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पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI



वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्  
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File No. 20/1/2020-O/o TRG - DGS (Comp No. 1865)

Date 20.01.2023

## DGS Order No. 01 of 2023

**Sub. - Gender Sensitization Training for candidates undergoing Pre-Sea and Post-Sea Competency courses.**

1. Whereas, Resolution 14 (Promotion of participation of women in the maritime industry) of STCW 1995, Invited Governments:

i) to give special consideration to securing equal access by men and women in all sectors of the maritime industry.

ii) to highlight the role of women in the seafaring profession and to promote their greater participation in maritime training and at all levels in the maritime industry.

2. Whereas, Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 passed Resolution No. II concerning the promotion of opportunities for women seafarers to promote equality of opportunity for women and men; Invited the Governing Body to give due priority in the use resources to examining measures which can further promote career opportunities and appropriate working and living conditions for women seafarers.

3. Whereas, Resolution 14 (Promotion of participation of women in the maritime industry) of STCW 2010, reiterated the earlier Resolution of STCW 1995, further invited Governments and the industry:

i) to endeavor considering ways to identify and overcome, at international level, the existing constraints, such as the lack of facilities for women on board training vessels, so that women can participate fully and without hindrance in seafaring activities in order to facilitate effectively the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG)3 (Promote gender equality and empower women);

ii) to support the provision of on-the-job-training opportunities so that women may acquire the appropriate level of practical experience required to enhance professional maritime skills.

4. Whereas, this Directorate, after reviewing the mandates by MLC (2006) and Resolutions in STCW Convention, had issued Merchant Shipping Notice No. 07 of 2019, which laid down guidelines that outline rights of women seafarers. This was an attempt to promote the number of women in the industry, safeguard and promote their rights, ensure their well-being, and encourage their career growth in the industry.

Title 1 of this notice eliminated discrimination at the recruitment and placement level, including wages and promotion opportunities and addressed issues such as the maternity leave and alternate / re-employment for female seafarers as well as their Sanitary needs and medicines required.

Title 2 of the Notice covers the broad topic of sexual harassment and fair resolution of complaints.

Title 3 established guidelines for gender sensitization onboard, pre-joining training to prevent sexual harassment which outlines concepts including appropriate language, appropriate clothing, ban on pornography and similar literature, etc.

5. Whereas, in view of the continued complaints of improper behavior arising out of lack of Gender Sensitization training, and in order to formalize the earlier guidelines, it has now been decided to introduce Gender Sensitization Training as mandatory part of our pre-sea and post-sea training courses for all seafarers, as follows:

Type of Training Courses	Duration
Pre-Sea training Courses for officer cadets, i.e. Diploma and B.Sc. in Nautical Science, B.E. / B. Tech Marine Engineering, Marine Engineering training for GMEs and DMEs, ETOs, etc.	12 Hours
Pre-Sea training Courses for General Purpose or Saloon Ratings, Orientation Course for Diploma / Degree holders in Catering, etc.	12 Hours
Post-Sea Certificate of Competency Courses for COC as Deck or Engineer Officers or Revalidation Course for Engineer Officers	6 Hours

6. This training can be imparted in Modules during the course of Pre-Sea Training or during the Certificate of Competency Courses / Revalidation Course for Engineers. On successful completion of this training course, the passing out course certificate shall be endorsed as follows:

***“The candidate has also successfully completed gender sensitization training during this course”.***

7. Whereas, the modalities for introduction of gender sensitization training for other seafarers, who do not attend the courses listed in Para 5, are being worked and will be issued separately in due course of time.

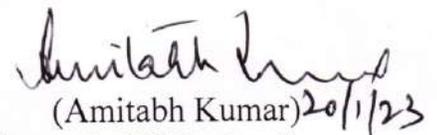
<b>Module</b>	<b>Subject Area</b>
<b>Module 1</b>	<b><u>Introduction to Gender Sensitization</u></b>
1.1	Historical Perspective
1.2	Early Medieval Period
1.3	The Dawn of the 20th Century – A New Beginning
1.4	Women in Maritime History
1.5	Women in Indian Maritime
1.6	Recent Statistics
1.7	The Way Forward
1.8	Importance of Gender Sensitization
1.9	Benefits of a Gender-Sensitive Workplace
1.10	Difference between Gender Sensitivity and Non-Gender Sensitivity in a Workplace
<b>Module 2</b>	<b><u>Gender and Sex</u></b>
2.1	Gender Stereotypes
2.2	Gender
2.3	How Gender Differences Develop
2.4	Why is it Important to Understand the Differences between Gender and Sex?
2.5	Why is Understanding this Distinction in Shipping Important?
<b>Module 3</b>	<b><u>Gender Roles</u></b>
3.1	Gender Stereotypes
3.2	Exercises – Biases of Participants
3.3	Times then vs Times now
3.4	How Gender Roles and Gender Stereotypes lead to Discrimination
3.5	How Gender Roles Affect Us
3.6	How Times are Changing
3.7	Looking at the Person beyond Established Gender Roles
3.8	Learnings and Insights

<b>Module 4</b>	<b><u>Discrimination and Safety of Women Seafarers</u></b>
4.1	<u>Introduction</u>
4.2	What Do Statistics Tell Us?
4.3	What is Gender Discrimination?
4.4	Types of Gender Discrimination
4.5	How Does Gender Inequality Affect Women?
4.6	How do Women Deal with Discrimination and Adapt in the Workplace?
4.7	Ways To Encourage Women to Be a Part Of Maritime
4.8	Safety Concerns of Women Seafarers
4.9	How can this issue be dealt with?
4.10	Organizations/Institutions Working for the Cause
4.11	Laws against Harassment in Maritime
4.12	The Way Forward
<b>Module 5</b>	<b><u>Gender Harassment</u></b>
5.1	Types of Harassment
5.2	Power Dynamics and Harassment
5.3	Gender Harassment in the Maritime Industry
5.4	Consequences of Harassment
5.5	What Could be Done by Victims?
5.6	Indian Laws against Psychological Harassment
5.7	What Kind of Change is Necessary to Promote a Culture of Gender Equality On board?
<b>Module 6</b>	<b><u>Digital Media: A Boon and Bane for Women at Sea</u></b>
6.1	The Boons and Banes of Internet and Digital Media
6.2	Potential Threat of Cyber Crimes against Women Seafarers
6.3	Prevention is Key
6.4	Dos and Don'ts for Male Seafarers
6.5	Dos and Don'ts for Women Seafarers
<b>Module 7</b>	<b><u>Legal Factors in Gender-Related Issues On board</u></b>
7.1	Introduction
7.2	Global Recognition of Women Seafarers' Rights and Regulations for the Same
7.3	United Nations for Seafarers
7.4	Maritime Labour Convention (2006)

7.5	Indian Regulations for Women Seafarers
7.6	Indian Constitution and Gender Sensitivity
7.7	Vishaka Guidelines
7.8	Kudumbashree
7.9	The DG SHIPPING GUIDELINES Notice No. 07 of 2019
7.10	Redressal of Complaints
<b>Module 8</b>	<b><u>Physical and Mental Health in Women Seafarers</u></b>
8.1	Physical Health
8.2	Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
8.3	Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)
8.4	Menopause
8.5	Symptoms of Menopause
8.6	Physical Activity and Women
8.7	Benefits of Physical Activity
8.8	Reasons for Physical Inactivity in Women
8.9	Appropriate Physical Activity for Women
8.10	Barriers and Tips for Women to Overcome those Barriers to Exercise
8.11	Research article
8.12	Effects of Gender Discrimination on Physical Health
8.13	Physical Health in Women Seafarers
8.14	Health Challenges Related to Work
8.15	Psychological Issues in Women Seafarers
8.16	Women's Mental Health: Some Facts
<b>Module 9</b>	<b><u>Challenges Faced by Women Ratings On board</u></b>
9.1	Work Stereotypes
9.2	Socio-Cultural Background of Ratings
9.3	Vocational Training Required for Ratings
9.4	Accommodation of Ratings
9.5	The Way Forward
9.6	Importance of Finding Solutions to the Problems of Female Ratings
<b>Module 10</b>	<b><u>Education Among Seafarers</u></b>
10.1	Current Scenario in the Seafaring Community
10.2	Role of Family
10.3	Area of Improvement
10.4	Efforts Taken

