medium) and 82.5% of the respondents continue fishing even after their GPS (Global Positioning System) fails. However, only 10.9% continue fishing even after the weather warnings are issued. Safety orientation is medium (index value 8.23) and 99.5% of the respondents carry first aid equipment and engine spares on their vessels whereas only 79.3% of the respondents carry life-jackets for the entire crew onboard.

**C. Navigational practices**

**Figure 4** indicates that the overall knowledge of the respondents on navigation is below the mean (45.0%) due to their poor knowledge of collision regulation and lack of structured training. Only 5% gave the correct answer to questions on





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their vessel related such as “What is the day signal for a vessel engaged in fishing?” However, 59.8% of them have correctly answered other vessel-related questions such as “What are the navigational light signals for a power-driven vessel?” The respondents could use the GPS (100%) and find the vessel’s position and calculate the ETA (estimated time of Arrival) to the destination from GPS (80.5%) and thus making the vessel navigational skill (88.0%) high. However, the navigational equipment operational skill (67.7%) is lesser as much of the modern electronic equipment such as NaviC (86.2%), Barometer (61.5%), and Anemometer (58.8%), have never been seen by the respondents. This generally leads to poor onboard decision-making during rough weather conditions. Alternately, 79.5% and 96.0% of the respondents could operate AIS and VHF Radio respectively due to the regular use of these equipment for safe and efficient operation of the vessel. Cognitive skill (78.1%) of them is normally employed during navigation of the vessel and when fishing, the fishers are too busy on the fishing job rather than keeping a watch on the bridge, thus reducing the situational awareness capabilities of the fishers. It is further evident that 59.3% of them have never used binoculars for keeping a lookout, even though it could enhance the situational awareness capabilities of the fishing vessel. Interpersonal skill (88.9%) is high as it is being developed during their routine operation and has a direct influence on the safety and efficiency of the vessel. 92.6% of them appreciate their colleague for good work and 86.9% of the respondents share their mistakes with others so that it does not occur again.

Navigational procedure compliance (73.2%) is above medium and 98.5% of the respondents could help the other fishers when they are in distress. However, only 25.2% of them could use the day signal for fishing vessels. This is due to a lack of navigational knowledge and poor vessel construction to display correct day and night signals.

**Table 1** reveals that fisher’s navigational knowledge has a significant positive correlation with educational status and experience at sea ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, age of the fishers does not have a significant correlation. Age of the fisher ( $p < 0.01$ ), educational status ( $p < 0.01$ ) and

**Table 1. Correlation coefficient and navigational practices**

Variable code	Correlation coefficient		
	Navigational Knowledge	Navigational skill	Navigational procedure compliance
X1	-0.023 NS	0.516**	0.269**
X2	0.045*	0.795**	0.462**
X3	0.032*	-0.119 NS	-0.028 NS
X4	0.006 NS	-0.027 NS	-0.080**
X5	0.000 NS	0.013**	0.002*
X6	-0.010 NS	-0.436**	-0.143**
X7	-0.045 NS	1.857 NS	-0.030 NS

\* - significant at 5%, \*\* - Significant at 1%,  
NS - Non significant



fishing distance ( $p < 0.01$ ) have a positive significant correlation with navigational skills. However, the duration of voyage ( $p < 0.01$ ) has a significant negative correlation with navigational skills. Age of the fisher ( $p < 0.01$ ), educational status ( $p < 0.01$ ) and fishing distance ( $p < 0.05$ ) have significant positive correlations with procedure compliance, alternatively, length of fishing vessel worked ( $p < 0.01$ ) and duration of voyage ( $p < 0.01$ ) have significant negative correlation with procedure compliance. Further training attended does not have any significant correlation with the navigational abilities of the fishers. This may be due to inadequate training and the training given was unstructured and did not have any influence on navigational abilities.

*This poor education brings an inferiority complex within the fishing industry that the fishing industry is only suitable for poorly educated youngsters*

## V. CONCLUSION

Distant fishing is inevitable as coastal fishing is not lucrative anymore due to poor catch. A paradigm-shift from coastal to deep-sea fishing is required in the fishing industry to continue to support the livelihood of the fishers. This can be achieved through raising vessel construction, vessel operations and abilities of the fishers to a new level on par with the international standard, besides removing the inferiority complex in the fishing industry as it is suitable only for under-educated children. Livelihood and economic motivations are the primary factors for the fishers to continue developing the required skills for deep-sea fishing. However, being away from family leads the fishers to problems such as



children's school education in family, poor safety and security at the fishing destination, lack of awareness of international rules and regulations and language hurdles [3]. The present navigational knowledge and skills are developed by themselves, and it is to the level of their exposure at sea working condition. As the age of the fishers, experience at sea and training could not mould their navigational skills and knowledge on par with the international standard, their compliance with the navigational rules and regulations and vessel construction to display proper day and night navigational signals at sea could not be enhanced as required.

Corrective measures after collision accidents involving fishing vessels are poor though their importance is very much addressed. This is because no formal training is established to improve the navigational knowledge and skills of the fishers. Poor vessel construction without a navigational mast led to poor navigational regulation compliance and led to much confusion at sea while navigating. Having inappropriate navigational light signals on these vessels (side lights with only 90 degrees arc of visibility and only a single all-round light in place of separate mast and stern light for a vessel of 12m and above) indicate that they are attempting to comply with regulations, however due to poor awareness on these regulations, they could not construct the vessels as required. Changing weather patterns and technological developments in the maritime field demand the fishers to adapt to a new way of vessel operations. Further, modern electronic equipment such as NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation) messaging services, Distress Alert transmitter (DAT) and GEMINI (GAGAN Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information) have been developed by the government to support in navigational decision-making of the fishers. However, it has not been utilised by the fishers and hence cannot improve the decision-making capabilities of the fishers at sea. Thus, the fishing vessels could not be upgraded to the requirements of the latest requirements and the fishers could not develop their navigational knowledge and skills as required for deep-sea fishing activities.

**Further training attended does not have any significant correlation with the navigational abilities of the fishers**

Specialised training is needed for fishers to develop leadership qualities and decision-making abilities, besides enhancing knowledge and skill [13].

In addition, developing non-technical skills and skills for handling modern electronic equipment shall also be considered [8]. Hence, structured training for fishers is strongly recommended to enhance ocean navigational abilities,

and improve fishing vessel construction on par with the international standard with proper signal masts for displaying day and night signals.

**[This paper was presented in IMU's MARPOL CC Conference/February 2024]**

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# A Study on Government Initiatives for Fishermen: Challenges in Implementation



Srikanth, M. Sekar

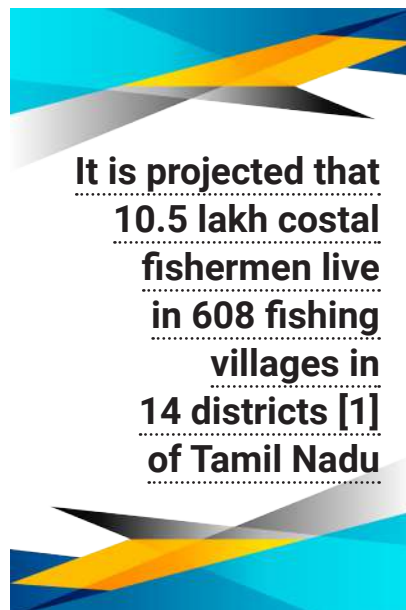
**Abstract:-** Inland and marine Fisheries, remain a significant source of income, food, foreign exchange and employment in India. Fishing including aquaculture culture contributes a significant portion for the economic growth and GDP. The sector provides livelihood for, roughly around 16.25 million fishers. India plays an important role in fish exports, in 2021-22 India was ranked the third largest producer of fish, with the production touching 16.24 million tonnes. The fisheries sector has a share of about 6.7 percent of total agriculture GVA, with an annual average growth rate of 7 percent since 2016-17.

This paper examines the challenges experienced in the implementation of government initiatives to the fisherman like PMMSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana) which consist of sustainable development in fishing, infrastructure development, modernising fishing technology, crafting a market oriented approach etc. The objectives of the study is to analyse whether government initiatives are accessible to the fisherman and to find out exactly the challenges faced in implementation of government schemes. The scope of

the study covers the coastal communities (fisherman) from Thiruvanniyur to Muttukadu in Chennai and the challenges in implementing the government initiatives.

The researcher has circulated structured questionnaire and conduct unstructured interviews with the fishing community is quite easy with fisherman and also the most free-flowing. It gives better flexibility in gathering participants' responses in a better way and can really get crux of the matter which in turn can meet the research objectives. The researcher has used thematic analysis, and simple percentage analysis for the study. The conclusion of the study may bring out the challenges faced in implementation of government policies and initiatives.

**Keywords:-** Fishery, youth, government schemes, implementation



## Introduction

Tamil Nadu is a state located in the southernmost part of the Indian subcontinent. The state has huge cultural references in Tamil literature with regard to marine fisheries (Neithal land) since ancient times. The costal length of Tamil Nadu is 1076 km along the Bay of Bengal and 41,412 sq.km of continental shelf area with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.9 lakh sq.km. It is projected that 10.5 lakh costal fishermen live in 608 fishing villages in 14 districts [1] of Tamil Nadu. Fisheries sector besides generating employment, significantly contributes to the state's economy.

Several schemes are being implemented by the Government of India and state governments for upskilling and imparting new skills amongst marine fishermen. These schemes are intended to improve the quality of life of the fishermen community as well as increase the quantity of fish caught by adopting environmentally friendly practices and necessary safety measures in reduced fishing time.

**Literature Review**

Promotion of deep-sea fishing, measures to promote mariculture, and vessel modernisation stood out as the most significant areas under support for fixed cost inputs. Support levels vary significantly by year, with the highest values from FY 2016 to FY 2019 being seen in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Subsidised diesel comes under the category support for variable-cost input for fishing. The idea is that the support would tend to encourage more fishing[2].

Though fishermen possess traditional knowledge and wisdom in fishing, their education level is very critical. Capacity building for sustainable fishing is critical to achieve targets in capture fisheries of India especially at fishermen level [3].

Education and training shall develop environmental awareness among fisherfolks that eventually lead to solve problems in costal and marine fishing and promote sustainable fisheries and sustainable livelihoods[4].

Fishing by the young students affect academic achievement mostly to the male students [5].

The fishermen use not only money, boats and fish to support their livelihood but may also draw on their family labour, physical strength, educational and professional skills, political influence, the social services provided by the state, infrastructure funded by taxpayers, and a host of other assets that policy and management interventions potentially support, undermine and redistribute[6].

The government can monitor the activities of small-scale fishing vessel through the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). The fishermen are willing to learn this new technology and install them in their boats for their safety. Most of the fishermen are aware of the government subsidy extended by the government and it plays an important role to install this system in their boats as it alleviates the financial burden in procuring those devices to an extent [7].

Modernisation of fishing crafts and gears have contributed in terms of good catch and reduced the fishing time significantly and also contributes nutrition security and income to the nation. The awareness with respect to responsible fishing is must to maintain the sustainability of the aquatic resources[8].

Awareness on free training programme provided by the government amongst the youth is substantially low. The study found that lower economic status and illiteracy of parents put the youth on pathetic condition as it reflect

directly on their development in the field of education and employment [9].

There is less takers of benefits by the fishermen form the government schemes that focuses on welfare and health of the fishermen [10].

