

# Social Aspects of Bangladeshi Seafarers: An Assessment

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**Abstract:** *The goal of this thesis is to give special importance to the unstable social life of seafarers onboard ship or at home town can influence the safety of the ship, and to bring to mind that the seafaring profession needs a global approach to the development of seafarers' living and job conditions. The second chapter is the literature review of my dissertation. Here I discussed about what resources I found related to my study and what are the materials I studied for my work. The resources are mentioned in reference section. The third chapter delineates seafarers' social life in two deferent aspects: onboard ship social life that influenced by human relation, working and living conditions and home-town social life with the difficulties of job insecurity, family and shore isolation and the lack of social security. The Bangladeshi seafarers' situation is highlighted in chapter four with an analysis to evaluate Bangladeshi work force. Finally, the last chapter shows the importance of considering the development of living and working conditions as a global problem, in which the different factors influencing the physical and mental well being of the seafarers are inter-related and recommendations for the better life of seafarers'.*

**Keywords:** Seafarer, social life, vessel, recruitment, working and living conditions

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

A sailor, seaman, mariner, or seafarer is a person who navigates waterborne vessels or assists as a crewmember in their operation and maintenance.-Wikipedia. Bangladesh has long history of seafaring. As we are at the bank of bay of Bengal, it is our great advantage of navigating through sea .According to the department of shipping of Bangladesh there are 13701 seamen working in local & foreign flag vessels.(Government Shipping office, Chittagong, Bangladesh)

The difficulty of ensuring the safety and health of seamen has been for many years and still is a major fact of concern to governments, ship owners and seafarers due to the particular problems inherent in employment onboard ship. Despite the considerable progress that has been made in this area over the years, seafaring is still a risky occupation.

The difficulties to which ship owners and government are exposed are financial or political in nature, but seafarers are unprotected to physical hazards, which threaten their very lives. In the first 6 months of 1996, 180 ships of more than 500 tons have been lost at sea, resulting the death of 1200 seafarers and many passengers. Twice as many human lives were lost at sea in this period than in the whole 1995 (ILO magazine, 1999).

Moreover, the elements of living and working situation onboard, family troubles ashore and home alienation expose the individual to potential health risks and stress. Seafarer's social life is a complex life and it influences his work performance. As a result, maritime countries have a moral international obligation to make sure that the world's seamen enjoy adequate safety standards and proper human working conditions.

The goal of this thesis is to bring on light on the tough life of seafarers onboard ships and how much the majority of

seamen suffer as a result of improper living and working conditions onboard, and how their social life at home town could influence their mind.

Chapter two reflects seafarers' social life onboard ship as well as at home-town. Modern ships, more automation, prolonged stays at ocean, trimming down of crew, rapid changes in climate, continuous working at noise, vibration and heat, improper accommodation for private and common use, job insecurity and staying away from family lead to stress, fatigue and Job dissatisfaction.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

This thesis has been created gradually over a period of one year. On the way, a broad range of different sources of information has been exploited. From October, 2016, I started to meet some of the representatives from the international shipping industry represented in our country, and to look for a suitable area for a fieldwork. Later the same year, I was conducting my first interviews with those this work is about, namely the 'Social aspects of Bangladeshi seafarers: an analysis.

It is not a simple task to perform a typical study of humankind on a category of professionals that live such fluctuating lives as the seamen. The common time span at sea for the ordinary seaman is 6-8 months per year and thus they are home only 4-5 months a year. In order to establish a minimum of continuity in this fluctuating pool of informants, I re-visited some of the informants in between two contracts.

The main fieldwork took place in the Chittagong city, were I visited Bangladeshi seafarers who were back home on vacation. All in all, I stayed for almost a year in Chittagong, during the last half of 2016 and first half of 2017. During this period, I conducted about 40 interviews with returned seafarers. I also gave questionnaire to about 50 seafarers and collected data. The interviews usually took place in their homes or on neutral ground, such as a restaurant. The

majority of those I met were employed by Bangladeshi companies, or had been so in the past.

During my field work I found many seafarers are willing to state their situations and problems. But again there were some who did not want to talk about their problems because they were senior to me and also because of the pride.

Who to visit and interview, was a question I had to ask myself at an early stage in my work. I knew that a lot of seafarers have their home in this Chittagong city, and this definitely proved to be right information. But I also knew that majority of the maritime workers - about 65% to be accurate - were out at sea at all times. What I therefore in total did, was to depend upon the well-known snowball effect - one interview or contact, led to another. In this way I have been introduced to a wide range of people. Still, away from all my interviews took place with people brought to me by this arrangement. During this period I also met several people more accidentally, for example through Bangladesh Marine Academy, or from living in the same neighbourhood as some of them (for example, a former chief mate had his residence only 30 meters from the house I live). I also want to add that I didn't differentiate between the seamen, whether they were officers or ratings, my area of working was more or less the same. Behind this practice, lies the idea of conducting a seaman as a seaman; in the sense that at a specific level of experience, rank can be treated as more or less inadequate. And it is this extensive and shared degree of experience which is the main concern of this thesis.

Again outside Chittagong I only went to Dhaka for a small time and got some interviews' there. So almost all my research is done in Chittagong, which is the home town of most of Bangladeshi seafarers. But they does not represent all the seafarers of Bangladesh.

Another limitation of my study is the opinions of the seafarers. Each one of we seafarers have different view. Their opinions on different issues are totally different from each other. These views mostly differ from each other according to their age, rank, sea time, working companies and many other things. I hardly found any two seafarers giving same opinions on every questions. So my work is not a concrete job and I expressed the views of majority seafarers. So this might vary from any seafarer's individual opinion.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Project

- To describe the social life of seafarers
- To find out the social problems faced by Bangladeshi seafarers
- To bring in attention to the proper authority about the unsecured life of seafarers.
- To find out the solutions of their problems

### 1.4 Research Methodology

- Literature Review
- Interview Method
- Questionnaire Method

### 1.5 Organization of this Report

This thesis follows a manuscript style, each of the predefined objectives are exclusively addressed in a separate manuscript. The thesis consists of five chapters. The main contents of those chapters are given below.

#### • Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter discuss about the issue relating to the background of the thesis objectives, methodology and research structure.

#### • Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter discusses about the previous works done on this topic. There were never any work done on this factor in Bangladesh. So the works of other nationalities have been reviewed.

#### • Chapter 3: Social Life of Seafarers

This chapter describes the social life of seafarers who have two different social lives. One is on board social life and another is life in home town around friends and families.

#### • Chapter 4: Results and Discussions

This chapter is about the findings of my work. Here I pointed out the current situation of Bangladeshi seafarers and analysed them.

#### • Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

Finally, a conclusion on the obtained results is presented. This also includes the novelties within the work, and suggestions for future work.

## 2. Literature Review

At the very beginning of my work I was trying to find out a perfect work field where I can do my research work. When I finally came up with my topic I started collecting the previous works done on Bangladeshi seafarers.

Maritime sector is a very promising sector for our country. But there is not much research work is done on this sector. Especially in Bangladesh the number of thesis done on seafarers is negligible. If I have to tell the truth then actually I haven't found any work on the social life of Bangladeshi seafarers. I found some thesis job done on the life style of a seafarer, which were basically based on either their life on board or the process to improve their quality via various methods. Some works shows the importance of Maritime training for the sea farers. Some shows the working standard on board. I read them. Then I started looking for the works done on other nation's social life of seafarers.

I found some research has been conducted on the seafarers of Egypt, Iran, Philippines, Indonesia and some other countries. These works was about their job problems, relation between working life and social life, views of seafarers about different matters.

Then I started to read the magazines related to seafarers. Our library was a great help to me to find out the new magazines and articles of seafarers. I also read some novels written by Bangladeshi seafarers because I believed that they would reflect the life of Bangladeshi seafarers.

After all this literature review I started the field work to study the life of Bangladeshi seafarers relating their social

life with their life on board and in home town in a structural way. I believe that my work will help to find out the major problems & there possible remedies.

### 3. Seafarers' Social Life

Social environment of the seamen has two major elements. A one element deal with working and living situation on ships and the other is his family away at home town. Both are inter-related. Which one runs the other is something like a chicken and egg problem.

Positive affect of these factors supplies for higher efficiency. Negative affect results in decreased efficiency and increases the risk of accidents and unwell nesses. It is the main task of all those responsible for the betterments of seafarers to reduce, and, ideally, cut out as many negative factors as possible.