<b>Module 11</b>	<b><u>Gender-Sensitive Communication</u></b>
11.1	Using Gender-Sensitive Language
11.2	Body Language/ Communication at Sea
11.3	Facial Expressions and Eye Contact
11.4	Body Movements and Gestures
11.5	Personal Distances
11.6	Touch
11.7	Understanding Body Language
11.8	Understanding Differences in Communication across Cultures
11.9	Do's and Don'ts while communicating with women from different nationalities
11.10	What to do When Faced with an Uncomfortable Situation?
11.11	Things to Keep in Mind while Communicating with the Other Gender
<b>Module 12</b>	<b><u>Occupational Sexism</u></b>
12.1	Male-Domination and Sexism
12.2	Society and Sexism
12.3	Occupational Sexism in India
12.4	Occupational Sexism in Maritime Industry
12.5	What The Industry Can Do
12.6	What Male Seafarers Can Do
12.7	What Women Seafarers Can Do
	<b>Case Studies</b>

8. A detailed Instructor's Manual has been prepared in consultation with the Experts in this field as a Guideline and is enclosed herewith, which may be used by training institutes for preparation of training material, presentations or exercises.

  
(Amitabh Kumar) 20/1/23

Director General of Shipping &  
Additional Secretary to the Govt. of India.



# GENDER SENSITIZATION INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

# **GENDER SENSITIZATION**

## **PREFACE**

Gender sensitivity is a concept that aims to remove the barriers created by discrimination and gender prejudice. Creating a gender-sensitive setting fosters mutual understanding among people of all genders.

A talent pool of women and men that is not constrained on gender lines will pave the way for more people of the opposite gender to start venturing into the hitherto male-dominated bastions. The purpose of this course is to help break down these walls and invisible defenses so that all genders can co-exist and work professionally to deliver in their roles.

This is not about taking sides, this is about addressing gender preconceptions that are accurate, while consciously avoiding stereotypes and orthodox generalizations. The approach is about a well thought-out acceptance, open-mindedness, and the maturity to embrace change. This will ensure and provide both sexes with the widest possible freedom/choice of life and academic/vocational alternatives. A committed workforce helps reduce sexism and the resulting obstacles to individual and economic growth.

Sensitizing the workforce to the other sexes' situation vis-à-vis sexist stereotyping, discrimination and violence is a step to ensure that men and women recognize their duties and responsibilities to achieve fair outcomes. As the world around us changes rapidly, we need to take steps to play a positive part.

This course will focus on addressing key concerns and bring about thought and conversation on aspects that will be critical to gender sensitization in the maritime industry. Less than 1.28% of seafarers are women (as per BIMCO/ICS 2021 Seafarer Workforce Report) and much can be done to increase this percentage to a healthier balance. In India, we are still evolving and currently women seafarers represent only 0.7% of active Indian seafarers.

We are extremely grateful to the Senior Women Seafarers who wholeheartedly participated in the preparation of this Manual and gave their most valuable inputs, difficulties faced and experiences of women seafarers and insights into the remedial measures which need to be taken to encourage women to take up this profession.

# Module 1

## Introduction to Gender Sensitization

Gender sensitivity is referred to as the process through which peoples' sensitivity and insight is developed into the state of the other sex. It involves being perceptive and open towards the roles and feelings of the opposite gender. **Gender relations are evident in all institutions, and gender sensitivity is most visible in identifying privilege as well as the discrimination based on gender.** It is all about dispelling false beliefs and misconceptions, as well as understanding how to engage with people of the opposite gender.

Many schools and universities are not co-educational, and students wind up engaging with individuals solely of their own gender. This occurs throughout their early years, resulting in a distorted behavioural pattern in both men and women. The two sexes do not engage with one another until they reach higher schooling. And such interactions are often involuntary and formal.

This assertion can be easily verified; in most settings, if you look around the classroom, where male and female students sit in distinct and clearly defined groupings. Unfortunately, such seclusion reinforces gender stereotypes. Gender stereotyping is many a times amplified by movies wherein, the hero is often engaging in very disagreeable and condemnable behaviour, such as taunting, stalking, or bothering the heroine, or all three.

In any human civilization, social differences are likely to be present. Gender differences is one of the primary examples.

### 1.1 Historical Perspective

From the historical phase to the contemporary times, a strange dichotomy has always existed over the status of women. While our scriptures and religious texts have always respected and bestowed the status of Goddess on women, their real-life status and treatment in society was in sharp contrast, especially in the bygone era. Women till today are still fighting uphill battles for equality and to break out of the restraint of norms imposed on them by a male-dominated society. Patriarchy in the family structure meant that the father / brother / son / uncle made all the important economic and household decisions, whereas the birth of a female child was not welcomed.

Since perpetuity of lineage was assigned to the male offspring, the status of women in families and societies remained lower. To add to that, girls were married off early, which affected their educational prospects and aspirations of being financially

independent. Emphasis on chastity actively discouraged divorce, widow remarriage and encouraged the heinous practice of Sati.

## **1.2 Early Medieval Period**

In Medieval India, women were continued to be considered inferior, inspite of certain Exceptions, who, stood a testament to the fact that given the opportunity, women would rise to the challenge, ride alongside their male counterparts and play a decisive role against foreign invaders and in the Indian Independence struggle. Women reformers also exposed the prejudices of their contemporary male reformers.

In spite of these dark times, several Indian women continued their fight for emancipation, right to education, right to vocation and financial independence, and demanded equal rights. They also rebelled against orthodoxy and archaic customs and traditions like sati, child marriage and jauhar.

## **1.3 The Dawn of the 20th Century – A New Beginning**

The 20th century saw voting rights and breaking down the rigid barriers imposed by patriarchy. The goal was to ensure that women got a representation in the Parliament so that they could play a role in deciding the administrative and polity of the country, also rights regarding abortion, higher studies and pursuing education and career interests overseas.

The 21st century has witnessed giant steps in the way women are represented and recognized in society, with clear guidelines on the rights to education, financial independence, abortion, marriage, re-marriage, divorce, access to parental property among others. However, on the flipside, violence against women in various forms and the continuance of abhorrent practices like foeticide and child marriage thrive in a country that is making its mark on the global stage. Discrimination at home, at work, and in society continues in insidious forms like the glass ceiling at work and the perpetuity and reinforcement of male domination at all levels.

India has seen a tidal shift in the manner in which women have made giant strides in every known field. While statistics maintain that one-third of India's workforce comprises women, they are now represented in every sphere of life, be it politics, aerospace, mass media, information technology or business entrepreneurship. The directory of successful Indian women in all spheres of education, society, politics and society, in general, is dotted with illustrious names who are now proving themselves surpassing men in their chosen fields.

These sectors are just a drop in the ocean among the vast diaspora of women who have fought and struggled to be treated as equals and this by no means undermines

the efforts of homemakers and daily wage earners who make a living for themselves and their families honorably through sheer hard work.