**Methodology**

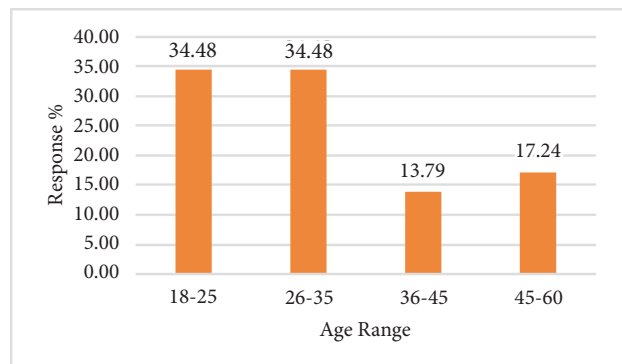
The study was carried out at Injambakkam village, South Chennai coast, and Kanathur village, South Chennai coast, Tamil Nadu. Descriptive survey method was used to collect the data from 29 respondents by using simple random sampling method. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were adopted to conduct the study. The study was conducted for the following objectives:

1. To Analyse whether government initiatives are accessible to the fisherman
2. To Study the challenges faced in implementation of government schemes.

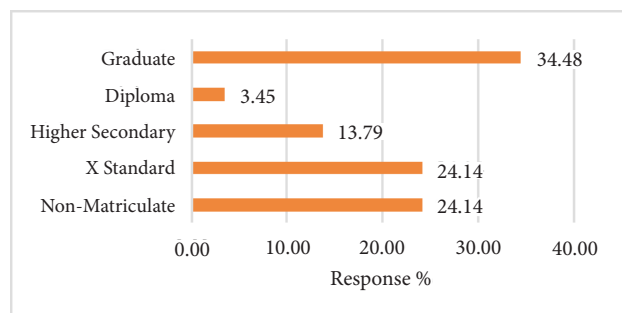
**Data Analysis, Finding and Discussions**

Gender of the respondents:

The respondents were all male. During the informal interview, the respondents informed that normally women will not go for marine fishing, whereas they would engage in inland fishing.



**Figure 1. Age of the respondents**



**Figure 2. Level of Education**

Findings from the **Figures 1 & 2:** Majority of the respondents were 35 years or less and 75% of the respondents were X standard and above. This shows that

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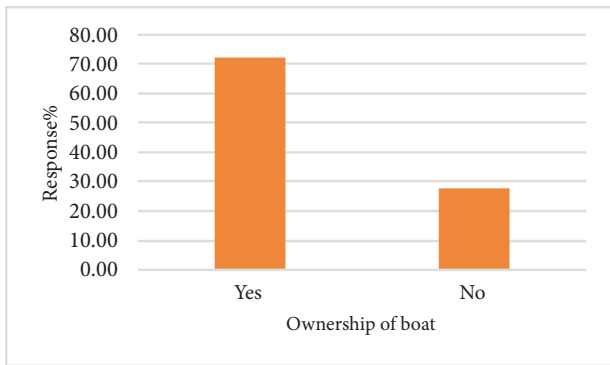
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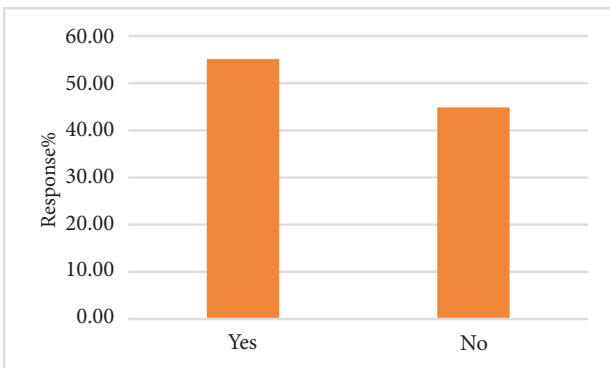
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the sample population is mostly youth and may meet the criteria kept for availing training schemes.



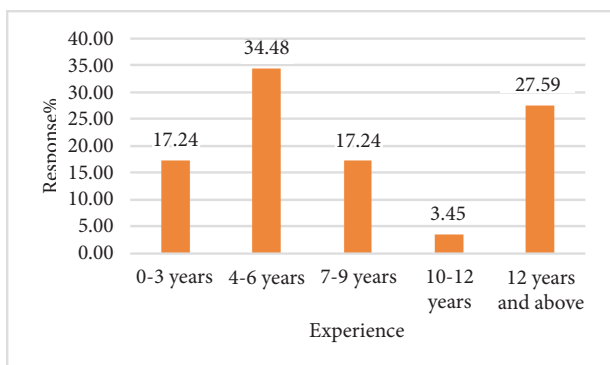
**Figure 3. Ownership of boat**

Findings from the above: Ownership of the boat may determine economic stability of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were owning boats and the others either hiring boats or work for others.



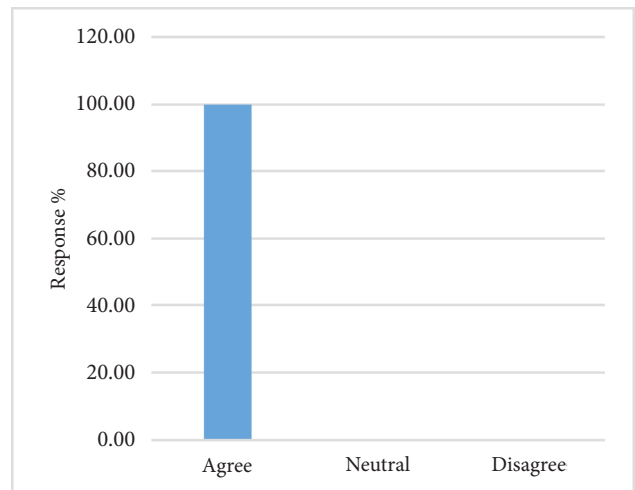
**Figure 4. Employed in a fishing boat**

Findings from the above: As regards employment of the respondents, most of the boat owners hire out their boats.



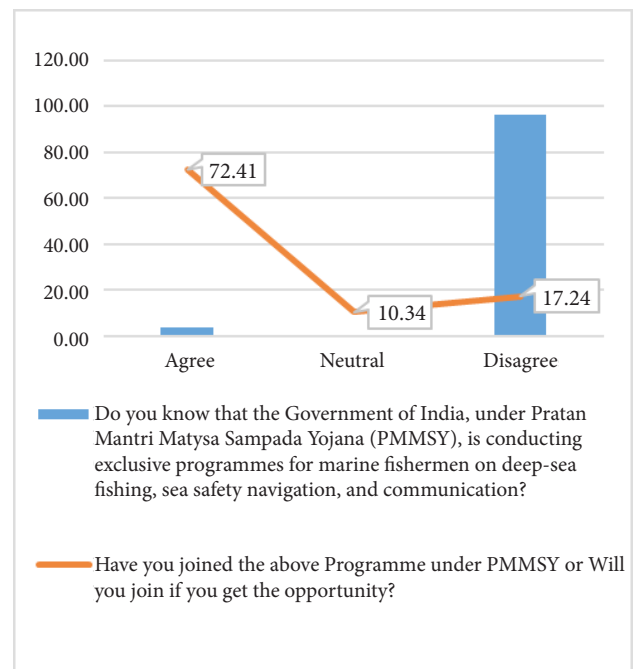
**Figure 5. Experience of Marine Fishing**

Findings from the above: Seventy-Three percentage of the respondents were having experience of marine fishing 12 years or less. It can be seen from the **Figures 1, 2 & 5** that the fisherfolks have begun their marine fishing career at very young age and the years of experience correlates with the age of the respondents.



**Figure 6. Your boats are using subsidised diesel facilities offered by Tamil Nadu State Apex Fisheries Co-operative Federation Limited (TAFCOFED)**

Findings from the above: All the respondents were having awareness on subsidised diesel scheme of GoTN. During the informal interview, all the respondent stated that they are drawing subsidised diesel from the Neelankarai facility.



**Figure 7. Awareness on GoI programmes for marine fishermen on deep-sea fishing, sea safety navigation, and communication**

Findings from the above: Three percent of the respondents stated that they were aware of the scheme. Whereas, Ninety Seven percent of the respondents stated that they have no idea of the scheme. None of the respondents had undergone this training, however, Seventy Two percent of the respondent stated that they would undergo this training had we known.



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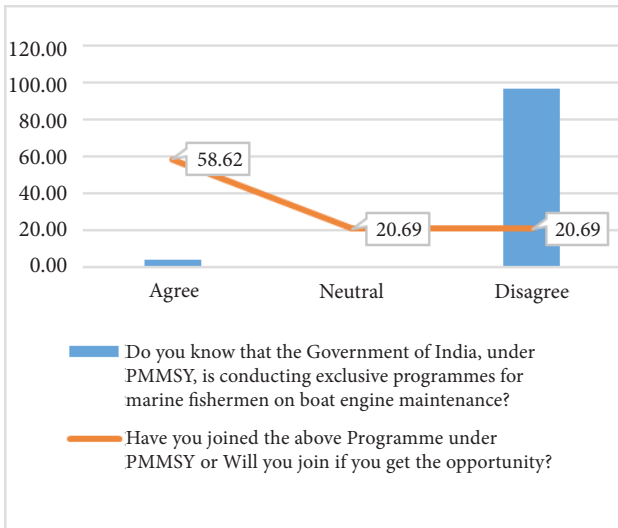
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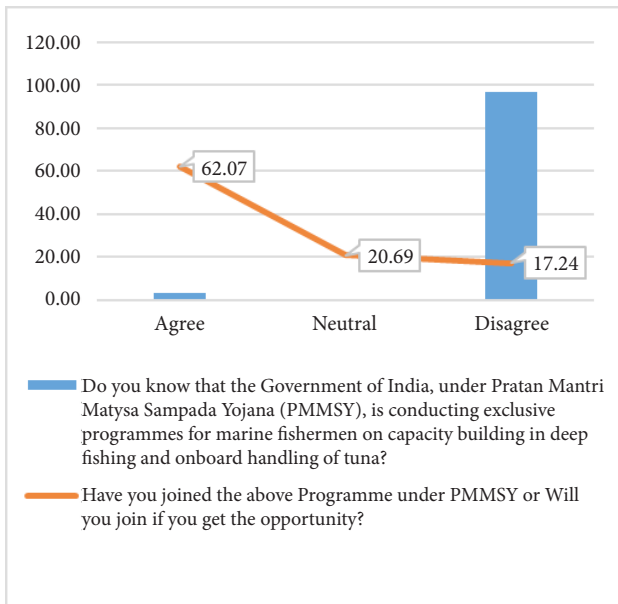
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**Figure 8. Awareness on Gol programmes for marine fishermen on boat engine maintenance**

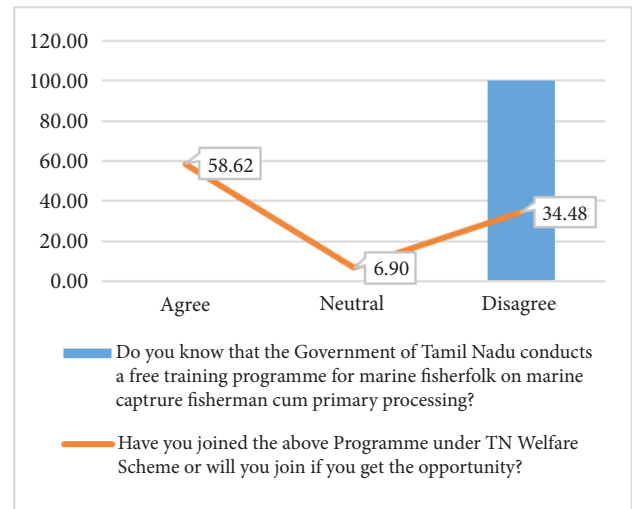
Findings from the above: Three percent of the respondents stated that they were aware of the scheme. Whereas, Ninety Seven percent of the respondents stated that they have no idea of the scheme. None of the respondents had undergone this training, however, Fifty Eight percent of the respondent stated that they would undergo this training had they known. It is also found that the interest in undergoing boat maintenance training is slightly less as it requires some technical knowledge.