#### 3.1 Seafarers' social life onboard ship

The ship for a seaman is both his work and home place for the time of his professional activity. Seafaring is not just a job, it is a way of life. From the moment of departing the home-town the seafarer lives in a closed society with different norms and social values different from those of the outside world. The seafarer faces uncertain weather and climatic conditions, has a residence that is a noisy metal body which vibrates and often is not a secured base but one that is moved and tossed about by uncertain movements. Vessels are an extreme example of a structure that is disconnected from the rest of the world.

##### 3.1.1 Living conditions

In many areas of the world there are ship owners who cut expenses and lower safety, living and working conditions. They are still able to run with relative indemnity. They sail under flags of FOC or developing countries. Most of these ships have a poor track record and it is always the seafarers who suffer. Those situations would not remain if the flag states ratified the conditions of the ship, or if they verified the economical status of the companies.

Lewis (1996) has brought light into the fact that living conditions on ships can be unforgivable, "When the freighter *Dumbravenin* collided in the port of Hamburg with the freighter *Venlo*, no one was surprised to learn that the Captain was drunk. Nor that he had been fighting with two of his officers and would subsequently be charged with criminal offenses. What really shocked officials climbing onboard the detained vessel was the pitiful state of the crew. There were cockroaches in the kitchen. The refrigerator contained rotten meat. The crew had not been paid for several months, and one of their members had fallen ill with malaria".

##### 3.1.1.1 Daily life of seafarers

Chapman (1992) has described the daily life of seafarers as boring and routine. During an usual four-hour shift, the deck officer has usually little to do, while the engineer has to do no more than observe the dials. Deck ratings passes day after day chipping paint and repainting. Periods of jobs are followed by periods of leisure, the rhythm is continued for

days and months. In the same time, as a result of decreasing staffing levels, the boredom and schedule may alternate with work overload, especially on smaller voyages.

Even when ship docked in port does not give rest. The work schedule continues loading and unloading, stores, repairs and attending to paper work and formalities. With very small hours in a port, the seamen often have time to do no more for them than make a phone calls.

Sherar (1972, 10) finds out the differences between life onboard ship and life ashore, onboard ship during the rest hours, there are only a few places to go to. The decks, mess room or another seafarer's cabin, physical space is restricted from stem to stern and from port to starboard. moreover, social interaction is limited to fellow shipmates, regardless whether they are personal friends or not.

Furthermore, in most ships one's privacy must also be divided with a cabin mate. In comparing with people who live on lands and work five days a week, with the facility of taking a day off if needed to walk away from the physical boundaries of home or office. In conclusion, shore people can manage their living and working conditions, but seafarers can not.

##### 3.1.1.2 Accommodation and nutrition

The Director General of ILO (1987) declares that " It has been widely recognized that the quality of accommodation provided for seafarers onboard ship is a primary element of their well-being. And that the quality, quantity and variety of food, and the manner in which it is prepared and served, have a direct bearing on the health of the crew and thus on their efficiency "

##### a) Accommodation

Just as the body needs a proper and balanced diet to reconstitute the power reserves that have been used, it also needs proper rest to overcome accumulated fatigue. To have its full result, rest should be taken in an environment with noise level and temperature that enables total relaxation. The housing is counted as a major factor in recuperation from work fatigue. Noise, vibration, dirty accommodation, high or low temperature counted as disturbance to sleep and also a factor of nervous stress that hampers sleep, the difficulty is even more acute for seafarers on night duty.

##### b) Nutrition

Nutrition is surely important both generally and in connection to work. Good nutrition not only provides to the better welfare and happiness of people but also ensures people to work and produce more. Poor nutrition does restrict productivity, not only in the conventional narrow sense, but also as a result of increased absenteeism, lowered resistance to sickness, lethargy and shortage of drive. It is simple to realize that if the calorie intake does not cope up with the work energy expenditure, the number of total working hours will be reduced. Acute undernutrition is a subtle factor in the reasons of occupational hazards, and has been classified among the factors which may cause fatigue and lessen concentration (Parker, 1997).

Food composition is another factor to be looked for. Food must not just give the energy needed for physical activity, it must also be properly balanced. The human "machine" can not give more than is permitted by the energy intake.

The matter of food and catering for the seamen onboard ship is handled in various ways in various countries. The legislative provisions on the subject differ from extremely detailed regulations giving a lowest list of items to be carried, and specifications regarding the quantity and the quality of each food, to a normal statement to the effect that the ship owner shall give to the seafarers with free food, or subsistence consistent with good maritime practice. In some cases there may be provision for various ration routines according to such points as whether the voyage will go through a cold or a hot climate, or to the different religious practices of the ship members. In some places the subject of food is dealt with collective agreements. In most of these agreements rations are described in details, other agreements are not that specific, merely telling that the employer shall provide proper supplies of good, nourishing and tasty food. Other agreements are given for the payment of a daily provision fee for each ship member.

The shortage of efficient catering crew in some ships demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the useful effects that upgraded nutrition can have on seafarers' productivity and even behavior. Many of the troubles onboard ships are created by bad quality nutrition. Each owner should make a useful effort to make sure the quality and quantity of nutrition and also provide extra calorie intake between meals. This will increase productivity, enhance working capacity and will develop seafarers health status.

### 3.1.1.3 Communication

Communication has taken major importance since the last decade and more so in view of the "mechanized" lifestyle and limited time available to share views. Communication amongst human beings should not be thought as simple. Every human being is full of different experiences. This leads to differed interpretation of spoken or written words. The trouble becomes big issue when the working group is multi-national.

Good communication is important for safe and efficient ship operation, this matter has always been essential but, has become even more so as the new global labor market for seamen has created multi-national crews of different composition. Seafarers are well prepared for the routines and duties onboard ship and they realize the necessity of communication when working together in close contact. The regular argument is that the multi-national crews are not regarded a bad thing, because, after all, many ships are equipped that way without an apparent threat to marine safety. Furthermore, only a very little proportion of serious or fatal accidents at sea can be attributed to language deficiencies (Schroeder, 1999, 80).

On the other hand, communication is a very essential factor influencing the social life onboard ship. Good communication is important for a good social climate and individuals satisfaction, and also excludes a feeling of isolation as part of an individual or groups. Problems in communicating with other crew members smoothly, or in

creating relationships with them may cause alienation. Alienation results in mental alterations and unusual behavior, which may have unwanted consequences. Its for every ship or more precisely every shipping company to keep watching these details while employing people onboard.

### 3.1.1.4 Welfare

The demand of seafarers' welfare at sea and in port constitutes a different item. The seafarer wants, as part of the conditions of his employment, proper welfare facilities catering for his special needs and those of his family. The Director General of ILO In his report (1987) points out that "it is important to recall that the needs of seafarers are changing as a result of longer periods at sea and shorter stays in port, smaller crews and the movement of many major port areas away from city centers to remote berths and terminals, among other factors".

Authority for the welfare of the individual officer or rating during the voyage is often unsure or just not assigned. In the case of obvious emergencies many companies run policies through which a man may be gone home or helped in all kind of different ways if he gets into problem. But the seamen, whether officer or rating, whose trouble have not yet arrived the point of crisis, may get no one onboard ship with whom his trouble can be discussed or explored (Hill, 1972, 66).

While many owners provide adequate facilities onboard their ships, many do not, leaving such matters to the creativity of the crews themselves. The presence or absence of recreational equipment must be stressed in this connection that the massage is often more essential than the usage of the facility itself. The presence of a recreation room or a smoke room may be felt to be an essential demonstration of concern by the owner. Similarly, the permission to bring wives onboard for certain period will be appreciated.

### 3.1.2 Working conditions

In the recent years there has been almost a continual flow of new technological innovations, available to the mariners, making ships quicker and safer, so the troubles faced in seafaring are not as such as they were in the past. In addition the working conditions for ship members onboard the ship have changed significantly over the past decades so far as physical work is concerned. Continuously there has been a shift from physical to mental and psychological stress situations.

The ships are being developed in many respects and the working procedures and means onboard are also changing. The technical improvement in shipping, the mechanization of cargo handling and the automation, as well as the continuously growing ship operation coasts, started a trend to decrease the number of crew on modern ships. More computerization onboard means less crews this often leads to more working hours while onboard, which in turn are mitigated for by longer leave periods ashore. The rhythm of the traffic gets more severe and so does the work. The responsibilities of the crew members also increased in such conditions, when a small mistake by any one onboard can lead to a great catastrophe (Clerc, 1995, 101-103).