#### **1.4 Women in Maritime History**

Factually, women have faced barriers for entering into the maritime industry, to work as equals along with their masculine counterparts and have had to overcome several barriers before the sector opened up. Seafaring careers were a blind end for women, and they often resorted to disguise and fictitious identities so as to take up jobs. The only available route for them to join ships was via marriage or by being born as captain's daughter.

However, history also records several instances on board ships when women stepped up and took charge of the vessel. On sailing ships in Great Britain, the Captain could hire his wife as the stewardess whose job description included serving meals, cleaning the cabins and quarters and maintaining financial records. Economic needs and the awareness to break the shackles of stereotypes gained momentum during the 19th century.

Wars, especially the World War I and II, resulted in opening up employment opportunities for women as never before. This was driven by sheer economic necessity as the menfolk were already engaged on the war front. What is remarkable is that during the war, women earned as much as 40% higher wages by being engaged in industrial production vis-à-vis women who were employed as teachers, nurses, waitresses, etc.

The high point was in the mid-1943, wherein the boom in shipbuilding trade ensured that almost 65% of workers engaged in shipyards were women though not in leadership positions. This created a fear in the minds of men that they would lose control over their families if women continued to be financially and socially independent.

The experience in the shipyard work gave women the much-needed sense of confidence and security, and several of them realized they would never feel helpless again. Post-war, women were continued to be hired as welders and demand reached such dizzying heights that they started working in production jobs too, performing competently and often better than men in similar positions.

#### **1.5 Women in Indian Maritime**

Prior to 1988, there was a limited opportunity for female sailors to create a name for themselves in the maritime sector. When the International Maritime Organization (IMO) launched a global initiative for the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector, it was the first constructive move toward embracing them as an integral

member of the community. This was a bold choice that opened many doors and provided several chances for women in the marine industry.

In 1991, the doors to women to enter into seafaring profession were opened by the Government of India. Since then, the number of women seafarers has been growing consistently and at present (2021), there are about 1,600 active women seafarers. These include 186 certificated officers, 96 officer trainees and about 1,300 women working on Cruise Liners / Passenger Ships.

Women seafarers have risen to all ranks right up to the Captain of the ship, Chief Engineer, Electro-technical Officer, Ship's Medical Officer, Chief Cook and Chief Steward, etc.

Senior women seafarers have also been chosen for roles like Technical Superintendents, Operations Superintendents, Marine Pilots, Quality Assurance Executives, Sr. Surveyors, and Marine Faculty

A number of innovative institutes from across the world began providing graduate and postgraduate courses for female seafarers, demonstrating their dedication to women's empowerment in the maritime profession. The World Maritime University in Sweden began with 4 female student graduates in 1985 and has since grown to 79 in 2018, demonstrating constant growth in the number of female graduates over the years.

## **1.6 Recent Statistics**

According to the Baltic and International Maritime Council/International Chamber of Shipping (BIMCO/ICS) 2021 Seafarer Workforce Report, women now make up just 1.28% of the worldwide seafarer workforce. This indicates a favorable trend in gender balance, with the study projecting 24,059 women serving as seafarers, a 45.8% increase over the 2015 estimate.

## **1.7 The way forward**

Even though women are a substantial representation in workforce and various vocations, they are still clearly outnumbered in sheer numbers, viz. manpower requirements. Simply put, in most professions, manpower distribution is heavily skewed in favor of men. Given this fact, gender sensitivity and the role of verbal and non-verbal communication assumes dramatic significance to ensure a congenial workplace atmosphere and culture.

Nowhere is this more imperative than in the Merchant Navy/Shipping/Sailing lines wherein the presence of women in the workforce is very small. It is very natural for the opposite gender to harbor some apprehensions/reservations which need to be sensitively addressed so as to create a sense of ease, equality and inclusivity.

Back in 2019, the theme for World Maritime Day was ‘Empowering Women in the Maritime Industry’, which is a step in the right direction and is proof of the fact that the industry is looking at women as a viable, long-term force which can be trained to work and deliver in various roles in the industry. Furthermore, the reasons why women are underrepresented in the industry are enumerated as below:

- 1) Inadequate support: Women are generally not encouraged by both, family as well as society to take up seafaring jobs as it is perceived to be a traditional vocation chosen by men. Our education system and upbringing reinforce gender stereotypes, especially vocational/educational choices. Limited family support further limits the opportunity, coupled with the fact that the shipping sector itself does not extend the necessary support to get women interested in large numbers.
- 2) Barriers in recruitment: In recruitment, we see invisible walls where women wishing to opt for shipping as a career are often not given adequate work support. The male domination in this field leaves women thinking that their chance of career advancements could be severely limited. Performance pressure, coupled with glass ceilings, might limit their aspirations to move up the ladder. This leads to a whole population of aspiring women to back out and seek career prospects in other industries. While gender gap is narrowing over the years, much work still needs to be done to set right these perceptions.
- 3) Job security: Most of the jobs, especially in the private shipping companies, are contractual in nature, and retirement benefits and superannuation are often unheard of. This leads to fears of job security, a confirmed source of income and retiral benefits. Women tend to be more leaning towards stability over uncertainty. As a result, they may hesitate to join the industry. Ensuring equality in employment and financial stability might help overcome these challenges and ensure that a large workforce of women seek active participation.
- 4) Limited Awareness/information in public domain: Career options in the shipping/maritime industry are not very well-known to young aspiring women as a choice of vocation. Support groups for women by shipping companies can provide women with the necessary mentoring and sponsorship as a step towards prepping for this career. This will ensure that more women are aware, informed and thus free to opt for it as a career choice. Much work needs to be done in this area as awareness creates an interest and with the right kind of mentoring and training, women can acquire the required skill sets to take on jobs which are traditionally perceived as male-dominated. Schools, universities and academic institutions need to provide guidance and create awareness of career prospects in this area. Career magazines and online

career portals should be used as a medium to communicate with this potential female workforce.

- 5) Cultural deterrents: Women are traditionally brought up being reminded about finding the right kind of balance between work and family. Long durations at sea surrounded by men severely limits any role that they might have to play in society/family, making it an unattractive proposition. There is the additional pressure that women are expected to bring up children single-handedly and also the fact that a potential suitor may not want a wife who spends several months at sea. There is a large population of skilled, educated women that remains severely under-utilized on account of these barriers.
- 6) Historically male-dominated: This is an industry that demands long hours of toil, hard work, elbow grease, and is perceived as meant for the male population. The fact that women are heavily outnumbered in this industry could perpetuate the fear of harassment, verbal abuse, violence and extremely low level of support from coworkers. The absence of female role models is also a limiting factor. An increasing number of women now aspiring for career options in shipping could help bridge this gap. Women must also be assured that though they will be primarily surrounded by a male workforce, most maritime institutions and shipping corporates have framed strict rules and policies to protect the rights and identities of their female workforce. The policies and procedures to handle complaint and harassment must also be clearly outlined and shared to ensure and assure women that they will be treated as equals and that their concerns will be addressed adequately.

## **1.8 Importance of / Rationale for Gender Sensitization**

This training is necessary for adopting multiple points of view into our daily life. Participants in this course learn about the different viewpoints of other genders and build a more well-rounded understanding of the human experience, which in turn helps everyone. The major goal of gender sensitivity training is to spread awareness about the needs and concerns of genders into the forefront and bring about more productive conduct. It benefits an individual by giving them insight into their conduct and assisting them in developing emotional and behavioural concerns.

Gender sensitization is vital as representation matters. The representation of a person or a group not only promotes equality but also gives the previously disadvantaged population a sense of belonging. Organizations/individuals require the correct balance of talent that is not gender-constrained in order to have a healthy performance-oriented culture.