**Figure 9. Awareness on programmes for marine fishermen on capacity building in deep fishing and onboard handling of tuna**

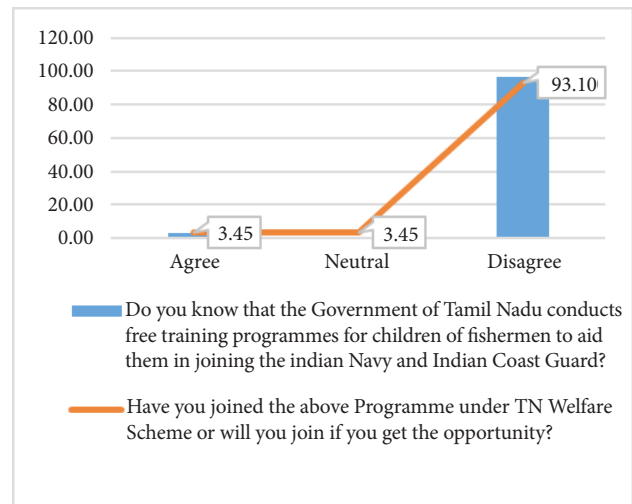
Findings from the above: Three percent of the respondent stated that they were aware of the scheme. Whereas, Ninety Seven percent of the respondent stated that they have no idea of the scheme. No respondent had undergone this training, however, Sixty Two percent of the respondents stated that they would undergo this

training had they known. The other did not show interest on deep sea fishing.



**Figure 10. Awareness on GoTN programme for marine fisherfolk on marine capture cum primary processing**

Findings from the above: None of the respondents were aware of the scheme. Fifty Eight percent of the respondents stated they would undergo this training had they known. As this training has classroom type of interaction and extend for a week, the respondents stated that they would be left with no business for a week if they go for this training.



**Figure 11. Awareness on GoTN programmes for children of fishermen to aid them in joining the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard**

Findings from the above: Three percent of the respondents stated that they were aware of the scheme. Whereas, Ninety Seven percent of the respondents stated that they have no idea of the scheme. One of the respondents stated that he was trying to enrol himself for the training programme. Since joining Navy and Indian Coast Guard have age restriction, Ninety Three percent of the respondents stated that they won't join this programme.





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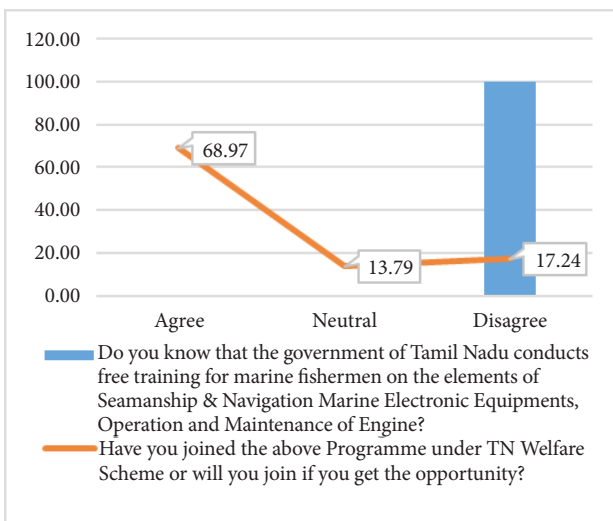
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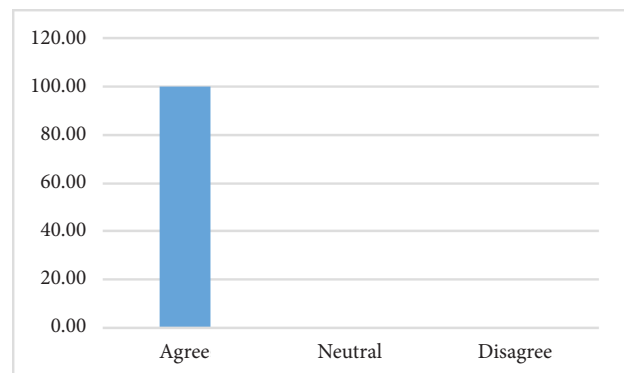
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**Figure 12. Awareness on GoTN programme for marine fishermen on the elements of Seamanship & Navigation Marine Electronic Equipment's, Operation and Maintenance of Engine**

Findings from the above: None of the respondents were aware of the scheme. Sixty Nine percent of the respondents stated they would undergo this training had they known. Since the training requires some technical knowledge, Thirty Percent of the respondents did not show interest.



**Figure 13. Your boats are fitted with Auto-Identification System-enabled GPS devices, which facilitate easy tracking and rescue in the event of technical snags in mid-sea?**



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#### ★ **Advanced IGF** **Course Id-5312**

Advanced Training for Ships  
using Fuels covered within IGF

**5**  
Days



#### Course Dates:

**Basic IGF:** 05th August 2024/ 26th August 2024/ 02nd September 2024/ 10th September 2024

**Advanced IGF:** 20th August 2024/ 23rd September 2024

Time: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Registration Link: <https://imeimum.marineims.com/course/register>

MEO CL-I (FG)	2 months	02nd Sept 2024/ 02nd Nov 2024	Rs. 30000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
MEO (CEO – NCV)	2 months	02nd November 2024	Rs. 30000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
MEO CL-II (FG) - NEW	4 Months	01st Aug 2024 / 02nd Sept 2024/ 01st Oct 2024 / 02nd Nov 2024 / 01st Dec 2024	Rs. 40000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
MEO (SEO – NCV) Part-A	2 months	1st August 2024	Rs. 28000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
MEO (SEO – NCV) Part-B	4 Months	02nd Nov 2024	Rs. 40000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
MEO. CL-IV NCV	4 Months	2nd January 2025	Rs. 36000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Diesel Engine Gas Combustion Simulator for MEO Class I	3 Days	29th August 2024/ 2nd September 2024/ 5th September 2024/ 29th October 2024/ 4th November 2024/ 7th November 2024/ 28th December 2024	Rs. 12000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Engine Room Simulator Management Level for MEO Class II	5 Days	27th Aug 2024/ 2nd Sep 2024/25th Sep 2024/ 1st Oct 2024/ 26th Oct 2024/ 1st Nov 2024/ 26th Nov 2024/ 2nd Dec 2024/ 26th Dec 2024	Rs.14000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Engine Room Simulator Operational Level for MEO Class IV	3 Days	7th August 2024	Rs. 7500/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Refresher Updating Training Course for all Engineers (RUCE )	3 Days	7th August 2024/ 22nd August 2024	Rs. 7000/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Basic Training for Ships using Fuels covered within IGF code Course	5 Days	22nd July 2024/ 05th August 2024/ 26th August 2024/ 02nd September 2024/ 10th September 2024	Rs. 15500/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Advanced Trg. for Ships using Fuels covered within IGF code	5 Days	20th August 2024/ 23rd September 2024	Rs. 21500/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>
Assessment, Examination and Certification of Seafarers	10 Days	16th September	Rs. 15500/-	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a>



Findings from the above: All the respondents were aware of the GPS devices. The respondents stated that their boats either fitted with GPS devices or use GPS app in mobiles for the same.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Creating awareness about the government scheme amongst the fishermen is the way forward. The following recommendations can be made to increase the awareness of the government schemes:

1. Bill boards may be placed at the fuel station where the fuel subsidy is being given, and the scheme details may be displayed.
2. Further, Fisheries department may prepare a yearly or half-yearly training calendar and the details may be disseminated through flyers.
3. Most of the coastal fishermen are sailing on registered and licensed boats. Details of the schemes may be sent to their registered mobile numbers as a WhatsApp message in both English and the local language.
4. Government and private schools located in the fishing hamlets may be informed to display the schemes regarding skill development, and awareness programs may be conducted.
5. At present, the training programmes are being conducted in Chennai; steps may be taken by the government to extend them to all the coastal districts.
6. Fishermen find it difficult to commute to the training centre; steps may be taken by the training institute to plan for TA and DA. Further, hostel facilities may be explored.
7. The association for fishers may arrange road show to populate the schemes rolled out by the government.

The number of beneficiaries' slots available for the free training of each programme ranges from 20 to 50, and the number of batches per year is in the range of 5 to



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50, or on a request basis. This shows that the number of beneficiaries for the free training programmes would be less than 2000 per year in Tamil Nadu. The central and state governments may take the necessary action to increase the batches over the year. By and large the fishers are not getting enough information about the government schemes to the fullest extent.

It is found that the young fishermen are ready to enrol themselves in the training programmes offered at no cost by both the central government and the state government, though they were not initially aware of the schemes. This study has limitations as the primary respondents are from only two villages and the respondents are less than thirty.

**[This paper was presented in IMU's MARPOL CC Conference/February 2024]**

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# Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning In Maritime Training & Education – The Way Forward



Anand Subramanian, Tirth Vakil

**Abstract:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are two related fields of computer science that aim to create systems that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, decision making, and problem solving. AI and ML have been applied to various domains, including the maritime industry, where they offer potential benefits for improving efficiency, safety, sustainability, and competitiveness.

This paper discusses the application of AI & ML specifically in Maritime Education & Training sector.

India is a power house in Information Technology sector. We can develop the required AI / ML software, Simulators, AR / VR graphics under Make-In-India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiatives.

This will put India back in forefront of Maritime Training.

**Keywords:** Maritime Training & Education; AI & ML; Safety of Life.

## 1. WHAT ARE AI AND ML?

Artificial Intelligence or AI is a broad term that encompasses different types of systems that can mimic or augment human intelligence. AI systems can be classified into two categories: Narrow AI and General AI. Narrow AI refers to systems that can perform specific tasks or functions, such as speech recognition, image analysis, or game playing.

General AI refers to systems that can perform any intellectual task that a human can do, such as understanding natural language, reasoning, or creativity. General AI is still a hypothetical concept that has not been achieved yet.

**Narrow AI refers to systems that can perform specific tasks or functions, such as speech recognition, image analysis, or game playing.**

**General AI refers to systems that can perform any intellectual task that a human can do, such as understanding natural language, reasoning, or creativity**

Machine Learning or ML is a subfield of AI that focuses on creating systems that can learn from data and experience, without being explicitly programmed. ML systems use algorithms and statistical models to identify patterns and make predictions based on the input data. ML systems can be divided into three types: supervised learning, unsupervised learning, and reinforcement learning. Supervised learning refers to systems that learn from labelled data, such as images with captions or texts with categories. Unsupervised learning refers to systems that learn from unlabelled data, such as images without captions or texts without categories. Reinforcement learning

refers to systems that learn from their own actions and feedback, such as a robot that learns to navigate an environment.