Long working hours, unavailable or inadequate rest, repetitive tasks, exhaustion created by heavy physical work, a hostile environment, fatigue and premature aging caused by a fast work speed and the need for instance vigilance, are bad working conditions, which seriously affect seafarer's health, equilibrium and, consequently, productivity. Bad working conditions not only cause work place accidents and diseases, but they are also the resources of tension, fatigue and dissatisfaction resulting to poor health, high absenteeism, rapid seafarers turnover and decreased productivity.

### 3.1.2.1 Work place

As explained by Zakaria (1994) seafaring is a typical international activity and most of the health problems of the people employed on ships in many countries are similar if actually not the same, relating to the working conditions on ships. The jobs of the master, officers on watch keeping duties, are counted as mental strain-jobs. Engine room crews and catering staff go through whenever occupied an extra burden. Deck personnel have working conditions tough in ports during loading and unloading. The seafarers job onboard ships on cold areas or hot areas are open to severe climatic conditions. Voyages during supreme rough sea have their own hazards. An alarming condition arises when the vessel rolls and pitches, disturbing not only scheduled work and sleep but also chances to have accidents are increased as well. Engine room members remains under the effect of a great level of noise and vibrations, which cause occupational mental strain. Moreover, danger comes out from handling oil and grease.

A more human approach to work is important. It is not undertaken that man's most valued possessions, health, physical integrity and even his life living ways, professional skills, and dignity, should be alarmed by his employment. As well as providing for the basic needs of life, job should offer a means of personal achievement. Working situations are not a closed system different from the general environment in which they are located.

### 3.1.2.2 Working hours

The level of hours of work and the way these hours are planned can significantly influence not only the quality of working life but also the quality of life in general. They can affect the health of the seafarer, safety at work, the level of strain and fatigue, the degree of earnings, the amount of free time available and social life of the seafarer.

At sea, the eight hours off spaced by four-hour watch, and then another eight hours off, makes up a man's life. It is in the duty off time that all else must be done: sleep, personal matters, recreation, relaxation, house keeping and any other activities. Seafaring as described by Sherar (1973) is a seven-day job.

The accolade to work is rest, and the accolade to working time is time for rest, for seafarers' safety, health and well being, it is important to manage hours of work so as to provide proper periods of rest, short breaks during working hours, longer breaks for meals, daily or nightly rest and weekly rest.

### 3.1.2.3 Wages

The factors distinguishing whether someone chooses seafaring as a career differ from one to the other and from country to country. Financial reason is one of these factors. Most of seafarers are at sea for financial reasons. Their livelihood depends upon their progress in their occupation.

While pay is seen as fair on the basis of job demands, personal skill level and community pay standards, satisfaction is likely to result. The key issue in connecting pay to satisfaction is the perception of fairness. But, when the pay is on an unfair basis, the seafarers will strive to increase their salaries, and this may endanger their safety and health. Danger money is the better rates for over time that may encourage seafarers to ignore the problems to which they may be exposed.

In recent years, there has been a significant tendency in pay negotiations for employers to attempt to keep a tougher control upon basic wages, compromising instead on leave conditions and over time. Owing to seafaring labor surplus in some countries in national fleets, seafarers have had to accept lower wages; longer working hours, shorter holidays and leave at less frequent intervals, simply to keep their jobs (Clerc, 1985).

### 3.1.3 Human relation

Human relation as defined by Dubrin, (1988), is "The art and practice of using systematic knowledge about human behavior to achieve organizational and personal objectives". Each human being is a different individual and normally, no two people are accurately alike physically and mentally. A personal environmental and culture background affects every person. Therefore, forming a group of people from various cultures attitudes and beliefs in social, religious and political aspects who are then supposed to live and work together can produce a lot of troubles unless these people are ready for their new multi-culture lifestyle.

The human relation theory or idea is based on knowledge that the character of social relationships at work has a deep influence on employee performance. Consequently, having friendly and supportive co-workers leads to increased job satisfaction (Mottram, 1998). The satisfaction of social wants in face to face co-operative relationships with fellow seafarers should become a major goal of the management, as it likely to increase creativity.

Seafarers are people who work on vessels, who travel regularly at ocean. These people have the capability to develop in a highly skilled way of acceptability to make a quick, easy, jovial temporary relationship with those with whom they sail and they value highly the capability to act out more negative feelings by continuously changing ships or companies.

During the voyage the seafarers are very much mixed up with themselves day in and day out. The relationship flows to be kept at a reasonably friendly level, because the seafarers have to work, eat and relax with each others. And even more, and because the sea life is an enclosed society, if they have got something disturbing them, they can keep themselves contained. Most men at sea seem to improve

considerable social skill in managing to maintain relationships just at a level where tension can be stored.

The connection between shipmates, however companionable, has its limitations. The experienced seafarer recognizes this and accepts it. It is comparatively uncommon for groups of seafarers to seek to stay together for voyage after voyage. For the most portion of seamen, the relationship between shipmates is known as being easy going, valued while it lasts but is undoubtedly temporary. In contrast, Hill (1972) believes that, many seafarers come to find their relationships with their fellows on shore increasingly difficult to lack something that they find at sea, they prefer the companionship of their shipmates with whom they feel at least a common bond. Seafarers themselves often stress the value of the mutually supportive comradeship that exists at sea and give all kind of instances of how this differs from the relation between other men, even work mates ashore. Seafarers have a same fortune, they share the same destiny. They have one love, one enemy and they have one home. The sea is their love, while the weather is their enemy and the ship is their home.

The temperament of relationship onboard becomes seriously important both horizontally between shipmates, and vertically between officers of different seniority and, especially, between officers and ratings. But still, the output facts of the hierarchy onboard shall be taken into consideration, and the vertical relations that comes out from it, especially those between ratings and officers. This relationship comes in for complicated criticism, particularly by ratings. Complaints, says Hill (1972), are made about all the minor ways which officer's facilities differ from those given to ratings and particularly focus of resentment is the deferential nutrition quality issue. Officers do not share these kinds of views with the same strength. Although some do express that the social distance between them and ratings is exaggerated and feels the view either that officer/ratings friendships should be encouraged rather than actively discouraged or that ratings have to be treated with more sympathy and understanding. On the other hand, officers are also have knowledge of the difficulties in exercising authority over and maintaining discipline with men with whom they have to live in close enclosure and without having the kind of authority that is present in a military unit.

"Every ship has its own splice" is an old saying, it means that each ship is a reflection of the "old man", or each ship is operated differently, according to the working philosophy and habits of the captain (Sherar, 1973). The system in which the captain of the ship manages his task is universally held to be specifically important and the view is continuously expressed by all ranks that a captain can make or break a ship. It is also universally agreed among seafarers that the master can be either very good or very bad. In general the good master is perceived as one who is not manifestly disturbed in his behaviour, and is able to manage with sensitivity accurately the right balance between firmness and discipline, on the one hand, and friendliness and approachability, on the other hand. The position of the master still requires from him a measure of isolation. And that the ocean can still be dangerous and circumstances can come up when a group of men can find themselves in

detention and danger and requiring a strength of leadership varied from that which they might require in any comparable circumstance at shore.

The important point is that the requirements and stresses of the individual seafarer, whether officer or rating, lean to get lost between those that see him too small and those that see him too much. The seafarer, by this complexation, has to maintain a degree of reticence about his personal matters. It is often told that by his nature the seafarer will always grumble no matter what the circumstances. Nevertheless, particular companies have made determined steps to break down the barriers and distance between officers and ratings, ship and shore. These attempts and trials have been appreciated by those at sea.

### 3.2 Seafarers' social life at home town

A seafarer might come from a vulnerable type of people, have family or health problems, have troubles with community or be faced with economic worries in addition to his job problems. Beyond the work area, stress factors are connected to the seafarers' home life, family and civil responsibilities and duties. Such factors may interact positively or negatively with stressful components of the work environment and thereby influence the over all job quality, satisfaction, creativity and productivity.

#### 3.2.1 Getting a job

Finding a job is one of the major difficulties faced by the seafarers after every vacation. Seafarers sign on for a specific voyage or for a specific length of time and have no surety of another job when the voyage or the specific time is over. By contrast, workers in shore-based jobs can look forward to the possibility of years or even lifetimes of steady employment with the same one company. Some shipping companies have objected to the fixed turnover and have initialized a system of crew continuity so they can be made sure of having the same work force.

Seafarers, especially those from the developing countries, become unemployed when their contracts or specified voyages are over. They cannot be sure of returning to the same ship in the same position. Many have to start a job search all over again. And due to the waiting periods between jobs are almost always long, during the unemployed time, they have to stretch their earning, and during the months when they are under articles, they are bound to try to save in anticipation of the long months of jobless time. Most overseas seafarers are unable to manage the capital they need, forcing them to take loans between jobs against expected earnings. Many workers are financial hostages to a life at sea.