Every individual at a workplace wants to learn and grow, and an insensitive environment not only makes that difficult but also makes it unfriendly. Gender sensitization is critical because it makes employees feel respected and cared for in the workplace. Inequality and prejudice have become the norm in settings that do not prioritize gender sensitization. The normalization of this type of culture results in increased turnover, absenteeism, and other issues.

## **1.9 Benefits of a Gender-Sensitive Workplace**

1. Decreased Gender Bias: A decreased gender bias is the first step towards dismantling male-dominated orthodoxy and prejudices and provides for a level playing field based on equality, knowledge and merit. For too long, women have borne the short end of the stick, be it household, society, education, or the workplace. It often tends to create divisions and bifurcations based on gender. This is unhealthy as it perpetuates and strengthens age-old biases and attitudes. The world is changing quite rapidly and every industry/vocation needs to keep pace with the rapid evolution and ever-dynamic demands of the environment. Women are a huge talent pool of qualified, skilled and knowledgeable professionals who are able to step into roles formerly coveted and meant only for men folk.
2. Creates a diverse environment: The inclusion of women blends well with the culture of diversity and inclusivity, which are buzzwords in today's dynamic work environment. Advancements in technology have ensured that the world and distances have shrunk, making it possible to do things faster and more intelligently. The fact that a formerly overlooked workforce is available to manage this diversity is surely an opportunity for organizations.
3. Increased productivity and motivation for both genders: An equitable job distribution for both sexes provides the much-needed boost, as it motivates the workforce to put their best foot forward and apply the knowledge and skills they have imbibed into increasing productivity, which is very important for the economic well-being of industries and nations.
4. Healthy competition: Clearly defined roles and targets for both men and women based purely on merit and skills provides women with the much-needed level playing field so as to compete positively with their male counterparts in trying to achieve and exceed organizational goals. This sense of healthy competition provides for a positive work culture and a sense of belonging and ownership with the parent organization and a feeling of kinship with their co-workers.

5. Brings in a new perspective: Women and men are known to think differently, and this combined pool thinking out of the box ensures that the organization is never short of ideas in fields of innovation, achieving targets, research, keeping costs under control and adapting to a diverse and often and challenging environment.
6. Different set of skills and knowledge that paves way for creativity: An untapped reserve of skills and knowledge that women bring to the table paves the way for thinking creatively and arriving at cost-effective and time-bound solutions to align with organizational targets and goals.

### **1.10 Difference between gender sensitivity and non-gender sensitivity in a workplace**

1. Access company's resources and strive for similar opportunities: A gender-sensitive workplace duly recognizes and rewards skills and knowledge-based purely on individual merit rather than influenced by gender considerations. Such organizations are quick to ensure that the male and female workforce have equal access to resources and opportunities to grow in the workplace and this helps break through glass ceilings, which are so detrimental to the emotional well-being of the workforce. Opportunities to take up newer assignments and issues like promotions, incentives and increments will ensure that both men and women compete healthily in achieving and delivering against targets. This in turn fosters a positive work culture and helps create sense of equality.
2. A gender-sensitive workplace will have reduced rates of harassment: By creating diverse and inclusive work environments, workplaces will also ensure that systems are put in place to handle and address issues related to harassment of women in various forms. Having a manual wherein the interactions and penalties in the event of harassment come to light once put in place will act as a deterrent and actively discourage the need to treat women differently. Coaching, counselling, workshops and training sessions need to be conducted quarterly, half yearly or yearly.
3. A gender-sensitive workplace leads to healthy competition and team building: An organization that works together fosters a sense of healthy kinship and competition which is very important for any team building activity. The world today demands a quick response to the needs of the environment and a motivated team is always better equipped than an individual person.

## **Module 2**

### **Gender and Sex**

The terms gender and sex are often confused to mean the same thing. The two are freely used interchangeably and often erroneously. This creates tremendous confusion amidst general ignorance about the difference between the two and it is unpleasant when individuals have to bear the brunt of the ignorance of people who don't understand the difference between the two terms. This resultant confusion also fosters age-old stereotypes which are often detrimental for the female gender. The purpose of this module is to clearly explain the difference between the two, for everyone to gain clarity and be on the same page.

#### **2.1 Sex**

Sex has multiple meanings.

Sex refers to the biological aspects of a person notably defined by their anatomy, which is a complex by-product of chromosomes, hormones and their interaction. Sex is typically male or female and something that one is born with. In its simplest form, it refers to the difference between men and women and includes differences in physical, mental, genetic and psychological make-up. Males have one X chromosome and one Y chromosome, whereas females have two X chromosomes. Other biological distinctions stem from this fundamental genetic difference. The first to appear are the genitals that boys and girls develop in the womb and that the doctor and parents look for when a baby is born.

The genitalia are referred to as primary sex characteristics, whereas the other changes that emerge throughout puberty are referred to as secondary sex characteristics, which are caused by hormonal variances between the sexes. Testosterone in boys causes them to develop deeper voices, more body hair, and greater muscles. As nature prepares girls for adulthood, they grow breasts, broader hips, and begin menstruation. For better or worse, many people's perceptions of what it means to be female or male are influenced by these fundamental biological disparities between the sexes, as noted in later content.

## 2.2 Gender

Gender, on the other hand, is a social construct that is related to behaviours/attitudes based on labels of masculinity and femininity.

While one may be born a man or woman, the process of conforming to a particular role is learnt through the process of education and observing others around. This involves teaching what constitutes appropriate behaviour, temperament, interpersonal interaction and often what they wear and think.

The concept of gender traditionally comprises relational, historical, institutional, contextual and hierarchical aspects. Males and females are traditionally taught appropriate norms, boundaries and behaviours, and especially about how they are expected to interact within households and workplaces.

Hence, gender is a sociological term, whereas sex is a biological concept. It refers to the social and cultural distinctions that a society makes depending on a person's (biological) sex. Similarly, the term gender roles relate to a society's expectations of people's conduct and attitudes based on whether they are females or males. How we think and conduct as males and females is not predetermined by nature, but rather by how society expects us to think and behave depending on our gender.

This is a learned behaviour that is rigorously inculcated during our growing up years and helps in defining our gender identities and roles. This, in turn, helps one conform to their roles and deliver against expectations and responsibilities. This indoctrination also, unfortunately, creates compartments in one's minds and fosters a divide between the sexes. The process of continuous education needs to be based on adaptability to an ever-evolving society and a fast-changing world.

This is the key to ensuring that stereotypes are nipped in the bud and that rigid narrow views don't restrict issues like equality and equitable access to means and resources.

A lack of clarity between what constitutes sex and gender fosters a grey area of ignorance and beliefs that often works against the female gender. It manifests itself in several forms and impacts educational and financial independence opportunities. Lack of clarity and an ignorant mindset also engenders social evils like female foeticide, honour killing and dowry deaths.

Some examples of sex characteristics include:

- Women undergo menstrual cycle at puberty

- Males have testicles
- Women have breasts that are capable of lactation
- Men have bigger, broader and heavier bones

Some examples of gender characteristics include:

- Women in most countries earn lesser than male counterparts
- Women do majority of the household work
- Male to female sex ratios are skewed in favour of men

### Exercise

Many people confuse the terms 'sex' and 'gender' or aren't sure what they exactly mean. This tool is designed to help us teach a simple, common understanding of the two terms.

Without going into the truth or falseness of the statements below, indicate next to each one whether it is about sex or gender. Place a tick in either of the boxes.

Sr. No.	Statement	Gender?	Sex?
1	Women earn less money than men do.		
2	Men make good doctors; women make good nurses.		
3	Men can't cook.		
4	Women have larger breasts than men.		
5	A husband cannot follow his wife on a posting.		
6	Girls drop out of school more than boys do.		
7	In most African traditions, women do not own land.		