## 2. HOW ARE AI AND ML USED IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY?

AI and ML have been used in various aspects of the maritime industry, such as navigation, communication, operation, maintenance, security, logistics, and management.

Some examples of AI and ML applications in the maritime industry are:

**a. Autonomous ships:** These are ships that can operate without human intervention or with minimal human supervision. Autonomous ships use sensors, cameras, radars, GPS, and other devices to collect data about their surroundings and use AI and ML algorithms to process the data and make decisions. Autonomous ships can improve safety, efficiency, fuel consumption, and environmental impact of maritime transportation.

**b. Collision avoidance:** This is a system that helps ships avoid collisions with other vessels or obstacles by using AI and ML techniques to analyse the data from the Automatic Identification System (AIS), radar, sonar, and other sources. Collision avoidance systems can alert the crew or take control of the ship in case of emergency situations.

**c. Predictive maintenance:** This is a system that monitors the condition of the ship's equipment and components and uses AI and ML methods to predict failures or malfunctions before they occur. Predictive maintenance systems can reduce downtime, repair costs, accidents, and environmental damage.

**d. Maritime security:** This is a system that uses AI and ML tools to detect and prevent threats such as piracy, terrorism, smuggling, or cyber-attacks. Maritime security systems can use image recognition, natural language processing, anomaly detection, or facial recognition to identify suspicious activities or persons and alert the authorities or take countermeasures.

**e. Maritime logistics:** This is a system that uses AI and ML techniques to optimise the planning, scheduling, routing, loading, unloading operations etc.

AI & ML use has not been harnessed as yet in Maritime Education and Training.

**Artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are two of the most promising technologies that have the potential to transform various sectors, including maritime education and training.** This article will explore

*ML systems can be divided into three types: supervised learning, unsupervised learning, and reinforcement learning*

the pros and cons of using AI and ML in maritime training, and discuss some of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

## 3. USE CASE OF AI & ML IN MARITIME EDUCATION & TRAINING

AI and ML are branches of computer science that aim to create systems that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as perception, reasoning, decision making, learning, and adaptation.

AI and ML can be applied to various aspects of maritime cadets training, such as:

**a. Simulation and Virtual Reality:** AI and ML can enhance the realism and interactivity of simulators and virtual reality environments, which can provide cadets with immersive and realistic scenarios for learning and practicing various skills, such as navigation, communication, collision avoidance, emergency response, etc. AI and ML can also enable adaptive learning, where the system can adjust the level of difficulty and feedback according to the cadet's performance and progress.

For example, the Maritime AI-NAV Project is developing an AI-based navigation simulator that can generate realistic maritime traffic scenarios and provide personalised feedback to the cadets.

**b. Data analysis and feedback:** AI and ML can help collect, analyse, and interpret large amounts of data from various sources, such as sensors, cameras, GPS, etc., which can provide cadets with valuable insights and feedback on their performance, strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement, etc. AI and ML can also help identify patterns, trends, anomalies, risks, and opportunities in the data, which can help cadets improve their situational awareness and decision making.

For example, the Maritime Data Science Project is using ML to analyse data from various sensors on board ships to detect faults, optimise fuel consumption, predict maintenance needs, etc.

**c. Personalisation and customisation:** AI and ML can help tailor the training content and methods to the individual needs, preferences, goals, and learning styles of each cadet. AI and ML can also help create personalised learning paths and schedules for each cadet, which can optimise their learning outcomes and efficiency.

For example, the Maritime Adaptive Learning Project is using AI to create adaptive learning modules that can



Figure 1. VR Set for Training (AI Generated)



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adapt to the cadet's prior knowledge, learning pace, and feedback.

**d. Collaboration and communication:**

AI and ML can facilitate collaboration and communication among cadets, instructors, mentors, peers, etc., through various platforms and tools, such as catboats, voice assistants, social media, etc.

AI and ML can also help create a supportive and engaging learning community, where cadets can share their experiences, challenges, solutions, feedback, etc.

For example, the Maritime Chatbot Project is developing a conversational agent that can answer questions, provide guidance, and offer encouragement to the cadets.

#### 4. WHAT ARE THE LATEST AI / ML TOOLS FOR TRAINING MARITIME CADETS IN TRAINING INSTITUTES.

**a. Adaptive Learning:** Adaptive learning is a method of delivering personalised and optimised learning experiences to each learner, based on their individual needs, preferences, and performance. Adaptive learning systems use AI and ML algorithms to analyse the learner's data, such as their prior knowledge, learning goals, progress, feedback, and behaviour, and then adjust the content, pace, difficulty, and sequence of the learning materials accordingly. This way, adaptive learning can provide a tailored and engaging learning experience for each maritime cadet, while also reducing the cognitive load and enhancing the retention and transfer of knowledge.

**b. Virtual Reality (VR):** VR is a technology that creates an immersive and realistic simulation of a three-dimensional environment, where the learner can interact with various elements using a headset and controllers. VR can be used to create realistic scenarios and environments that are relevant to the maritime industry, such as ship navigation, engine room operation, cargo handling, emergency response, etc. VR can provide a safe and cost-effective way for maritime cadets to practice their skills and gain hands-on experience in various situations, without the risks and limitations of real-world training.

**c. Gamification:** Gamification is a technique that applies game elements and mechanics, such as points, badges, levels, leader boards, challenges, etc., to non-game contexts, such as education and training. Gamification can increase the motivation, engagement, and enjoyment of learners by making the learning process more fun and rewarding. Gamification can also



**Figure 2. Gamification Scoreboard (AI Generated)**

foster a sense of competition and collaboration among learners, as well as provide feedback and recognition for their achievements. Gamification can be applied to various aspects of maritime training, such as quizzes, simulations, assignments, etc., to make them more interactive and appealing for maritime cadets.

By using these tools, maritime educators can create more effective and efficient learning experiences for their students, while also preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of the maritime industry in the digital age.

#### 5. USE OF AI / ML BY MARINE SHIP OWNERS FOR TRAINING MARITIME CADETS ONBOARD & ADMINISTRATION FOR ASSESSING THEIR PERFORMANCE:

AI and ML are powerful tools that can enhance the training of maritime cadets onboard ships. AI and ML can help ship owners to design personalised and adaptive learning programs, monitor the progress and performance of the cadets, provide feedback and guidance, and assess the competencies and skills of the cadets. AI and ML can also enable the use of immersive technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), to create realistic and engaging simulations of various scenarios and tasks that the cadets may encounter in their future careers. By using AI and ML, ship owners can improve the quality and efficiency of the training, reduce the costs and risks, and prepare the cadets for the challenges and opportunities of the maritime industry.

AI and ML can help maritime administrations to design and implement objective, fair, and reliable assessment methods that can measure the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of maritime cadets. For example, AI and ML can be used to create adaptive and personalised tests that can adjust the difficulty and content of the questions based on the cadet's responses and learning progress. AI and ML can also be used to analyse the data collected from the tests, such as the response time, accuracy, confidence level, and feedback of the cadets, to generate insights and recommendations for improving their learning outcomes.

Moreover, AI and ML can help maritime administrations to monitor and evaluate the practical training and on-board experience of maritime cadets, which are essential for developing their professional competencies and readiness for the real-world challenges. For instance, AI and ML can be used to create realistic and immersive simulations that can mimic the scenarios and situations

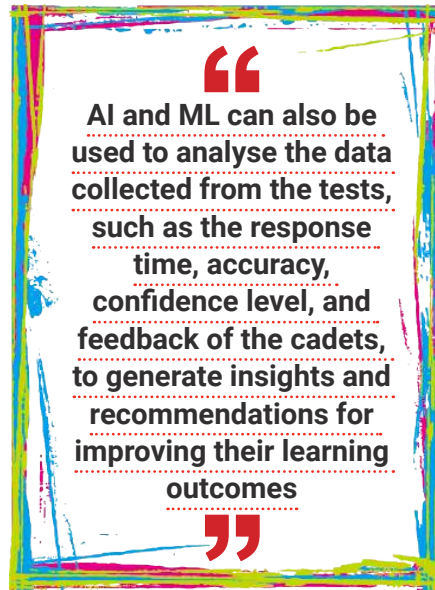
*Gamification can be applied to various aspects of maritime training, such as quizzes, simulations, assignments, etc., to make them more interactive and appealing for maritime cadets*

that cadets may encounter at sea, such as navigation, communication, emergency management, teamwork, etc. AI and ML can also be used to track and record the performance and behaviour of cadets during the simulations, such as their actions, decisions, reactions, interactions, etc., to provide feedback and guidance for enhancing their skills and confidence.

By using AI and ML, maritime administrations can ensure that the cadets are well-prepared and qualified for their future careers in the maritime sector.

## 6. USE OF AI / ML IN WORKSHOP & LAB TRAINING:

AI and ML can help cadets learn from data, simulations, feedback, and scenarios that are relevant to their field of



study. Some examples of how AI and ML can be used for maritime training are:

**a. Data analysis:** Cadets can use AI and ML tools to collect, process, and visualise data from various sources, such as sensors, cameras, radars, sonars, and satellites. This can help them understand the patterns, trends, and anomalies in the maritime environment and make informed decisions.

**b. Simulation:** Cadets can use AI and ML to create realistic and immersive simulations of maritime operations, such as navigation, manoeuvring, communication, collision avoidance, and emergency

response. This can help them practice their skills, test their knowledge, and improve their performance in a safe and controlled environment.





**c. Feedback:** Cadets can use AI and ML to receive personalised and adaptive feedback from instructors, mentors, peers, and systems. This can help them identify their strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and errors in their learning process and improve their competence and confidence.

**d. Scenarios:** Cadets can use AI and ML to generate and explore various scenarios of maritime situations, such as weather conditions, traffic patterns, hazards, threats, and incidents. This can help them develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork skills.

## **7. DRAWBACKS AND LIMITATIONS IN USE OF AI / ML FOR MARITIME TRAINING:**

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are powerful tools that can enhance the Maritime training. However, AI and ML also have some drawbacks and limitations that need to be considered when using them in maritime cadets training.

### **Some of these are:**

**a. Ethical and social issues:** AI and ML raise various ethical and social issues that need to be addressed before deploying them in maritime cadets training. For example, how to ensure the privacy, security, transparency, accountability, fairness, trustworthiness, etc., of the data and systems used in AI and ML?

How to prevent or mitigate the potential biases, errors, harms, abuses, etc., that may arise from the use or misuse of AI and ML?

How to balance the human-machine interaction and collaboration in a way that respects the dignity, autonomy, and agency of both parties?

**b. Technical challenges:** AI and ML face various technical challenges that need to be overcome before achieving their full potential in maritime cadets training.

For example, how to ensure the quality, reliability, accuracy, robustness, scalability, etc., of the data and systems used in AI and ML?

How to deal with the uncertainty, complexity, dynamism, and diversity of the maritime domain and scenarios?

How to integrate AI and ML with other technologies and systems in a seamless and interoperable way?

**c. Human factors:** AI and ML also depend on various human factors that need to be considered when using them in maritime cadets training.

For example, how to design, develop, implement, evaluate, and improve the AI and ML systems in a user-centered and participatory way?

How to ensure the usability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, etc., of the AI and ML systems for the cadets, instructors, mentors, peers, etc.?

How to foster the skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, etc., that are needed for effective use of AI and ML?