Employment policies cause seafarers great difficulties. When seafarers are in demand, recruiters normally offer decent terms, when there are more seafarers than posts, recruiters tries to take advantage of the seafarers who are available. What choices do seamen have when they are in open and direct competition with other seafarers willing, for the sake of a job, to accept poor terms and conditions. Finding a job is both troublesome and expensive.

The worst abuse a employing or recruiting agent can perpetrate is as Chapman (1992) points out, to send a worker to a job that does not exist. Seafarers reach in a foreign port with documents, telexes supposedly from ship owners, and a letter of agreement only to find out that the agreement is fiction, not real. And even more usual abuse is to promise seafarer terms of an employment which is not present.

### 3.2.2 Family problems and shore alienation

Isolation from family and community is another ongoing reason of stress for seafarers, and most experience free-floating tensions about life at home. On average, the contract on sea going ships is for a longer period of time now than it was in the recent past. Long term contract makes family, community and interpersonal life not maintainable. It is not just that a seafarer goes away and comes back home again, but when he is away from home he is completely absent and often not available, even in an extreme emergency. All the odds are against the seafarer: time, distance, the months of separation, the loss of contact and the loss of communication (Sherar, 1973). These experiences are totally unknown to the shore side people and represent an alternation between to similarly extremes. In his book about the seafaring career Hill (1973) mentions how a wife of a seafarer describes her husband presence and absence as "we are never on an even keel. He comes home it is all joy and a holiday atmosphere and then he goes away and it's all doom and gloom, until he comes again"

An usual device is for the seafarer to distinguish between his home life and his ship life in two compartments inside himself so as not to experience an intolerable fight between the two. For this matter of fact some seafarers are, while onboard, reticent about discussing about their families to others. Coming towards home at the finishing of the voyage it is not so easy to keep up the isolation and the resultant tension and irritability.

As time passes on the seafarer feels increasingly distant from his friends, possibly they are married and have a new life. While, he has not, they have become more contained in their own affairs. He comes to feel aware of an increasing sense of separation from his shore side friends and often on a long leave easily gets itchy feet at a very short period of time and wants to go back to sea again, a seaman on land is like a fish out of water.

Once a seafarer does get married, the stresses on his wife can be considerable, especially if she is unsupported in carrying them. The young wife finds that she became lonely, isolated, wanting her husband, having to tolerate long absence and perhaps above all the unsurely of leave. Early marriage is in this view is subject to stresses that are intolerable. Regular small voyages often help, as does also the permission of taking the wife on a voyage. Officers occasionally summon their wives to accompany them, but working wives almost every time cannot afford the time, others with children make it impossible, and some find the time at sea so boring that they prefer to remain at home (Fricke, 1972).

With the addition of children, the wife as a mother has to maintain herself with quite new responsibilities, often

completely on her own, or is put into a situation in which she has increasingly to depend on relatives, rather than her husband. The seafaring husband may feel guilty that he is avoiding or not fulfilling his duties, not to able to take care of his children or offer support during a family emergency, cause serious stress.

A vigorous impact on the seafarer happens when his children grow and may not recognize him, stay away from him in terror or at the end of the vacation plead with him not to return to the sea. As the children grow older, it may also become important that they need a father, specifically in case of growing boys, and the attempt suddenly to take over authority in the relatively brief period of a vacation and then drop it again may not always be appreciated or in the child's best interests.

When seafarers are not home for long times, the family learns to function without them. So when they come, their role at home is unclear and they feel awkward. Having suffered from homesickness while on board, they soon look forward to get back to the ship, where their role is well defined and essential. The seafarer feels unknown and unwanted when he comes ashore, the life has already gone on without him and it's not going to wait to suit him into it, when he comes ashore it is leave time for him and nobody else. Often this is a part of bitter truth of loneliness of seafarers.

### 3.2.3 Social security

The working and living conditions of seafarers are varied from those of shore laborers. In addition to the hazards to which all persons are most likely to open, there are a number of other specific maritime hazards against which seafarers must be protected. Social security as defined by Higuchi is: "A set of organized measures furnished by society to its members in prescribed contingencies or circumstances. The purpose of which is, as far as possible, to prevent the occurrence of contingencies involving a suspensions, loss or substantial reduction of income, and when they do occur, to provide benefits in cash and kind against the consequences of those contingencies and facilitate the victim's physical and vocational rehabilitation. It is also to provide benefits for the maintenance of children" (ILO, 1983, 61)

During the past decade the social security protection of seafarers has improved in a number of developed, structured and developing countries (ILO, 1987). National social security policies in some countries are increasingly developing their coverage to seafarers, and their dependents, providing them protection either of a normal nature or in respect of specific contingencies. Even so, ship owners' liability, the traditional resource of protection of a seafarer who becomes sick or falls into injuries, remains an important component in the social protection of seafarers. Especially as regards a sick or injured seafarer that is landed in a foreign country, and more usually, as regards seafarers recruited in some developing countries where social maritime security is not available for seafarers. Many seafarers find themselves discriminated of protection either completely or in respect of specific contingencies during intervals between periods of recruitment at sea, which are not ensured by a contract of employment. In addition, the

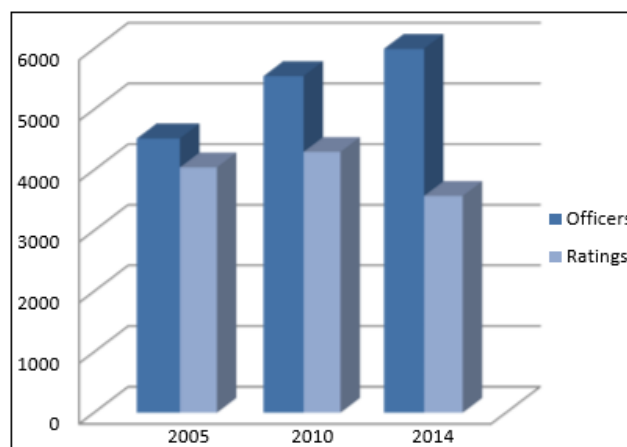
growing number of seafarers on ships registered in countries other than their own has given rise to another area of problems in social security coverage.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Bangladeshi Seafarers situation

Bangladesh maritime sector has a long history and maturity. One of the biggest river networks, one of the largest bays, biggest delta, longest sea-beach, prehistoric wooden shipbuilding heritage, and development of our ocean-going ship building industries - with all of these, Bangladesh is spontaneously a maritime country (Hussain, 2011). At present Bangladesh is a category “b” member of the IMO Council along with nine other states with the largest interest in the international seaborne trade (IMO, 2014d). It is argued that Bangladeshi seafarers have made it possible to be in that category (Ahad, 2013). Bangladesh has a long

tradition of producing professionally sound & skilled maritime worker. The history of seafaring in Bangladesh starts from back to the British colonial period when they made a good impression in British and other foreign flag vessels for their hard work and sincerity. During British rule in the first half of the twentieth century, over 50,000 seafarers from Bangladesh were sailing on different foreign sea-going ships, but with the improvements of technology the number reduced dramatically. Thereafter, during the Pakistan period, and now in independent Bangladesh, the government operated Bangladesh Marine Academy, established in 1962, created good reputation to the Hong Kong and Singapore based shipping companies for making quality merchant marine officers. However, due to different obstacles and limitations, seafaring as an occupation has not flourished in the country. As shown in figure 4.1, there are a total of approximately 6,000 officers and 3,574 ratings in Bangladesh.



**Figure 4.1:** Number of seafarers in Bangladesh, Source: BIMCO-ISF Manpower updates (2005) & (2010) and Government Shipping Office (2014).

### 4.2 International competitiveness of Bangladeshi seafarers'

With the facilities of open registries and the perceived opportunities, mostly economic and political benefits of ship owners, multinational crewing is a regular practice in today's shipping. In operation, the ship owners take decision on the overall manning systems and manage through their onward connections with the manning agencies and marine officer producing institutions. These practices have made an international labour market, which has created huge recruitment possibilities for seafarers in many developing countries including Bangladesh. Notwithstanding such job possibilities, employability of seafarers can be influenced by various external and internal factors. Thus, all such factors concerning to Bangladeshi seafarers are discussed in this chapter.