8	A man is the head of the household.		
9	It is not the job of the father to change nappies.		
10	Men don't cry.		
11	Girls dress in pink, boys dress in blue.		
12	A wife cannot initiate sex with her husband.		
13	Women menstruate, men don't.		
14	There are more male leaders than female leaders.		
15	A girl cannot propose marriage to a boy.		
16	Women cannot be religious leaders.		
17	Women are natural child care providers.		
18	There are more male miners than female miners.		
19	A man cannot get pregnant.		
20	The man is the breadwinner.		

### 2.3 How Gender Differences Develop

We have looked at the distinction between sex and gender.

We need to understand that although we may have been assigned sexes at birth, gender differences start early on, beginning with infancy and continuing right into ripe old age.

- Infancy

The first thing people want to know about a baby is its sex. Many hospital nurseries distribute pink hats for girls and blue caps for boys during delivery or provide some other visible indication of the baby's sex. In India and other countries, there are means of letting neighbours and society know about the sex of the new arrival. Toys at this stage include buses, trains and aeroplanes; dolls and stuffed toys for girls. As the child grows out of infancy, having toy guns, football and cricket sets at home further lets others know about a male offspring.

If gender was determined by sex, one could expect the world to sit back and watch the child grow into a male or female. In reality, sex determination lays the foundation for a lifelong process of gendering, as the kid grows into and learns to be male or female.

Even when children are clothed, names and clothing are just a minor fraction of the symbolic resources utilised to establish a constant continuing gender attribution. The fact that we may discuss a child's development as a girl or a boy suggests that initial sex attribution is more than a physical observation. Male and female children are understood and interacted with differently from infancy.

- School

Schools, as initial venues of socialisation, are critical institutions in the creation of gender. Elementary schools used to be known for segregating girls and boys, lining them up separately to walk throughout the school, putting them against one other in contests, and separating them for physical education.

Schools have lately begun to enforce gender equity, including prohibiting single-sex sports on the playground, attempting to minimise gender differences in the classroom, and highlighting gender-discriminatory behaviour on the part of pupils.

- Peers

Gender socialisation is also encouraged by peer factors. When youngsters reach school age, they begin to play gender-specific games. Boys prefer sports and other competitive team games with rigid rules and a large number of roles, whereas girls choose smaller, cooperative activities with fewer and more flexible rules, such as hopscotch and jumping rope. Despite the fact that girls are far more interested in sports now than a generation earlier, gender disparities in their play as children persist and reinforce gender norms. For example, these disparities increase boys' rivalry while encouraging girls' collaboration and

trust. Boys who aren't competitive, risk being labelled as 'sissy' or other derogatory terms by their peers.

- Family and Domestic roles

Feeding, cleaning, and clothing others, as well as the other activities involved in day-to-day domestic upkeep, are primarily associated with women. An entire section of work and roles are typically dedicated towards the need of others, and are expected to be fulfilled by women. Men, on the other hand, are commonly seen in roles such as taking care of repairs, being the breadwinner of the house, or taking care of the yard activities that may be arranged ahead of time to fit in with the rest of one's activities. This disparity in time demands makes it more difficult for women to commit to the same level of involvement in the marketplace as males.

- Culture and Society

Our society and culture dictate a lot of restrictions and set of guidelines for girls to follow. These include specifics of a very personal nature, like appropriate clothing, behaviour in public and interaction with the opposite sex. These dictates also frown upon cohabitation and friendship between boys and girls, and perpetuates age-old myths about puberty, menstruation, sexual awareness and man/woman relationships. In smaller towns and villages, these dictates often decide educational and vocational prospects for girls and often unjustly lay down ground rules for early marriage, citing our scriptures and cultural bearings.

- Mass Media

For decades together, especially in the seventies and eighties, women were objectified as decorative objects with no substantial roles. Men were shown as the architects of society, family and the nation in general, who fought wars and upheld the honour or dignity of society, womenfolk and the nation. A clear demarcation was made between heroines and vamps. Heroines, typically dressed in sarees, were depicted as coy, whereas the vamps were shown scantily dressed in western outfits and drinking freely with the villains.

The advertisement industry too has shed patriarchal mindsets when earlier ads clearly showed women engaged in household duties while menfolk lounged around. Ads promoting stereotypes about fairness being equated with good looks and marriage prospects were also present. Likewise, ads also are targeting menfolk and the need for them to provide for their families, and be muscular and strong.

Women-centric films and women of substance made an appearance much later in the last 90s and early 2000s, wherein substantial roles and scripts were written keeping womenfolk in mind.

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## **2.4 Why is it important to understand the differences between gender and sex?**

It is important to differentiate and understand gender and sex separately, as, in a given setting, gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or man. In most communities, women and men are assigned different responsibilities, engage in different activities, have different access to and control over resources, and have different decision-making chances.

Analysing and understanding the very clear demarcation between sex and gender is very important, so as to ensure clear understanding of these very different concepts and avoiding any kind of generalization and stereotyping, which will only seek to promote the existing confusion.

Sex is a biological phenomenon whereas gender is a socio-cultural construct.

One's sex at birth – male or female – invariably determines what roles/responsibilities/attitudes/behaviour/access to resources are assigned to them. Issues like equal rights, equal opportunity, right of self-determination, right to financial independence, among others, get compromised.

Having a clarity on these basic constructs only will pave the way for a better understanding that the old thinking can develop into a more progressive, more inclusive outlook based on mutual deference.

## **2.5 Why is understanding this distinction in Shipping important?**

According to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), women hold only 1.28% of all maritime employment worldwide. Digging a bit deeper into those figures, we see that a whopping 80% of these women work on passenger ferries or cruise ships. In India too, out of 1,600 women seafarers, 1,267, i.e., 79% of women are working on passenger ships/cruise liners.

Clearly, the presence of women aboard cargo ships, oil tankers, and large load carriers is minimal. But why shouldn't they? Is there a widespread belief that women cannot work on these sorts of vessels?

Conversations peppered with insensitive remarks about the suitability of women to areas like shipping, where women are hugely outnumbered, creates a sense of alienation and isolation. This impacts a healthy work environment and works against the principles of equal opportunity, inclusivity and diversity.

Understanding this distinction is further important so as to not deny opportunities based on a person's sex, and rather encourage skills and abilities based on the individual. When part of a team, it can help to look at a person objectively in terms of the responsibilities that she has been assigned, rather than taking a narrow view of her being just a woman. This is all the more necessary in traditionally male-dominated careers like shipping, armed forces and possibly factories.

Businesses and industries need men and women to work cohesively towards agreed organisational goals and targets as well-oiled teams. If unchecked, stereotypes against women could lead to large scale attrition and possible litigation which is wholly undesirable. In these times, businesses, including shipping, are throwing open doors to get women onboard to work alongside their male counterparts.

This module intends to set a tone for the upcoming chapters. Understanding the basic difference between sex and gender and the finer points therein can help aid better learning and clarity, and approach the coming chapters with a fresh outlook.

## **Module 3**

### **Gender Roles**

A gender role is a social role that encompasses a set of actions and attitudes that are typically accepted, appropriate, or desirable for a person based on their gender. Although there are exceptions, gender roles are usually based on concepts of masculinity and femininity. The specifics of these gender-based expectations may differ significantly between cultures, while other qualities may be shared across them all.