AI and ML are powerful technologies that can offer many benefits for maritime cadets training. However, they also pose some challenges and risks that need to be carefully considered and addressed. Therefore, it is important to adopt a balanced and responsible approach when using AI and ML in maritime cadets training.

## **8. MISUSE OF AI & ML IN EXAMS AND ASSESSMENT:**

AI & ML can pose some challenges and risks, especially when they are used in exams. Some of the ways that AI and ML can be misused in exams are:

**a. Ethics:** Educators and developers should adhere to ethical principles and standards when designing, implementing, and evaluating AI and ML systems for exams. For example, they should ensure that the systems are fair, transparent, accountable, and respectful of human dignity and rights.



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**b. Education:** Students and teachers should be aware of the potential benefits and risks of AI and ML for exams. For example, they should learn how to use the systems responsibly, critically, and creatively. They should also learn how to protect their privacy and security online.

**c. Regulation:** Policymakers and regulators should establish and enforce laws and policies that govern the use of AI and ML for exams. For example, they should define the scope, purpose, and limits of the systems. They should also monitor and audit the systems for compliance and quality.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning has a lot of potential in being used as a potent tool in Maritime Education & Training. It makes intensive use of technology which is readily available but it requires Maritime educators to adapt the technology to the special needs of Maritime Training. All those involved in Maritime training – Administration, Training Institute and Trainers – should be well aware of the potential benefits of AI & ML. They should also be careful that this technology is not misused. India is a power house in IT & ITES sector. We can develop the required AI / ML software, Simulators, AR / VR graphics under Make-In-India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiatives.

This will put India back in forefront of Maritime Training.

*[This paper was presented in the GLOMARS 2024 Conference in March 2024]*

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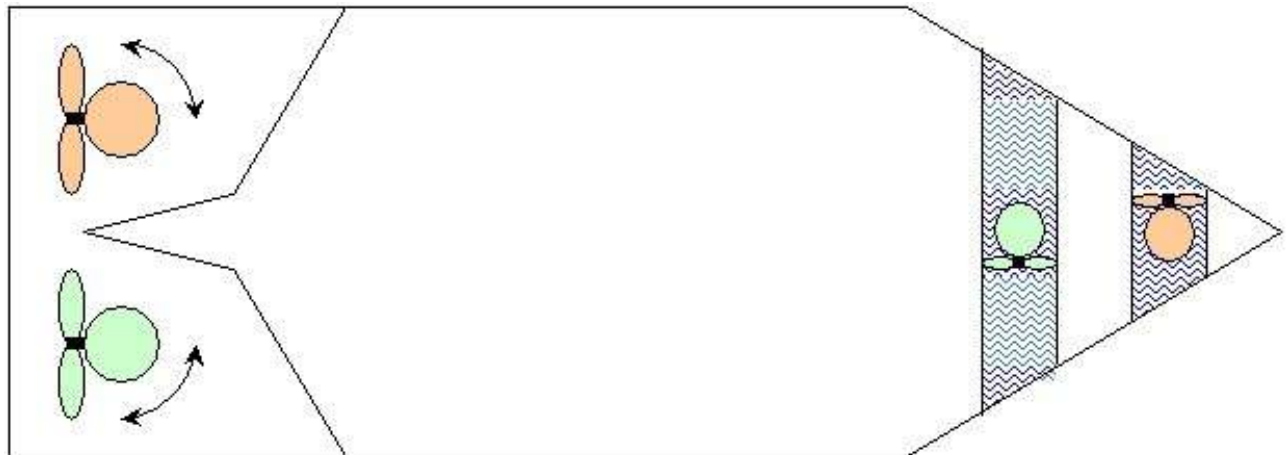
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**Ca. Anand Subramanian** joined sea in 1995 and sailed on various kinds of ships, and became Captain in 2007. His sea career spans about 23 years with 12 years as Master. Since 2018 has been with HIMT Pre-sea College. Presently he is serving as Principal of HIMT College.

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# Failure of Azimuth Thruster



Ramesh Vantaram

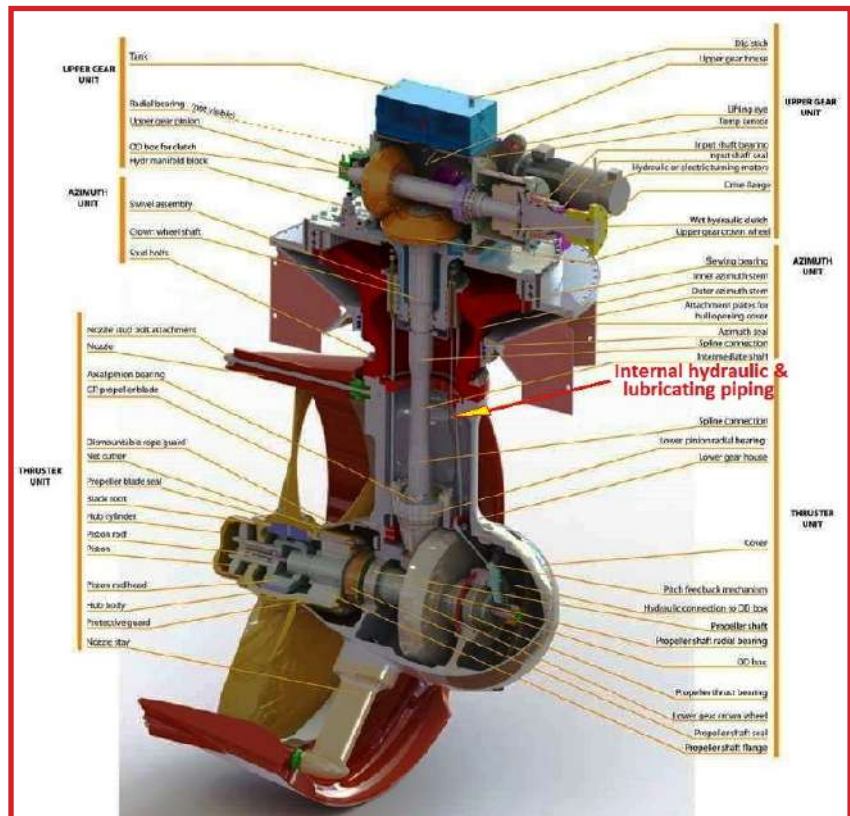
## Summary

The following Incident Report pertains to an Azimuth Thruster installed on an Offshore Supply vessel that failed whilst the vessel was in the offshore field. This is a classic case of Single Point of Failure (SPOF) that occurred while the vessel was in operation. Fortunately, the OSV was not in the 500-metre zone of the offshore installation. Immediately after the incident occurred the OEMs were contacted, but their Representative could not attend the vessel due to some other commitments. Owners therefore decided to address the problem independently. After a process of elimination, it was concluded that the issue was with the Azimuth Thruster. During the repair it was found that the torque pin had sheared off and had to be replaced. The simple solution would have been to replace the sheared torque pin with a replica. However this was not an option as the system would once again plunge the system into a SPOF mode.

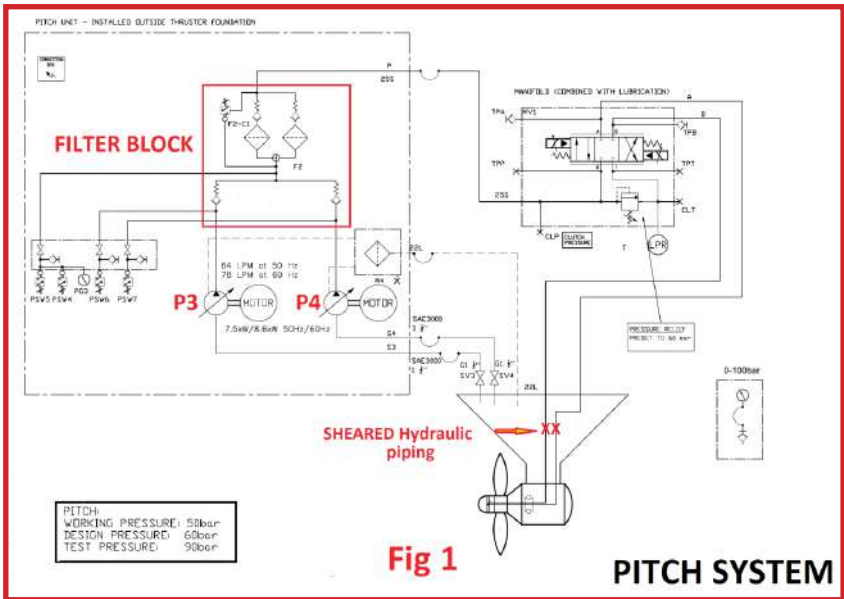
**Owners obviously did not have the wherewithal to delving into any kind of detailed design calculations with regard to the torque transmission load.** The torque pin was not only replaced but also redundancy factor was included. Instead of a single 5mm diameter torque pin, 6 Nos. of 16.5

mm diameter torque pins were introduced. Looks like an over-kill, but it was better to err on the side of caution! The vessel underwent the necessary repair/modification and was put back into service. There was no problem encountered over the next 6 months when the vessel was dry-docked for the Statutory Docking Survey.

Based on Owner's feedback, the Maker went back to the drawing board and reviewed the design. They came up with a design modification what they called a Swivel Assembly Upgrade. They had incorporated 3 torque pins of 10mm diameter! Adequate redundancy was provided. The torque transmission sequence was retained as the initial design. The new assembly was installed during the next dry-docking at their cost.