#### 4.2.1 External factors-Understanding the Bangladeshi seafarers in foreign affairs and economy

The international job context of seafarers' affects how employable the seafarers from a specific country would be

counted in the labor market. The external factors that have effect on the attraction of Bangladeshi seafarers are firstly explored. The document analysis was carried out and the following external factors were pointed out in relation to the attraction of Bangladeshi seafarers:

- Manning cost
- Economic situation of seafaring officers supplying countries
- Living cost and exchange rate
- Visa restriction to certain countries
- Occasional desertion

##### 4.2.1.1 Manning cost

Manning cost influences a large percentage of the total cost of the vessel which differs greatly by the crew nationalities, payment package, service condition, and crew size on board ships as well as the number of standby crew members. Figure 4.2 shows that the crew cost influences 60 percent for handy size, 48 percent for cape size bulk carrier, 28 percent for Aframax tanker, and 19 percent for VLCCs (Ma, 2013).



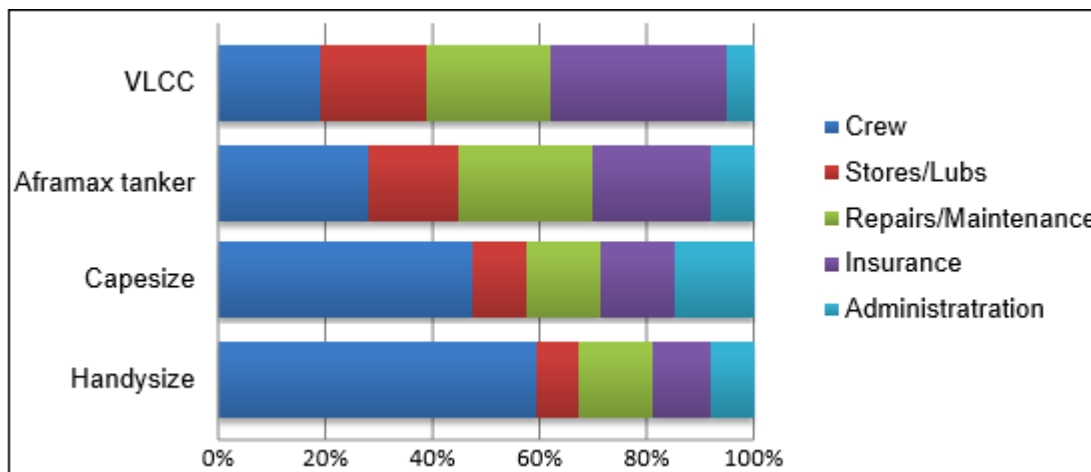


Figure 4.2: Structure of operating cost (%), Source: Ma (2013)

Besides the national law and regulation, recruitment practice, and living standards of the country of the crew are used as the main affecting factors of the crew cost levels. By asking the optimal connection between high quality crew and less costly crew, multinational crew is favored in most ships, especially when it is about the officers (Galic et al.,

2012, p.36). This practice is reflected by the decreasing of OECD countries (Figure 4.3). However, the quality of seafarers is not directly connected to the nationality; it develops by training, experience and competencies (Wagtman & Poulsen, 2009).

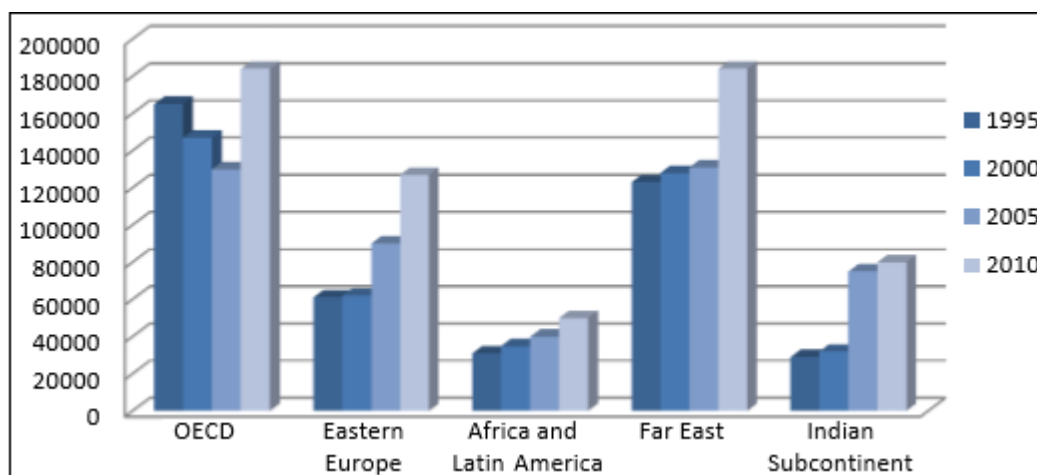
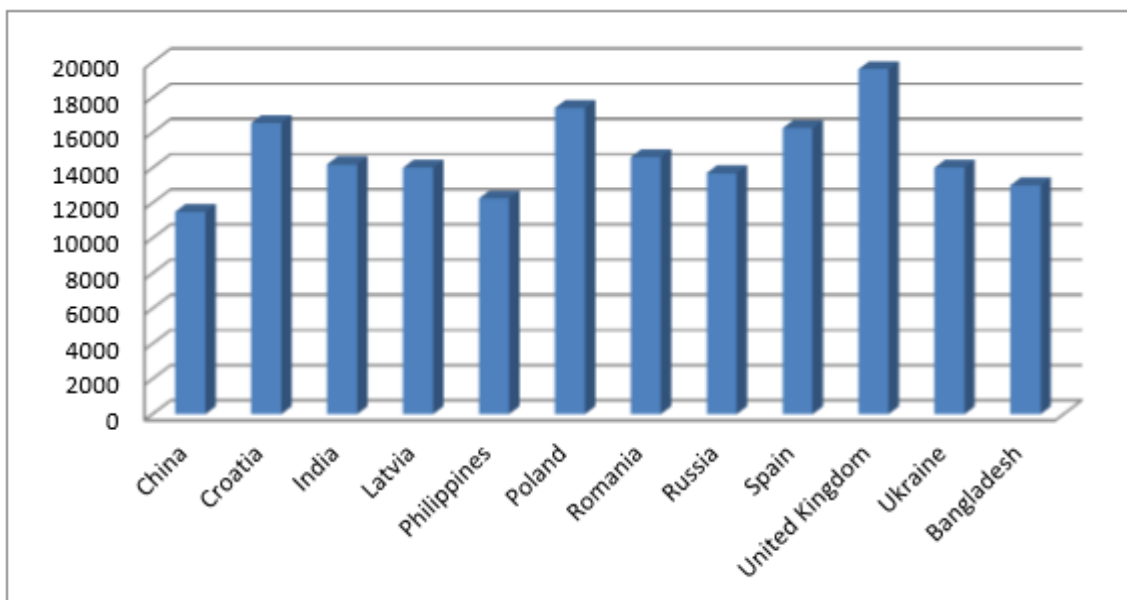


Figure 4.3: Area wise manpower update 1995-2010, Source: BIMCO/ISF Manpower Update (1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010). It is mandatory to state that German ship-owners are trying to make a deal with the government to cut the cost of recruiting the EU seafarers. German Ship Owners’ Association says that European seafarers are very costly, and said “When you add up the cost of employing four or five Europeans on board, it is unbearable” (Telegraph, 2014, p.14). Similarly, the Danish flagged fleet has passed 15m DWT for the first time with a total of 637 ships, and the Danish Seafaring Officers Union complained that the number of Danes employed in the fleet is falling steadily (Telegraph, 2014, p.15).

Therefore, employing seafarers from developing countries is seen as an economic advantage by shipping companies. Bangladesh as a seafarers supply country is in good position from this discussion, as ESCAP (2003) states, besides proficiency and hard-working ability, Bangladeshi seafarers are satisfied with less wages in comparison to seafarers from developed countries. These proofs justify the fact that Bangladeshi seafarers could be a great choice for ship owners, provided all other conditions are met.

**4.2.1.2 Economic situation of seafarers supply countries**

The MLC 2006 requires contracts of recruitment or recruitment contracts to be in place, wherein there is a appropriate wage or salary level, supported by realistic fringe benefits which includes standby pay, sick pay, and in certain instances, economic assistance towards certificate study leave.