Gender roles and stereotypes are deeply ingrained in our collective psyche and this is prevalent across boundaries and cultures. Even in the stone-age times, man by virtue of his superior physical strength assumed the role of hunter, gatherer and forager, while women tended to the children and managing homehearth. Much has changed since those days, but society and mindsets are still steeped in orthodox thinking and strongly resisting any change in status quo.

While the developed nations have overcome these barriers through open debate, discussion and legislation, the developing, underdeveloped and poor countries are still grappling with gender issues. One's sex at birth decides access to opportunity, resources, means and the freedom of choice and independence. Women often end up with the short end of the stick, having to give in to the dictates of society, patriarchal thinking and rigid mindsets. Boys are often considered to be the carriers of the family name and thus have unlimited access to means and resources, often at the expense of their sisters and women folk in the family.

Poor nutrition, lack of access to education, clear lack of respect at home and in society leaves them with poor self-image and low self-esteem. They are often considered a burden, married off early and saddled subsequently with an army of children and a never-ending vicious cycle of household duties. Female mortality is significantly higher in developing and poor nations which is clearly a direct result of unaddressed and unresolved gender issues.

Even in developing and some advanced countries, women face an uphill battle almost every day having to fight for equitable opportunities and resources. Attempts to stonewall women's aspirations takes up insidious forms like harassment at work, glass ceiling and appropriating jobs/skills as requiring traditional male handling and manpower.

Gender roles are based on the many expectations that individuals, communities, and societies have of individuals depending on their sex, as well as the values and beliefs that each civilization has regarding gender. They are the result of interactions between people and their surroundings, and they provide indications to people about what kind of behaviour is considered proper for which sex. Appropriate gender roles are determined by a society's attitudes toward gender differences.

Gender roles can be linked to male and female expectations in areas other than home, such as work. Men and women are frequently expected to complete various jobs and play distinct responsibilities in the workplace based on their gender. Furthermore, because many firms still have a traditional view of gender roles, the jobs that women and men have within corporations are frequently segregated by sex. Men are more likely to be expected to work as managers and executives, whereas women are more likely to be expected to work as secretaries. Men are also thought to be more ambitious and task-oriented at work, whereas women are thought to be more engaged in and concerned about their work connections. Likewise, gender roles are occasionally constructed on the basis of gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are depictions of males and females, as well as their differences. Individual opinions of proper gender roles are frequently based on gender stereotypes.

Gender roles established in childhood are usually maintained throughout adulthood. People have certain preconceptions about decision-making, childrearing, financial duties, and so on at home. At work, people also have presumptions about power, the division of labour, and organisational structures. None of this implies that gender roles are good or harmful in and of themselves; they just exist. Gender roles are a fact of life for practically everyone.

### **3.1 Gender Stereotypes**

A stereotype is a widely accepted judgement or bias about a person or group. Gender stereotypes can lead to uneven and unfair treatment based on a person's gender. Some commonly seen gender stereotypes are:

- **Personality qualities:** Women are frequently assumed to be accommodating and emotional, whereas men are typically expected to be self-assured and assertive.

- **Domestic behaviours:** For example, some people expect women to care for the children, cook, and clean the house, while men handle the finances, work on the car, and fix the house.
- **Occupations:** Some people assume that teachers and nurses are female, while pilots, doctors, and engineers are male.
- **Appearance:** Women are expected to be slim and graceful, whereas men are expected to be tall and muscular.
- **Grooming:** Men and women are also required to dress and groom in stereotypically gendered ways; for instance, men in jeans and short hairstyles, women in skirts, dresses and make-up.

**Stereotypes become so ingrained in our system that they can create a bias that fosters view from a young age in itself, for instance**

Early Years

Girls should play with dolls and boys should play with trucks. Boys should be directed to like blue and green; girls toward red and pink.

During Youth

Boys should engage in sports and refrain from more creative pursuits. Boys and men are expected to use violence and aggression to prove their manliness. Boys are not expected to cry or express their emotions freely. They are expected to appear resilient and tough at all times. Any expression of emotion publicly is seen as a sign of weakness and defeat.

As Adults

Women are natural nurturers; men are natural leaders. Women don't need equal pay because they are supported by their husbands. Men who spend time with family are less masculine and poor breadwinners.

Exaggerated or incorrect generalisations about the nature of males and females are common in gender stereotypes. One widespread gender stereotype about men is that they are cold and unfeeling. Females, on the other hand, are frequently portrayed as illogical or emotionally weak. Feminist movements, for example, continue to attempt to deconstruct gender stereotypes and propose alternative perspectives of gender roles that emphasise equality between men and women.

Women traditionally constitute one-third of the workforce and the development is encouraging; old barriers are slowly falling by the wayside. Women are being increasingly sought out for their skills in deciding the nations polity as also in aerospace, design, instrumentation, IT, etc. Business verticals and vocations now actively pursue women and are giving them equal opportunities, training and a level-playing field to compete in and prove their mettle.

A lot has changed, a lot still remains to be changed, but the movement on the ground is palpable and encourages the arrival of better times for women.

### 3.2 Exercises – Biases of Participants

Please fill up the blanks. Only one-word answers are required. Write the first word that comes to your mind. There are no right or wrong answers. There is no time limit, but please work fast.

1. The nurse looked very \_\_\_\_\_. The patient liked \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A gold chain was found missing. The servant did not turn up the next day. Could \_\_\_\_\_ be the thief?
3. The pilot landed the damaged aircraft safely. All the passengers congratulated \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A disciplined soldier will do what \_\_\_\_\_ is told.
5. The thief in police custody tried to run away, but the Inspector caught \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The Inspector was quick in \_\_\_\_\_ reaction.
7. 'It is a tough job' feels the constable. I agree with \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A good teacher will not lose \_\_\_\_\_ patience, with children fast.
9. A cook may become old, but not \_\_\_\_\_ cooking.
10. A good doctor will advise \_\_\_\_\_ patients correctly.

### 3.3 Times then vs Times now

India has always been an agrarian economy heavily dependent on agriculture for sustenance. Pre- and post-independence was all about farming for subsistence, which meant that the labour was primarily menfolk as women were engaged in nurturing and managing homes.

This was also the time when India was undergoing tremendous economic upheaval which was further compounded by British occupations. Economic growth was virtually stagnant and most of the people fell into the below-poverty line and lower-middle-class categories. A very few rich people formed part of the Indian society.

After independence, India was grappling with a clear direction of how to take the country forward. Education wasn't as rampant or considered necessary as it is today, and ignorance was high. Lack of healthcare facilities were prevalent, with a limited access to basic health and well-being. Increasing childbirth in poor due to the ignorance about using protection and the need to have smaller families led to a surge in a population which was already struggling with limited resources.

Poor nutrition affected the growth and increased mortality rates in children, leading to increased mortality rates in women. Women had to naturally stay at home and be involved in childcare. Early in the seventies, the government announced family planning measures, restricting the number of children per family to two or three. Greater emphasis on smaller families, better education and nutrition was actively promoted by the government through their five-year plans.

As disposable incomes and economic prosperity rose, funds were pumped by the government into primary and secondary healthcare and education. Better learning and health ensured that healthy and skilled individuals were available in the job market.

A healthier and learned population sought to fight and eliminate barriers of mindsets and do away with stereotyping of women, especially about gender roles. This allowed women to pursue education and vocations of their choice. With changing times, it has now become almost necessary that both wife and husband work, and bring income to the families. Men and women now live separate lives, work, learn, explore, and grow without relying on anybody else. Gender norms are outdated and irrelevant in today's world. The emphasis now is on fostering gender equality.

### **3.4 How Gender Roles and Gender Stereotypes lead to Discrimination**

Gender stereotypes have a significant influence on every individual who experiences them and decides to combat them. The pre-existing roles that civilizations have established for men and women allow men to act in whatever way they desire with women.