NOMENCLATURE



**Azimuth Steering System Failure:**

**Overview**

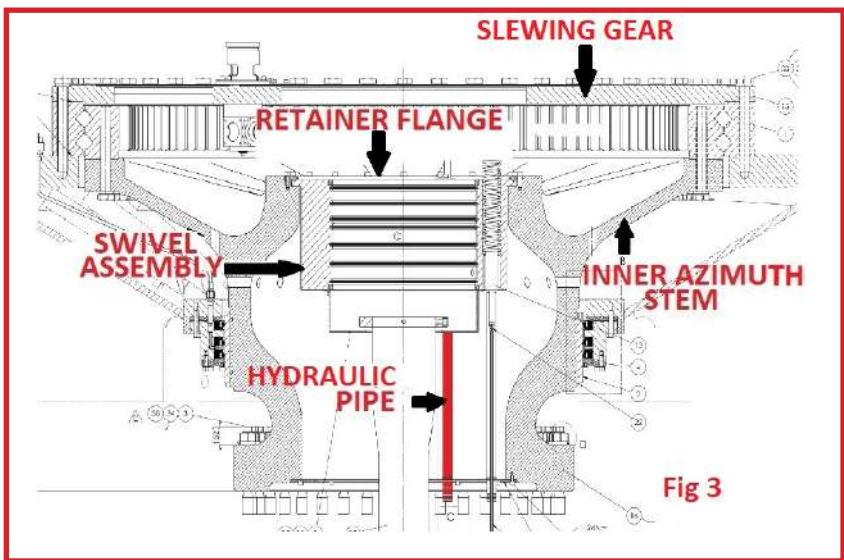
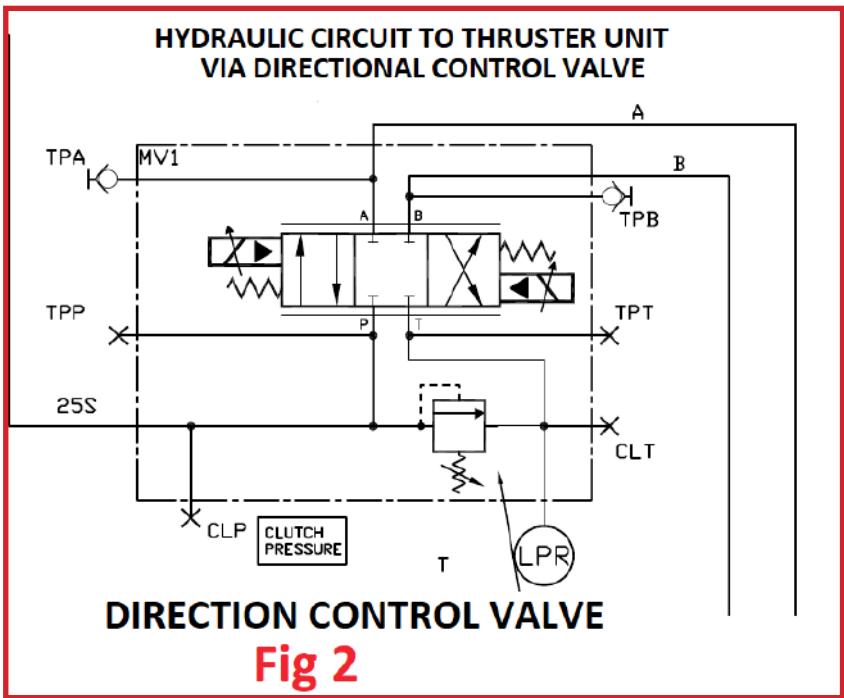
On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015, the vessel reported that the DP system alarm “AZIMUTH PORT/STBD PREDICTION ALARM” and until such time as the alarm was not acknowledged the Azimuth Thruster was getting locked. When Kongsberg, providers of the Dynamic Positioning System was informed, they tried some “remote” trouble shooting with no remedy. Finally they concluded that since the alarms were reported in both the DP Mode and the Independent Joy Stick (IJS) Mode, the problem would most likely be with the Azimuth feedback signal from the Thruster unit to DP/ IJS. What was perceived to be a DP related problem, turned out to be a Thruster related issue.

**Port Thruster**

When the pitch control Pumps P3 and P4 were operated, neither of the pumps was able to deliver the pressure. It was suspected that there could be some blockage in the system (valves, filters, pipelines). When no blocks were found in the piping etc, it was assumed that the filter block could be having an internal blockage. The Thruster OEM recommended replacing the Filter Block Assembly.

A new Filter Block was ordered and when this was fitted and tried out there was no improvement. At this time the OEM technician attended on board. The pressures were recorded at the various locations on the proportional directional control valve. The pressures recorded on the return lines were almost zero and so it was suspected that there was heavy leakage down-stream of the direction control valve

Thereafter the whole unit was dismantled and it was found that the torque pin had sheared and all 5 hydraulic pipes that convey hydraulic oil to and from the pitch activating pistons, in the hub assembly had sheared off. The root cause was identified as failure of







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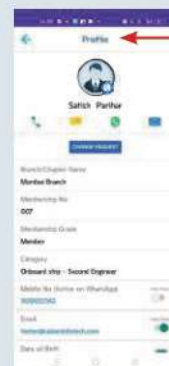
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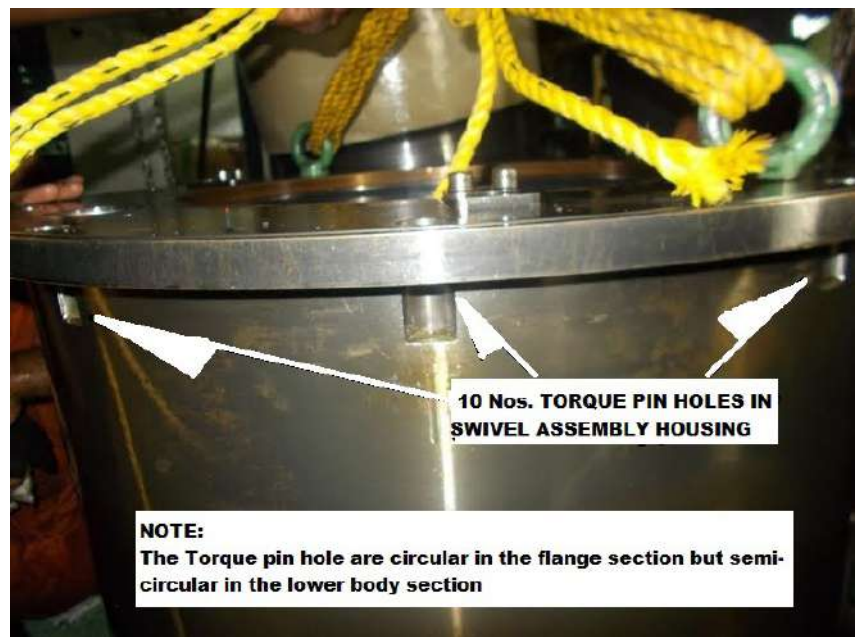
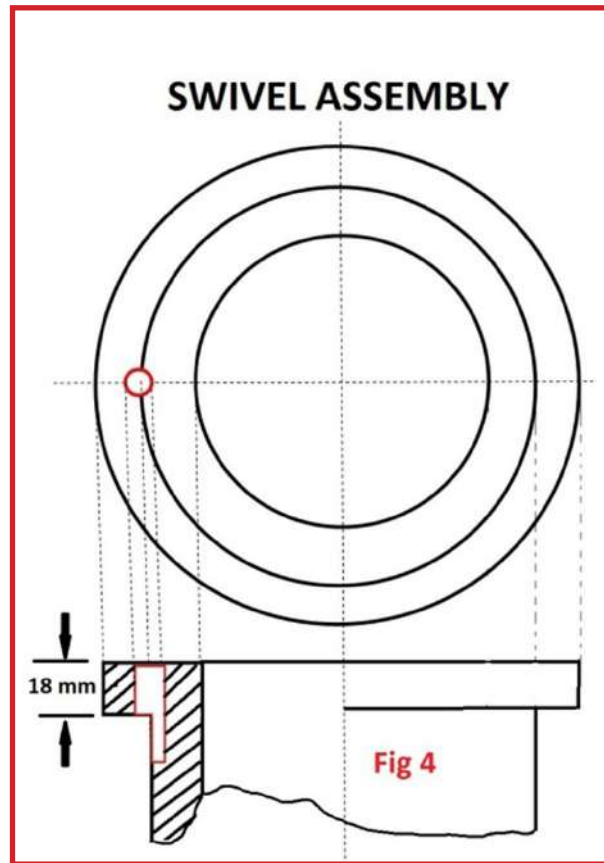
the locking arrangement causing a relative movement between the Inner Azimuth Stem and the Swivel Assembly, the later houses the 5 hydraulic pipes. Under normal operation the Inner Azimuth Stem and Swivel Assembly act as one unit and rotate together.

**FAILURE ANALYSIS:**

To understand the incident better, it would be pertinent to trace the whole slewing sequence. The slewing motors rotate the slewing gear. The slewing gear is bolted to the top flange of the Inner Azimuth Stem. Within the Inner Azimuth Stem there is a Swivel Assembly that houses 5 hydraulic pipes. The function of these pipes is to convey oil to and from the pitch activation piston that is located in the hub. The supply of oil is as per the path set by the direction control valve. The slewing motion (rotation) of the inner azimuth stem has to be transmitted to the swivel assembly. This process is facilitated by a torque pin.

One half of the torque pin fits in the inner azimuth stem, while the other half fits in the swivel assembly. By this arrangement, the torque pin effectively locks of these two components. This was the SPOF in the system. Failure of this pin would result in relative motion between the Inner Azimuth Ring and the Swivel assembly which is not permissible.

In the case in point, there was a failure of the torque pin causing the relative motion of the two components. While the Inner Azimuth Stem slewed along with the slewing motors, the swivel assembly remained stationery. This resulted in the 5 hydraulic pipes housed within the swivel assembly to shear off. Thus when hydraulic oil was directed to any side of the hub cylinder, the oil simply did not reach the intended location rather it leaked off from the sheared hydraulic pipes which explained the low oil pressure recorded at the directional valve block. Since the hydraulic pipes were routed within the Thruster assembly, there was no



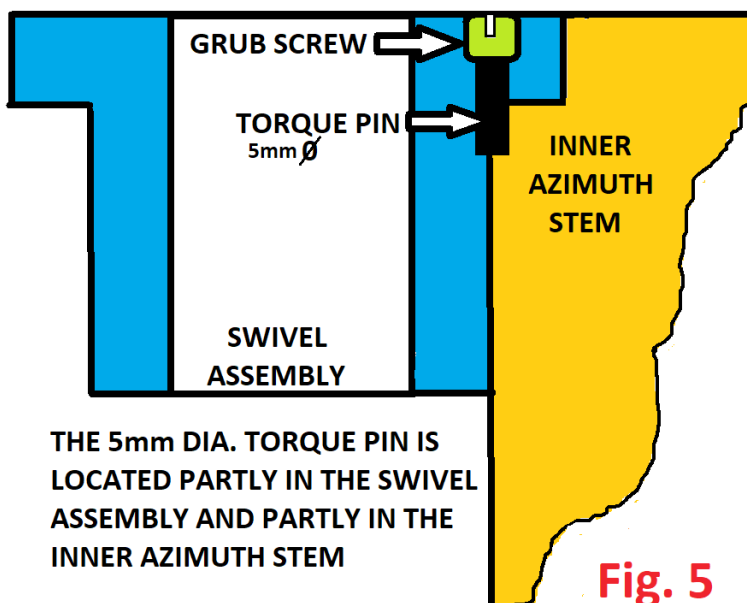
visible leakage as well as no loss of hydraulic oil. The level in the hydraulic header tank remained constant.

**LOCKING ARRANGEMENT**

It would be interesting to reflect upon the locking arrangement swivel assembly and the Inner Azimuth stem by means of the torque pin. The swivel assembly is cylindrical in shape having a flange at the top end. The swivel assembly has 10 Nos. axial bores of 5mm diameter. The PCD of the bores is same as the outer diameter of the lower section. One of these 10 bores



## LOCKING ARRANGEMENT AT THE TIME OF FAILURE



**Fig. 5**

was used to house the Torque pin. As mentioned earlier, this was the SPOF of the system.

In plan-view, the bore in the flange section is circular whereas in the lower section it is a semi circular. Refer the sketch and photograph (**Figure 4**). The corresponding semi-cylindrical holes in the inner azimuth stem, thus, the torque pin would efficiently lock the two components together.

At the time of failure, the swivel assembly and the inner azimuth stem were locked together with just **ONE torque pin, of 5mm diameter!** This 5mm diameter torque pin was to transmit the entire torque exerted by the slewing motors. The 5mm torque pin was inserted from the top and held in place by a grub screw. Refer to the **Figure 5**.

**It is still not understood why the flange had 10 bores, and when there**

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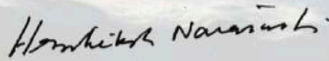
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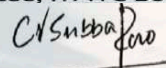
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were 10 bores, why only 1 torque pin was provided. Was it supposed to be a weak-link? Not really, because of the fact that the modified design that was installed in the subsequent dry dock included 3 torque pins of 10mm diameter. An increase of 1200%! See calculation in the box below.