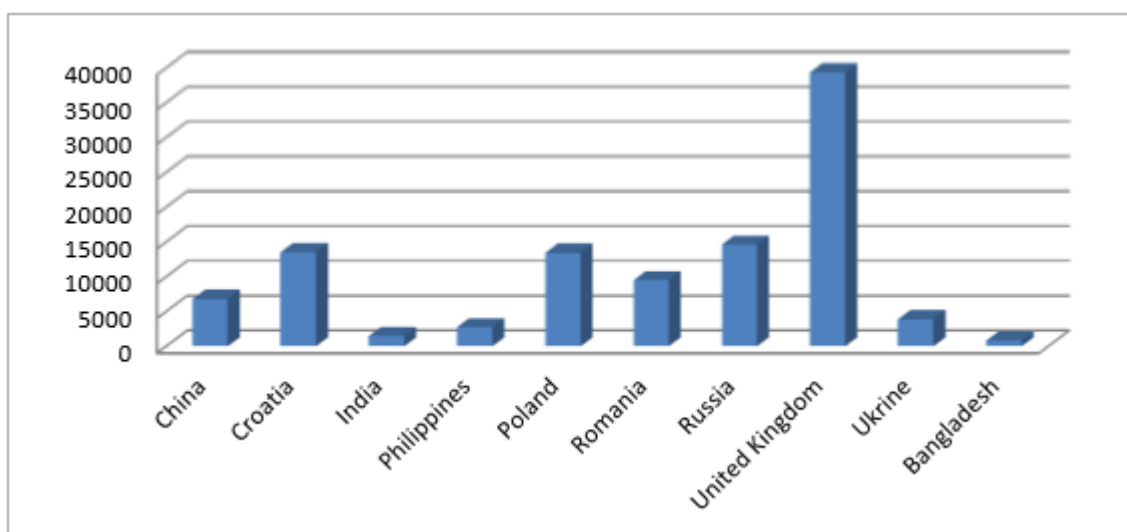
**Figure 4.4:** Comparison in wages between major seafarers supply countries with that of Bangladesh, Source: Drewry report (2014, p.70), and Reliance Shipping Services, Bangladesh (2014)

Despite International Labour Organization (ILO) setting the industry benchmark of salary rates, the supply of and demand for seafarers as well as other market factors create an impact on overall manning cost. Figure 4.4 shows the comparison of average wages for a Master in a tanker vessel. It displays a significant variation; highest for UK master mariners at USD19,600 and among the lowest China at USD11,500 and Philippines at USD12,250 (Drewry report, 2014, p.70). Direct costs in manning influencing wages, travel and onboard victualing allowance, while indirect costs include employment, selection and processing, medical tests, duration of contract, training, communication and bank charges, crew accident insurance coverage and agency fees. The average wages for a Bangladeshi master in a tanker vessel is normally between USD 12,500 to USD 13000 (Reliance Shipping Services, Bangladesh, 2014).

Bangladeshi seafaring officer’s salary is generally slightly higher than that of Philippines and slightly less than that of Indians. In this context, Bangladeshi seafarers remain highly competitive in salaries in the international labour market.

**4.2.1.3 Living cost and exchange rate**

Living costs and the exchange rate is another essential affecting factor that points out the competitiveness in recruit ability. For example, the number of Japanese ocean-going seafarers drastically decreased, when the Japanese Yen became less powerful against the US dollar after the Plaza accord of 1985 (ESCAP,2003, p.157). Also higher living cost needs to be shown in salaries; therefore, shipping companies do not like to recruit seafarers from the countries where living cost is comparatively high.



**Figure 4.5:** Comparison of GDP per capita in 2013, in major seafarers supply countries with that of Bangladesh, Source: World Bank (2013)

Figure 4.5 relates the GDP per capita in USD of the biggest seafarers supply countries with that of Bangladesh. The

highest GDP per capita was UK which is indicated USD 39,351. On the other hand, the lowest GDP per capita was

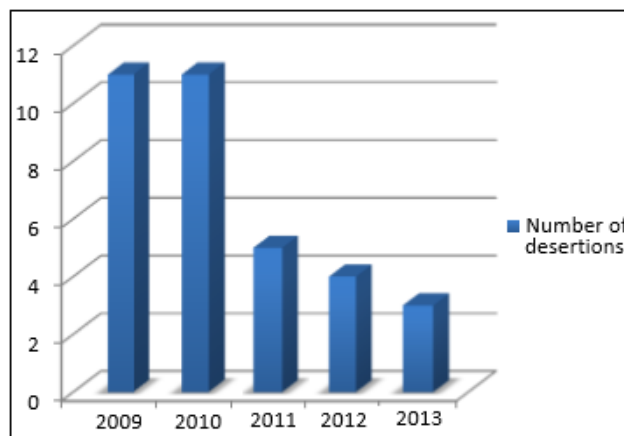
recorded in India is USD 1,499. In comparison, the GDP per capita in Bangladesh is USD 829 (World Bank, 2013). These figures let us know that the overall financial degree in Bangladesh is even lower than that in India. It indicates that Bangladesh can supply cheaper labor force to the competitive business markets, such as shipping, and there is a very big potential that Bangladesh could be one of the main seafarers supply country in the upcoming days.

#### 4.2.1.4 Visa restriction to certain countries

Visa restriction to some specific countries may create a serious difficulty to Bangladeshi seafarers as they often have to join or sign off from ships in foreign ports. The 9.11 accident in the USA had strongly set back the recruitment of Bangladeshi seafarers. Especially the imposition of visa restriction by the USA and Singapore during that time caused the loss of recruitment of many Bangladeshi seafarers. It brought an alarming concern to the Bangladesh

government as well as the seafaring community over the upcoming scope of recruitment of Bangladeshi seafarers. Relating to the neighboring countries, there is an unwanted long waiting period before Bangladeshi seafarers get visas to join the vessel where the works are offered. Such a prolonged waiting period, in fact, has a great impact on the employability, because it is often not possible to say the exact time when seafarers are requested to travel and join the ship because of the nature of shipping. The port locations where Bangladeshi seafarers generally join or leave ships are, for example Singapore, UAE, the EU countries and the USA. The Department of Shipping (DOS) in Bangladesh has come up some initiative through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to raise an awareness with relevant authorities in these specific countries. The result is yet to be seen. With all these steps, it is the expectation that seafarers will be provided with all possible help to join and leave the ships as well as repatriation to the country.

#### 4.2.1.5 Occasional desertion



**Figure 4.6:** The number of desertions by Bangladeshi seafaring ratings between 2009 and 2013, Source: Government Shipping Office (2014)

Figure 4.6 shows the amount of desertions by Bangladeshi seafaring ratings. The good news is that there is continuous decrease in number of desertions. In addition, there is no report of desertion by any officer in recent years. However, Bangladesh have to address this issue with more dedication through adequate education and training of the seafarers so as to make up ethical values and clear realization of the consequences of such desertion. Moreover, in discussion with the foreign shipping companies further tight and strict rules can be adopted.

#### 4.2.2 Internal affairs

Although the administrative thrust has always been to advertise Bangladeshi seafarers in the international market, there are some specific internal issues which influence the employability of Bangladeshi seafarers. Apart from inadequate number of national fleet, most of the internal factors arise from improper maritime training system of the country. The following issues are analyzed in the next sections:

- Insufficient number of national fleet;
- Application of quality standards system in maritime training;

- Assessment and certification system;
- Qualifications and experience of instructors and assessors; and
- Competency based training and assessment.

##### 4.2.2.1 Current situation of national fleet

Fund constraints, high operation cost and poor freight have widely affected the fleet strength of the government-owned firm, "The Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC)". There is a remarkable reduction of the BSC fleet over the years, and at the latest figure, the company has only 13 vessels at the average age of 30 (BSC, 2014). This has remarkably decreased the recruitment opportunities of Bangladeshi seafarers on national carrier. However, the company is in the process of adding 8 new ships by 2016 (Daily Ittefaq, 2014). In addition, the private sector in Bangladesh made a noticeable improvement in shipping business over the years, and they presently own a total of 65 foreign-going ships. These can be taken as a chance for Bangladeshi seafarers to have some primary experience on Bangladesh-registered ships, and thereafter with enough skills and experiences, they can look for a recruitment opportunity in foreign companies where the wages and salaries are much higher.