In the Indian set-up, we see a lot of general important institutions that constitute different set-ups. Since earlier times, men have been considered the bread-winners and all the family members depend on him for survival. This also includes economic power and being the head of the household. It indicates his total authority and making all decisions for the family.

A male-dominant community was a prevailing factor in the community too. Establishing dominance and treating wife as one's personal property meant that any kind of violence or wrongdoing was overlooked and condoned. Even in terms of vocation and marketplace, males are seen as bread earners and women are seen as supplementary earners. Women were assigned monotonous and routine jobs or any household jobs.

People from various social backgrounds are disproportionately influenced by these misconceptions. For example, young girls from low-income homes are married off at an early age because their parents are unable to care for them. Their opinions are never sought; instead, if they refuse to marry, their fathers/brothers severely assault them. Another significant influence is that women/girls are considered personal property that may be exploited whenever men choose to, such as forcing sexual interactions without consent.

Such preconceptions also contribute to heinous behaviours such as domestic abuse, suicide, genital mutilation, honour killing, acid assaults on women, and so forth. Gender stereotypes affect males in a variety of ways. Many boys/men are pushed to choose education or occupations based on their parents' preferences. Men who lack muscle mass and have a slender body shape are not deemed visually appealing.

### **3.5 How Gender Roles Affect Us**

- The assumption that we all fit into our assigned gender roles

Stereotyping of how we should behave as per our sex led to many assumptions and notions about the right fit for a particular sex. Men were considered to be tough and naturally assumed roles of hunters, providers and protectors of family and society purely because they had innate physical strength. On the other hand, women were looked upon to be nurturers and hence all the softer attributes were assigned to them. Thus, women were seen in roles of raising children, caring for family and providing emotional gratification.

- Those who don't conform have something 'wrong' with them

These widespread stereotypes defied borders and boundaries. Unfortunately, it gave society the power to take issue with those who did not conform to their sex. For example, a boy who was seen playing with dolls or engaging in needlework was considered a misfit in society. Likewise, if a girl took up competitive sports and wanted to study further or drive a car, she was frowned upon by society as she did not conform to its laid down rules.

Such behaviour that did not conform to societal dictates was considered wrong and there was social stigma attached to it. Unfortunately, the remnants of the stigma sometimes come to the surface even today, and the stigma, in turn, manifests itself in the form of bullying at school, discrimination at the workplace and ridicule in society.

- Gender roles are 'natural'

Another generalization that plagued society a few decades ago and still is prevalent in some forms is that gender roles are a gift of nature based on one's biological sex and hence comes naturally to a man or a woman. This led to issues in society when a man or a woman refused to conform to the natural role and tried to do something different.

Thus, a woman who refused to get married or have children because she wanted to pursue studies or a profession was frowned upon. Till today, men who choose to move away from conformity and take up professions such as hairstyling and makeup, for instance, are again looked down upon by society and considered 'odd'.

- Certain things are 'boys' issues' and others are 'girls' issues'.

Blindly following and laying down rules of conformity has created walls in people's mindsets about roles, responsibilities, temperaments, attitudes and expectations from genders. Thus, very early on boys and girls are conditioned to obey and follow rules and guidelines as dictated by society.

Thus, boys are expected to be tough and unemotional. They have preferential access to resources, and certain things like crying in public or expressing their emotions freely are considered taboo for them. For example, upon being hurt emotionally or physically when a young boy cries, he is shamed for it and often reminded that boys do not cry.

Girls, on the other hand, are expected to be soft and expressive. They are meant to be seen and not heard and the restrictions placed upon them in respect of behaviour, speech, gait, dress code, duty, posture become tougher as they move from infancy to puberty and into adulthood.

- Gender roles affect the way family life is built and maintained.

Gender roles based upon the dictates of society soon intrude family life too. Thus, an educated woman is expected to give up working or pursue higher education once she is married. This is further complicated when she bears children and is expected to put a lid on her career aspirations, manage household work and be a homemaker.

By the traditional roles provided, men, on the other hand, are expected to work and come home to a house which is taken care of. They are not expected to participate in active household duties.

### **3.6 How Times are Changing**

Things are changing rapidly around us and there is a wave that is demolishing old archaic notions about roles related to men and women. Scores of women across borders are breadwinners today, some of them are actively involved in deciding the administrative polity of their nations and many of them are blazing new trails in the industry.

For urban women, the service sector has become increasingly significant with its share in employment rising 35% in 1977 to 61% in 2018. These include professions such as teaching and nursing. Proportion of women working in agriculture fell from 89% in 1977 to 73% in 2018 due to increased mechanization and also better educational prospects for women.

Gender roles have no relevance in today's society and it is imperative for both men and women to understand that. Women are steadily contributing to workplaces. Women are more likely than males to follow company policies. They are more prone to be emotionally responsive than males and to take precautions and assess risk before taking an important decision. They are likely

to recognise the significance of a person's psychological well-being while offering a unique viewpoint on a certain task.

Over the last 50 years, the number of women sailors recruited aboard merchant ships throughout the world has consistently increased. Having both men and women on teams allows a benefit from the many perspectives and methods that come from varied life experiences. A diversity of viewpoints may drive creativity and innovation, as well as assist companies in identifying and seizing new possibilities. It can also motivate companies to question gender preconceptions. Women in the marine industry eventually inspire additional women to enter the job, therefore closing the gender gap onboard. Empowering women helps to fuel vibrant economies throughout the world, encourages growth and development, and benefits everyone involved in the global marine community in the pursuit of safe, efficient, fair, and responsible shipping.

The world, as we know it today, is very different from the world we witnessed a few decades ago. These changes are a step forward as they do away with old conformities and pave the way for inclusivity, diversity and equality in its truest sense. This movement is unstoppable and will only go ahead shattering and laying to rest old norms.

### **3.7 Looking at the person beyond established gender roles**

The changes around us necessitate that we look beyond gender and gender roles and instead look at the person objectively. Roles, designations, education courses, chores, assignments and tasks are no longer dictated by gender roles and there is increased fluidity in what people choose to do. There is a sense of self-determination and freedom to experiment and explore with one's choices rather than go down the traditional path as was the norm.

An increased sensitivity to these changes ensures an acceptance of the fact that times have changed and mindsets and thinking need to, too. Rigidity and closed mindsets are no longer relevant and the faster we manage to look beyond preconceptions about gender and gender roles, the earlier will be the process of assimilation and integration into the mainstream which is very essential for moving forward and progress.

### **3.8 Learnings and Insights**

Gender influences every part of our life. It defines gender roles and obligations. Gender roles have profound historical roots and are still prevalent today. Multiple institutions and entities have exhibited and strengthened it.

Nonetheless, we have tried to understand how they impact us and play a role in our daily life and interactions.

Let us look at building our insight and seeing how these roles manifest themselves in our individual lives and pave way for discussion.

1.	Have you encountered gender stereotyping?
2.	Have you observed gender roles being played out within your family or society? If yes, how?
3.	Do you believe gender stereotyping is a real thing? Which industries are likely to have more gender stereotyping? Share your reasons why.
4.	What steps would you advocate to counter gender stereotypes?
5.	Are men and women truly equal or does the disparity still exist? Explain why.
6.	What steps can the government undertake to create more opportunities for women?
7.	What steps will you take to counter gender stereotypes at home?
8.	What steps will you take to counter gender stereotypes at the workplace?

## Module 4

### Discrimination and Safety of Women Seafarers<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1 Introduction

Women Empowerment has been a major advancement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given the worldwide growth, women have excelled in every area and are proving themselves to be much more than just caretakers and housewives. As the world is coming closer with the enhancement of technology, changes in society in terms of gender norms, equality and beliefs are seen.