**Original Design:**  
 Shear load on each Torque Pin = Shear load / Shear Strength of Material X  $\pi/4 (5)^2$

**Modified Design:**  
 Shear load on each Torque Pin = Shear load / Shear Strength of Material X  $\pi/4 (10)^2 \times 3$

It is assumed that the material remains unchanged

**The Torque Transmission chain was as follows:**

Slewing Motors to Slewing Ring to inner Azimuth stem, via bolts; to the Swivel Assembly via single torque pin

Due to the shearing of the torque pin, the lower side of the flange was badly "scored" and the torque pin bore in the inner azimuth stem assembly and swivel assembly sustained damage, as can be seen in the photographs. More importantly this resulted in a relative motion between two components thus shearing the 5 hydraulic pipes.

The repair was carried out in-situ and the ORIGINAL locking arrangement as discussed above in paragraph titled LOCKING ARRANGEMENT was not replicated, instead locking arrangement was modified as detailed below.

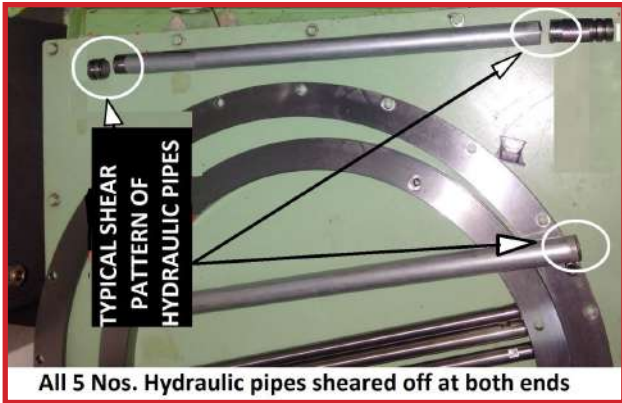
**OWNER'S MODIFIED LOCKING ARRANGEMENT:**

To ensure that the torque is effectively transmitted from the inner azimuth stem to the swivel



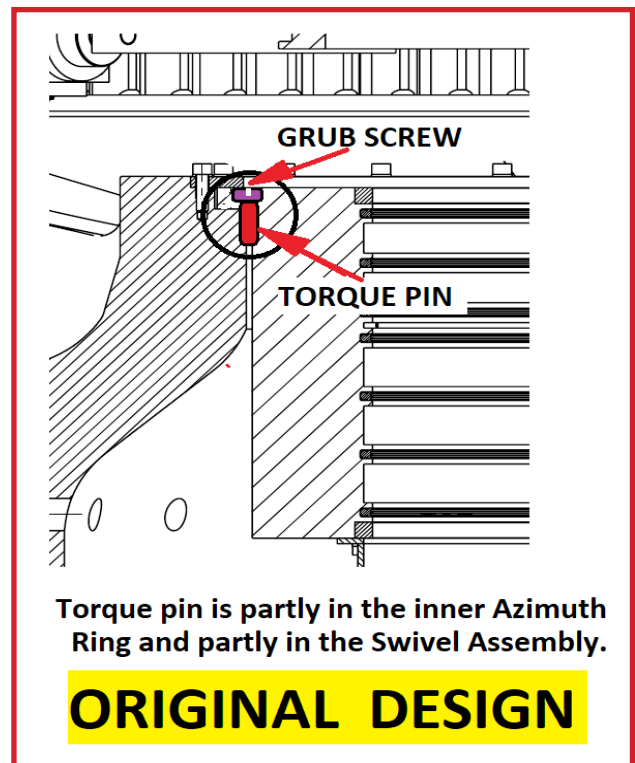
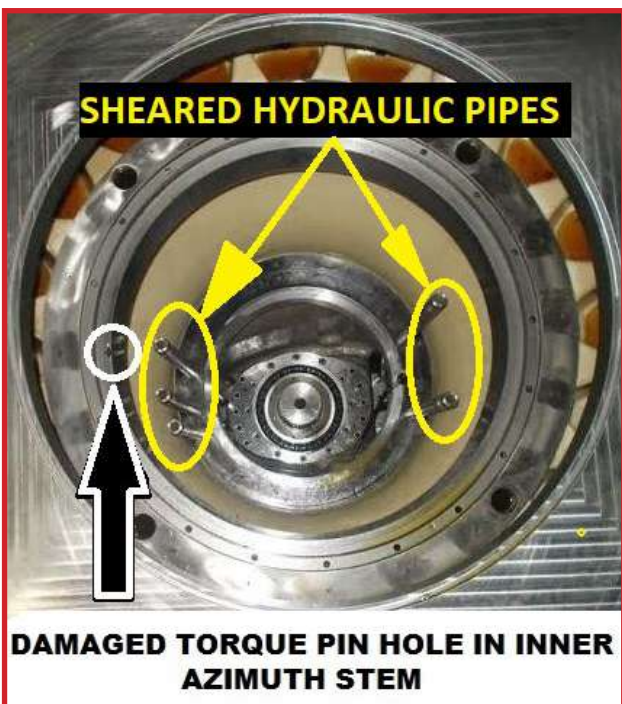
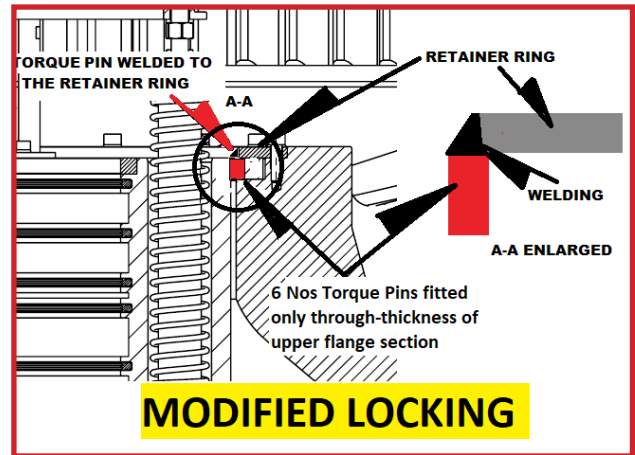
assembly, 6 torque pins of 16.5 mm diameter and 19.5 mm length were provided in the modified assembly. Further the newly made bores of 17mm diameter, were restricted only to the through-thickness of the flanged portion of the swivel assembly. The flanged section was 18mm thick.

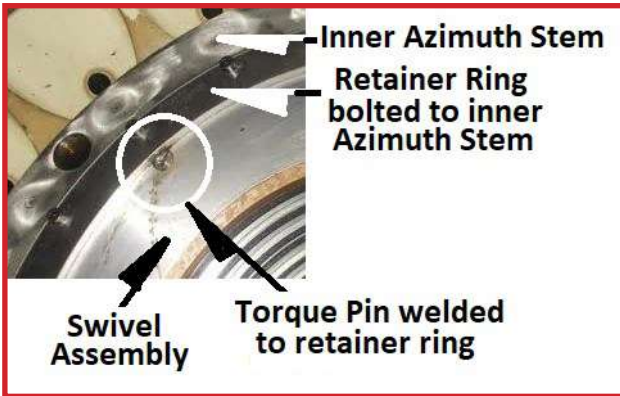
*In plan-view, the bore in the flange section is circular whereas in the lower section it is a semi circular*



**Modified Torque Transmission chain:**

Slewing Motors to Slewing ring via Bolts to Inner Azimuth Stem via bolts to Retainer Ring via fillet weld to 6 Nos. Torque Pins to Swivel Assembly. Note that the transmission chain is different to what was originally provided.





After fitting the torque pins in the swivel assembly, the retaining ring was placed over the torque pins and secured to the inner azimuth stem with Allen bolts. The torque pins were then tack welded to the retaining ring. Thus the torque would get transmitted from the inner azimuth stem to the retaining ring and then on to the torque pins and finally to the swivel assembly.

The sheared hydraulic pipes, 5 in all, were locally procured and machined to house the “O” Rings. Prior to assembly the pipes were hydrostatically tested to 100 bars and found satisfactory. System was tried out and found satisfactory.

The sketches and illustrations are Not to Scale and have been made for ease of understanding and explanation.

**About the author**



**Ramesh Vantaram** is an alumnus of D.M.E.T. (1974-1978). The sea career started with The Shipping Corporation of India. After obtaining MEO CI II certificate, he served with Hongkong-Borneo Shipping Company. After obtaining MEO CI I certificate in 1983, he served with Anglo Eastern Management Services until 1987. Thereafter he was associated for 3 years with an FAO (UN) regional Project known as The Bay of Bengal Program. The objective of the project was to provide fisher-folk with a viable alternative to Outboard Motors on their FRP boats. The work-scope involved Prototype testing of power tiller engines and multiple propulsion systems.

He worked with Lloyd's Register of Shipping from April 1992 to June 2005 at Chennai, Ahmedabad and Marmagoa. Just before and soon after his stint with LRS, he served as Chief Engineer, with South India Shipping Company and United Ocean Ship Management Co.

In 2008, he joined Great Offshore as Head of Quality, Health Safety and Environment, in charge of the Company's International Safety Management and Integrated Management System Certification processes.

In 2014, he moved to Ocean Sparkle Limited as Senior Vice President and served as Regional Head of North West Region. In 2018, took over as Head of Quality in charge of the Company's Integrated Management System and Certification.

In February 2022, he retired from Ocean Sparkle Limited and took up part-time teaching. Currently he is a visiting faculty at the Institute of Marine Engineers (India) at Navi Mumbai. He regularly writes technical articles especially for student readers in iMélange.

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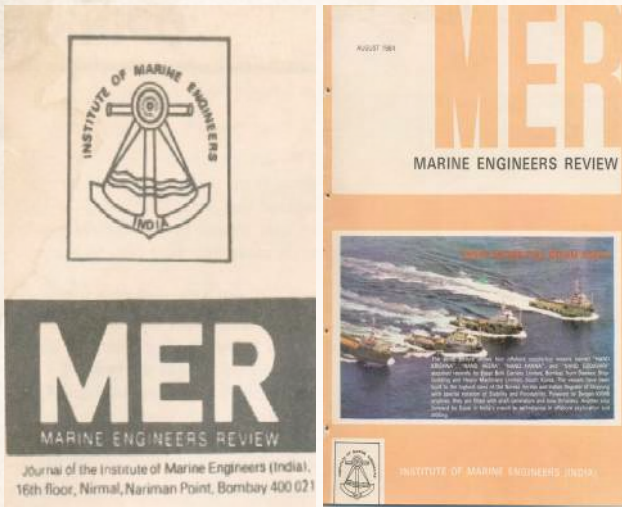
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# Going Astern into MER Archives...



The 'History' column captures the times of the 'first operational aircraft carrier', HMS Furious.

The Transaction section has 'Steering Gear: New Concepts and Requirements' by J. Cowley. Most of the marine engineers would have immersed themselves in the 'Running & Maintenance of marine Machinery' and Cowley would be familiar. The interesting part of the discourse is the single failure criterion, which made a big difference to steering systems. The redundancies required and the optimised options/combinations were a matter of intrigue for the marine engineers. All the Regulations are also projected.

The cherries on top of the icing are the discussions at the end of the Transaction (*Amoco Cadiz* disaster drives a good part). This is a very interesting read.