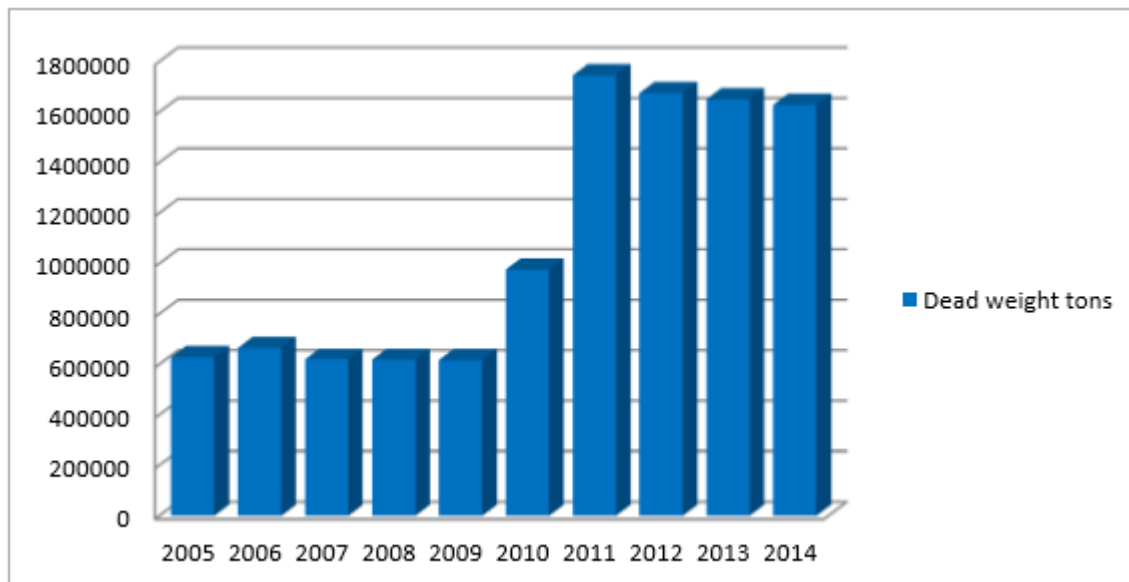


Figure 4.7: Bangladesh merchant fleet in deadweight tons (2005-2014), Source: UNCTAD (2014)

Figure 4.7 shows the total fleet size of Bangladesh national fleet in dead weight tons. There was a sharp rise in dead weight between the years 2009-2011 due to the private sectors improvement in shipping business. However, a gradual decrease is visible from 2012. A wealthy national fleet is of utmost preference for Bangladesh from the seafarers' recruitment perspective.

#### 4.2.2.2 Application of quality standards system in maritime training

Of the many changes made into the STCW convention over the years, the importance for a quality standards policy has had the greatest impact upon maritime training institutions. Figure 4.8 displays STCW convention Regulation I/8, section A-I/8 and B-I/8 requires all applicable provisions of the STCW convention and Code to be conducted by the quality standards system. In regard to MET, quality assurance can be interpreted as meaning fitness for the purpose to achieve stated objectives (Fisher & Muirhead, 2013, p.14)

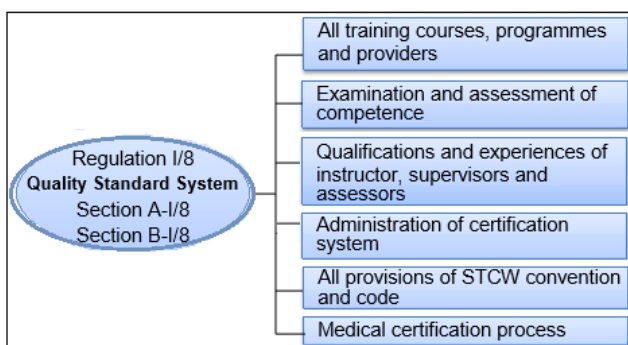


Figure 4.8: Coverage of Quality standard system, Source: IMO (2011)

However, maritime training institutions and Department of Shipping very often not been able to comply with this provision. DOS was unable to 'communicate the

information'<sup>11</sup> with IMO, in given time, the essential evaluation report in accordance with quality standards provision that include changes in national regulations and steps in compliance with the amendments to the Convention and STCW code. They submitted the report of 2009 in 2013; that too did not cover many important facts of the relevant quality matters. Furthermore, the Department of Shipping not only failed to communicate but also displayed with failure that their own quality standard system is non-functional. The above facts were published with complete description in Bangladeshi national daily (Prothom-alo, 2014a), made a devastating impact upon the Bangladeshi seafaring community as they became afraid of losing their recruitment due to non-recognition of their certificate of competency in future. Department of Shipping is aware of the upcoming difficulties and taking necessary steps.

Concerning the institutions, in most cases, the internal audit seemed to be almost non-functional and the external audit by the Department of Shipping is also found to be insufficient. For example, in Bangladesh Marine Academy the internal audit does not take place at regular interval. Regarding external audit, Department of Shipping very oddly visits the institutions, but in almost every cases those visits do not cover the full range of quality standards policy. In addition, government institutions do not have any experience of external evaluation by classification societies or similar institutions. Keeping all these factors in mind, the marine institutions in Bangladesh are normally not in full and complete accordance with the quality standards system.

In the mean time, there are some prospects in the institutions of Bangladesh. It is to particularly state that Bangladesh has been placed in the white list of IMO in 2000. In addition, the Bangladesh maritime training system is approved by

<sup>1</sup>STCW'78, as amended regulation I/8 „Quality standards system“ requires a report containing the results of the evaluation shall be communicated to the Secretary-General in accordance with format specified in section A-I/7 of the STCW code.

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)<sup>2</sup>. EMSA on behalf of the European Commission stated the Bangladesh Marine Academy and similar institutions in Bangladesh in 2008, and recognized the MET of Bangladesh in 2011 after rectification of the observations (EMSA, 2014)

#### 4.2.2.3 Assessment and certification system of seafarers

Bangladesh followed the British system of assessment and certification, and was proud of keeping high standards. But over the years, the country did not upgrade its assessment and certification policy; depends too much on assessing memorized knowledge only. There is barely any system to assess the understanding and proficiency as emphasized in STCW'78 as amended. The assessment policy seems to have gradually lost its accountability due to inadequate assessment method as well as the shortage of properly qualified assessors.

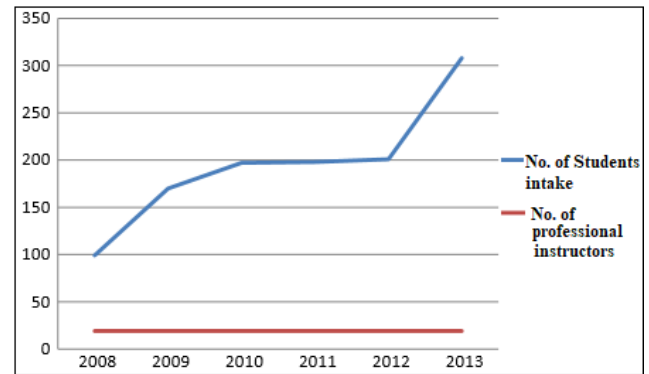
In terms of assessors, Department of Shipping has two assessors in each department, i.e. nautical and engineering branch. In addition to their other duties, Nautical Surveyors are operating written examination of 1500-1800 candidates per year, while the yearly numbers for Engineer Surveyors are close to 1200. Furthermore, relying on the passing rate in the written examination, the same Surveyors have to take the oral examination of till a large number of seafarers.

Lefrancois (2000) explains that assessment gives an insight to whether the objectives of the system were met and if trainee developed the required skill and knowledge. And the objective of assessor is to dependably determine the competencies or shortage of competencies of an examinee when assessed against a prescribed benchmark (Van Barkel, 1998, p.6). Therefore, the analysis of the situation suggests that with such a small number of assessors and limited resources, and without adequate method; the objectives of the assessment would not be achieved.

#### 4.2.2.4 'Appropriately qualified and experienced'<sup>33</sup> instructors and assessors

In regard of instructors, the department members are the heart of any educational institute, and there should be enough number of instructors with competencies, acquiring all relevant curricular areas with adequate qualifications. Duderstadt (2011, p.5) explained faculty members as the most necessary internal constituency of an educational organization, since the quality and competency of this body, more than any other factor, declare the quality of the institution. Since 2008, there has been a noticeable increase in number of trainees in Bangladesh Marine Academy. During the year of 2008-2013, the number of intake per year had suddenly increased from 100 to 300. However, as

shown in the Figure 4.9, the number of instructors has not been raised in line with that of cadets.



**Figure 4.9:** Increase in cadets' intake with the same number of professional instructors, (2008-2013), Source: Bangladesh Marine Academy (2014b).

#### 4.2.2.5 'Competence based'<sup>44</sup> training and assessment

In competence-based training, output of the learning is determined first, and activities and training contexts are arranged. The Bangladeshi training institutions not fully capable of the competence-based training system. For example, the ancillary and different safety courses are primarily taught in accordance with relevant IMO model courses. As the IMO model courses give a sample framework only, it is not adequate simply to follow what they are written. The course design concept based on competence-based learning and assessment have to be in place in order to gain the effective training system in the country.