The Editorial captures few suggestions from a recently-concluded conference on Marine Bunkering organised by Institute of Petroleum in London. The poor quality of fuel, the knowledge of personnel handling the responsibility etc., are the focal areas of concern. While fixing bunker suppliers, at least 5 enquiries must be made and if the Company cannot handle more than it should join with other Companies for the bunker purchase or engage a broker. A Consortium of Companies, particularly for bunker purchases is also proposed. MER would welcome some discussions from Superintendents and marine engineers who have been handling the business of bunker supplies.

The 'Opinion' highlights North Sea Offshore opportunities and how British firms are missing out on them (In Indian shores this is a familiar story). The issue carries an article on the North Sea Offshore Opportunities.

Another interesting article is on technologies for extracting smaller quantities of oils from smaller fields. BP's SWOPS (Single Well Oil Production System) is focussed upon. Marine personnel engaged in offshore operation will certainly find this interesting.

Discussions on RoVs, Tension leg platforms, all pertaining to offshore platforms, follow.

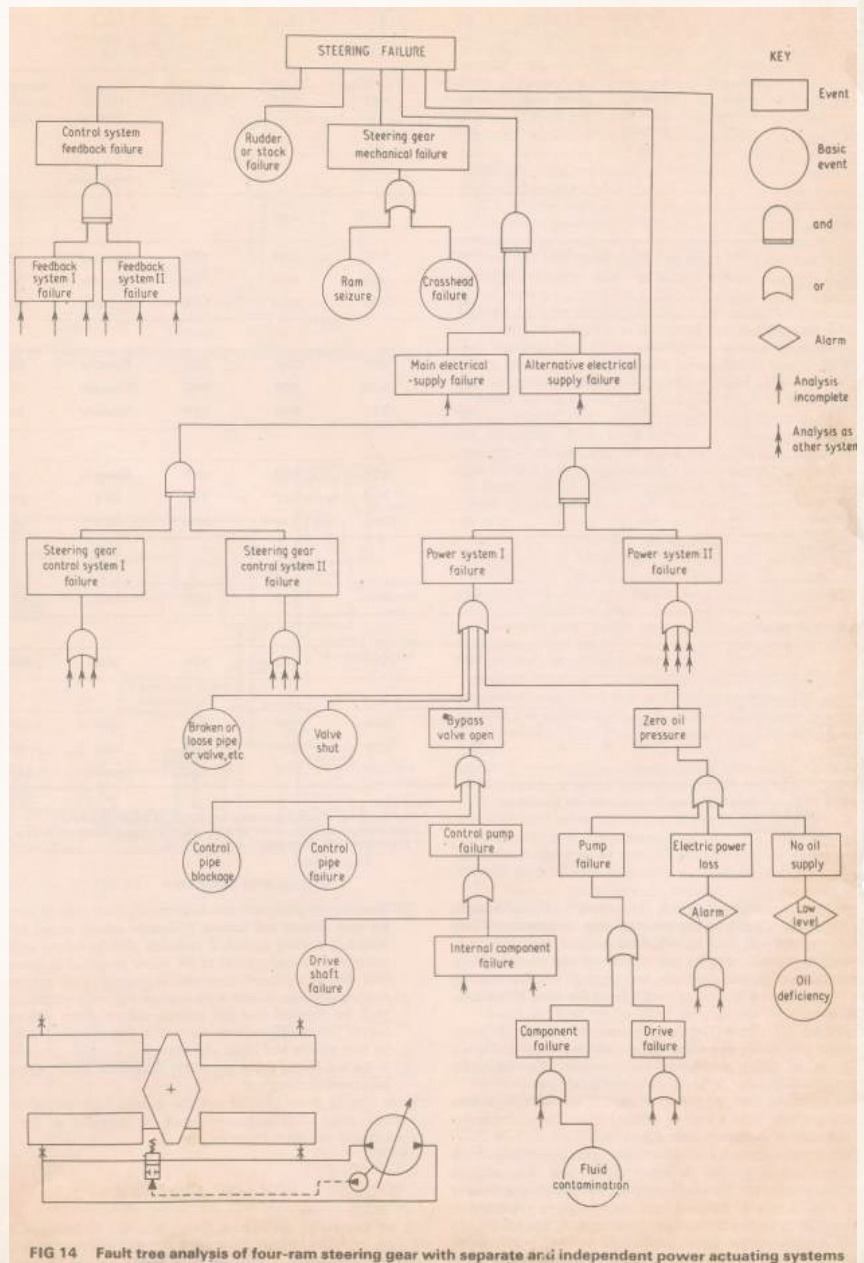


FIG 14 Fault tree analysis of four-ram steering gear with separate and independent power actuating systems

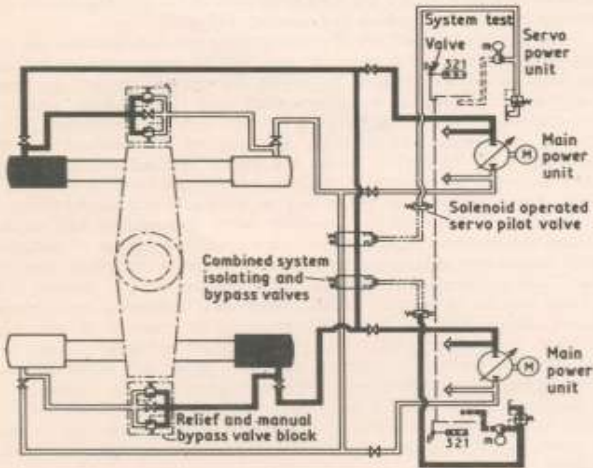
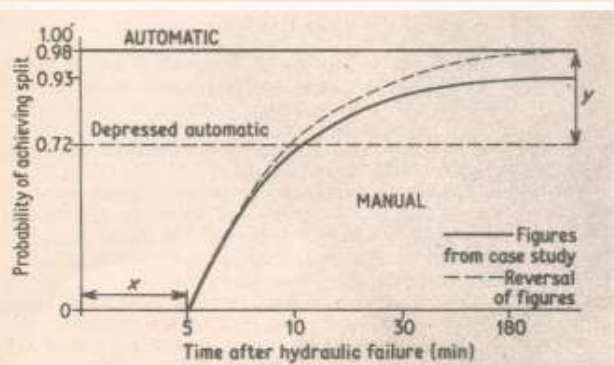
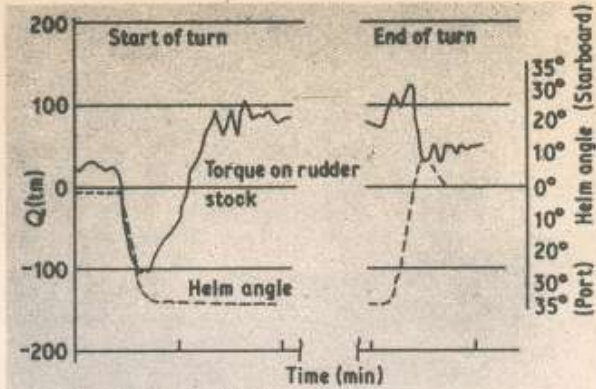


FIG 18 Automatic split system



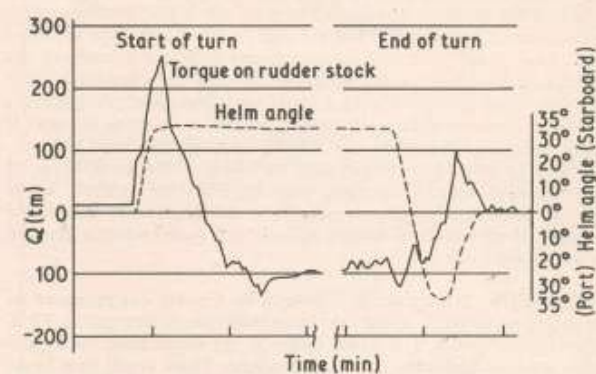
The quick action of the automatic system is the predominant factor in achieving better overall ship safety

FIG 19 Automatic vs. manual split system



Two-pintle rudder; source Ref. 2

FIG 26 Torque transmitted to rudder stock on a 240 000 tdwt fully-laden tanker during full-speed turn to port



Two-pintle rudder; source Ref. 2

FIG 27 Torque transmitted to rudder stock on a 240 000 tdwt fully-laden tanker during full-speed turn to starboard

Table VI: Relationship between predicted and actual failure rate

EQUIPMENT	FAILURE RATES (FAULTS/YEAR)	
	Predicted	Actual
Pneumatic transmitting flowmeter	0.58	0.6
Pressure switch	0.13	0.14
Oxygen analyser	3.3	2.5
Pneumatic valve	0.19	0.25
Temperature trip amplifier	2.8	2.6
Criticality monitor	0.38	0.34
Pulse amplifier	3.4	5
Pulse discriminator	6.1	7.1
Gamma monitor	1.28	0.85

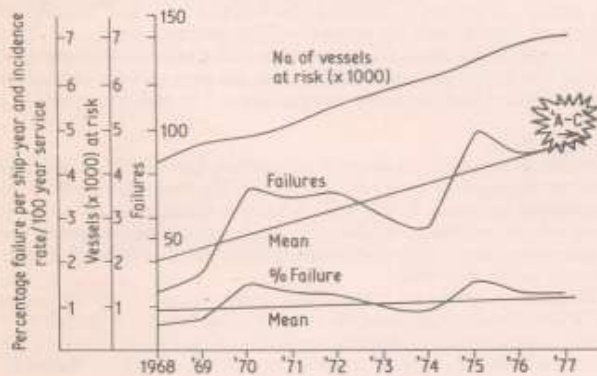


FIG 20 Steering gear defects 1968-1977

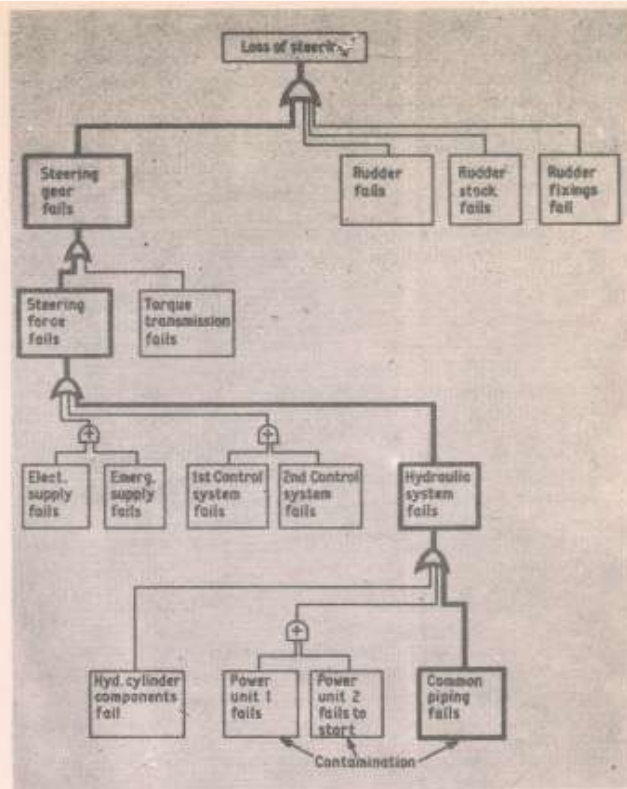


FIG 21 Fault tree analysis

We invite observations, discussion threads from readers, taking cues from these sepia-soaked MER pages. - Hon.Ed.



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