For certification purposes, Department of Shipping arranges the assessment of seafarers, but they do not have any type of preparation or knowledge storage to carry out assessment using laboratory equipment or simulators. Moreover, Bangladeshi institutions traditionally depend on written and oral examination as a primary assessment system. Therefore, the proof of one's competency cannot be properly pointed out. Furthermore, STCW section A-I/6 requires the certificate of competency courses be prepared in accordance with written learnings. These main components should be clearly connected to the training objectives and learning outputs, required for each qualification. Without having adequate number of instructors and sufficient training facilities, it is a challenge for Bangladeshi institutions to find out how particular persons can apply the knowledge and skills and display ability to demonstrate tasks, duties and responsibilities in a safe and effective way.

The analysis of the current situation of Bangladeshi seafarers suggests both opportunities and challenges in terms of their recruiting chances in the international labor market. While developing the external factors at the government level, there are rooms for training institutions to enrich the quality of education and training. If we can take proper measure both the external and internal difficulties can be removed for the betterment of Bangladeshi seafarers.

<sup>2</sup>EMSA has the legal background of STCW'78 as amended, regulation I/10 „Recognition of certificates“, EMSA founding regulation 1406/2002 as amended and directive 2008/106/EC, as amended

<sup>3</sup>STCW'78 as amended, regulation I/6, section A-I/6 set the requirements of having instructors, supervisors and assessors appropriately qualified, although did not provide any specific definition. See Vessel Traffic Service Manual of International association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities, France, <http://www.iala-aism.org> for a definition.

<sup>4</sup>The mandatory standards of competence are laid down in the STCW code „A“ table A- II/1, II/2, II/3, III/1, III/2 and III/6.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The seafarer has an unusual social life that is the outcome of living two different lives. The first one is the onboard ship life, where the seafarer passes a long time working and staying away from home in an abnormal environment. It is differentiated by working conditions, which are worsened by rough and tough environmental factors. Moreover, the living situations vary from these at home in nutrition, residence and human relations. In addition, at sea, differentiation between work and recreation is not as available as on shore.

The second one is the home town life, where the seafarer is expected to enjoy family life, take part in the family recreational outings and normally relax before return to sea, the confusion is always happened and the seafarers are open to a various types of stresses which are related to his family conditions. Especially if they are not secured and covered by a social protection system. In addition, the seafarer faces a major difficulty to find a job after his leave period.

It was pointed out that in many aspects the pattern of modern shipping has deleted many of the former aspects of seagoing life that were so attractive. Furthermore, with the reduction of pay and leave, the shrinking of crews and the less enjoyable conditions in work onboard ships, many seafarers suffer from loneliness, stress, fatigue and other psychological problems, made all the worse by the unsure situation surrounding their recruitment prospects.

As far as maritime labor legislation concerned, its progress in Bangladesh, as one of the developing countries, has been affected by several factors, the more significant ones of which are:

- Living and working conditions of the labor force in average are comparatively not good.
- The small number of seafarers' work force, which does not display a major power to affect government decisions to ratify and implement the international labor conventions.

It was found that the vast majority of ILO conventions which are linked to seafarers have not been ratified.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Developing countries have the responsibility to ratify, implement and enforce ILO conventions relating seafarers' social life either onboard or at home, as the human, welfare of seafarers would widely enrich the safety of life at sea.

Seafarers' unions are very important to observe and control working and living situations under which seafarers are performing their work, as a particular worker is at a total disadvantage in fighting to negotiate fair terms with a corporation. The Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers Association should be fully supported by the authority in order to perform its task, and should be financially

strengthened by measures of government subsidy and ship owners' charity.

Seafarers welfare should be enriched in a number of areas, such as better communications between seafarers and their families at home, connections with their home communities through the development of radio and television services, and the provision of a larger range of educational services onboard ship.

Crew residence should include not only sleeping and messing facilities or cabins, but also a number of other facilities as well, such as recreation rooms, libraries, gymnasiums and cinemas or video rooms.

A social security coverage should be introduced to all Bangladeshi seafarers whether onboard Bangladeshi flag ships or onboard other flags and to their dependents. This coverage will enable seafarers to come out from their fears for job unpredictability and their tensions about their families.

The length of time at sea should be decreased to the minimum acceptable period, complying to negotiations between seafarers' union and ship owners, to allow seafarers to take part in the life of the society and the family. This reduction will work in decreasing stress resulting from home isolation.

The shipping community should be aware of the difficulty that, too much negative stress can harm both particular person and their work performance, its resources should be available to help recruits deal with stress by introducing some type of positive program. Such as seafarers assistance programs that give opportunities to help seafarers whose performance has declined because of distracting personal difficulties.

All that now remains, at the finishing of my thesis, is to express the hope that this piece of work will, in turn, spread the sentence that changes to develop living and working conditions are possible and give rise to situation changing action.

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### Appendix 1

#### Interview Questions:

- What is the name of your shipping company and its nationality?
- What is your rank now?
- How many days have you been sailing?
- What do you think about your profession?
- How about your social life on board?
- Are you satisfied with the living and working conditions on board?
- If not, what are the facts that you like and what you don't like?
- Do you feel unsecured about your job?
- Does your salary satisfy you?
- What are the social problems you face in your shore life?
- Do you feel awkward in your family?
- Do you think due to your profession you can not give social security to your family?
- What is the average vacation do you take between your voyages?
- Do you think this social problems can be solved?
- What are your suggestions about this matter?

### Appendix 2

#### Questionnaire

Chittagong January 2017

**Please be sure of the information you write down. The questions you will answer depend on your latest article of agreement.**

#### 1) General information

- i- Shipping company name:
- ii- Shipping company nationality:
- iii- Job title (rank):
- iv- Ship type
  - Cargo
  - Passenger
  - Tanker
  - Others
- v- Contract duration
  - Voyage contract
  - Time contract
- vi- Voyage duration
  - Short (till 2 months)
  - Long ( till 9 months and over)
- vii- Name ( if you wish)

#### 2) Social life onboard

##### 2.1 Working conditions

- i- How many working hours per day? .....hours
- ii- Is there any over time hours required? Yes.....No.....
- iii- Is the over time hours required on a regular basis? Yes .....No.....
- iv- Do you paid for that over time hours? Yes .....No.....
- v- Is your salary satisfy your needs? Yes .....No.....
- vi- How many days vacation per contract? .....days
- vii- Do you get your vacation, or ask for it, in time? Yes.....No.....

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viii- If your answer was No in the last question, please mention why?

.....

2.2 Living conditions

2.2.1 During sailing

- i- Is the level of accommodation furniture, spaces and arrangements satisfy you? Yes.....No..... b- How many seafarers per room? .....per room
ii- Is the nutrition satisfy your needs?
• with respect to quality Yes.....No.....
• with respect to quantity Yes.....No .....
iii- Are there available medicine and treatment facilities onboard? Yes ....No .....
iv- Which type of the following welfare facilities available onboard?
TV .....Video .....Gym .....Library .....others .....
v- In case of the presence of TV, Is it satellite receiver or normal receiver? Yes.....No.....
vi- In case of the presence of video is the exchange of tapes carried out on a regular basis Yes.....No ....

2.2.2 During docking

- i- Do you have enough time to go ashore? Yes.....No.....
ii- Do you like to go ashore while the ship at port? Yes.....No ....
iii- If your answer is No in the last question - please mention why?
iv- .....
v- Are there any welfare facilities available in the ports you sail to? Yes.....No .....
vi- Are these facilities available in suitable prices? Yes.....No .....
vii- Please describe in brief the social life and human relations onboard your last ship.

.....
.....

3) Social life at home town

- i- What is your source of income during periods of unemployment?
.....
ii- Is it possible to re-join your last shipping company, after vacation, for new contract ? Yes.....No .....
iii- If your answer is NO in the pervious question - please mention how can you find a job once again?
.....
iv- How long it takes to find a new job? and what was the longest period you spent looking for a job?
.....
v- Do you covered with a health care scheme during periods of unemployment? Yes.....No .....
vi- Are your family covered with a health care scheme? Yes.....No .....
vii- Is there any social security coverage for you or your family? Yes.....No .....
viii- If your answer is YES in the previous question - please mention the coverage system applied to you?
.....
ix- Are you under protection umbrella of any union or social society? Yes.....No ....
x- If your answer is YES in the previous question - Please mention the name of that union or social society.
xi- .....

.....