Seafaring has traditionally been one of the male-dominated occupations for a long time. The commonly used language within the industry can give one a glimpse into it. For instance, the word ‘seafarers’ is gender-neutral, but is often replaced by masculine forms, such as ‘seaman’.

While the entry of women into seafaring has begun, it is a small yet growing phenomenon currently.

#### 4.2 What Do Statistics Tell Us?

A recent study (Sulpice, 2011) analysed the statistics of women seafarers in six European countries, viz., Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and UK, and concluded that there has not been much improvement in increasing the number of female seafarers. A similar concern was addressed in the case of the US merchant marines (Brickman 2012). Though women have been a part of this industry since a very long period, their numbers continue to remain significantly lower. There are certain prejudices towards women seafarers that have been long held by this male-dominated occupation.

Maritime trade unions have been working to reduce the incidence of discrimination in the maritime industry and raise the number of women in the workforce. Their efforts have helped women in the industry confront discrimination and find recognition for being valuable members of a ship’s crew. Though number of women employed in maritime positions has gone up to about 23,000 worldwide, it is still a long way to go.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343272471\\_The\\_gender\\_equality\\_in\\_maritime\\_industries\\_transnational\\_law\\_perspectives/fulltext/5f20d139299bf1720d6dadcb/The-gender-equality-in-maritime-industries-transnational-law-perspectives.pdf?origin=publication\\_detail](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343272471_The_gender_equality_in_maritime_industries_transnational_law_perspectives/fulltext/5f20d139299bf1720d6dadcb/The-gender-equality-in-maritime-industries-transnational-law-perspectives.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

The Maritime HR Association's survey of shore-based maritime industry professionals in 2018 indicated the following:

- Only 35% of the global Maritime HR Association workforce were female.
- Over 76% of that female workforce work in administrative, junior or professional level roles.
- Just over 10% women are on executive leadership teams, with female executives most likely to operate as chief financial officers (Gender diversity in maritime).

Due to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Review of Maritime Transport for the period 2014–2018, women shared 22% of the port workforce overall, with 34% of management team, and 12% of operations team (Review of Maritime Transport, 2019, p. 76). Research in recent years has also highlighted some of the issues that women seafarers face when at work.

Research studies have revealed that male seafarers do not have a proper understanding of the concept of gender and fail to appreciate that gender roles are merely social constructs. Thus, they hold several misconceptions about the capability of women to perform certain jobs. A few of the misconceptions that male seafarers have about women seafarers are as follows:

- They should only be given special tasks.
- They are not enthusiastic about their jobs or career-oriented and that the environment on board is very tough for women to handle.
- They should work only as cooks.
- They are usually very gentle and are not capable of doing many tasks that require strength.
- There is no real need to integrate women into mainstream seafaring. They are suitable for shore jobs only.
- They are often very emotional and thus weak.
- They will leave their jobs to prioritize family.
- They could pose as a distraction for male seafarers and thus be a safety risk.

### **4.3 What is Gender Discrimination?**

Gender discrimination is a form of unfair or unequal treatment that is meted out to a person based on their gender. Discriminatory acts based on gender may not always be perpetrated by men. People of all sexes may act as perpetrators of

gender-based discrimination in organizations. The gender of the perpetrator does not change the fact that discrimination is unlawful.

In the maritime industry, women have often struggled with discrimination both onshore or offshore.

As the number of women seafarers holding maritime positions is low, discrimination is almost inevitable. Many countries have denied providing training for women for any of the seafaring positions, and many shipowners have also refused trained female seafarers positions on their ships.

Gender discrimination in the workplace can often have consequential effects on a person's physical, psychological and emotional health. It can be stressful to feel at a loss of control over how one is treated or viewed by others because of his/her gender, which can often affect one's ability to perform job responsibilities fully. Although the maritime industry has embraced initiatives aimed at bridging the existing gender gap, the integration of women into the industry has been at a rather sluggish rate due to various barriers. Even though the initiatives already executed have led to an increase in the female workforce in the industry, there is still more room. Such practices not only limit the participation of women in the profession but also deny them an opportunity to utilize their skills and knowledge to benefit the industry.

Economically, discrimination based on gender can have negative consequences (Sivakumar, 2008).

#### **4.4 Types of Gender Discrimination**

One can be discriminated against based on their gender by being given unequal treatment. For instance, an employee could be treated differently or unjustly in terms of hiring, termination, salary and compensation, or restrictions on benefits or promotions, purely based on their gender.

An insidious form of gender discrimination is sexual harassment, which involves any unsolicited behaviour (verbal or physical) of a sexual nature that interferes with work performance, affects a person's employment, or creates a hostile work environment. Instances of sexual harassment in the workplace can range from inappropriate sexual jokes to the use of sexual slurs and non-consensual touching. This rather serious issue will be discussed in greater detail in our next chapter.

Apart from the ones mentioned above, following are a few more ways in which an individual faces discrimination:

- Get a promotion on account of gender; also known as the ‘glass ceiling’.
- Getting paid lesser than an employee of the opposite gender working on the same job profile.
- Being denied employee benefits or given less paid sick leave on account of gender.
- Being written up for behaviour that does not result in disciplinary action when performed by an employee of another gender.
- Being subject to derogatory language or slurs on account of gender.

In the maritime industry, gender discrimination in the aforementioned manner has a significant negative impact on the overall functioning.

Some of the negative consequences of gender discrimination are as follows:

(i) Women are under-employed and their productive capabilities are not fully utilized for improving the overall productivity of the maritime industry.

(ii) Under-employment and discrimination are demoralizing for women seafarers which in turn has an adverse impact on the discipline and work productivity of women employees.

(iii) Lack of sensitivity on the part of male colleagues and outright misbehaviour by a few male colleagues is making some women seafarers psychologically disturbed. This has also resulted in a change in general attitudes of women seafarers, some of whom have undergone the process of ‘defeminization’, that is an imitation of male standards of behaviour of a strong and an authoritative orientation.

(iv) Women seafarers behave in a certain masculine way so as to not get unwelcomed attention and different treatment.

#### **4.5 How does Gender inequality affect women?**

The way gender discrimination may affect an individual may vary based on the context of the situation they are in and their own way of responding to the situation when they are treated in a particular way. Not every woman may respond or cope similarly.

## Following are the effects of Discrimination at Workplace on Women



These are only some of the possible outcomes of discrimination, and the experiences and suffering of women may differ. While instances of discrimination may lead to some developing more confidence and being assertive of their right to equal treatment, there might be a few who may be fearful of acting against injustice.

### 4.6 How do women deal with discrimination and adapt in the workplace?

Women seafarers in the early stage of their careers tend to learn a need for negotiating their gender identities to fit into the male-dominated work environment. At each step, women seafarers have to keep proving their calibre despite being excellent at their work. They have to be cautious with their appearance, behaviour and overall conduct. Due to the gender gap, they are concerned about how they are regarded by their male colleagues. Masculine norms and values being dominant in the occupational culture of seafaring and the possibility of the signs of femininity being taken as a marker of difference at sea leads them to follow a certain strategy for negotiating their gender identities to fit into the male-dominated workplace.

A study noted that women seafarers commonly felt uncomfortable when they were seen as 'women' rather than 'people' or 'seafarers' by their male colleagues on board ships. Out of the 36 women who participated in this study, 25 attempted to look less feminine in their appearance and/or behaviour (the obscurers of femininity). Some even went on to choose clothes that were not too revealing when they packed for their voyage. This was out of the concern that the clothes they feel comfortable in would be inappropriate in front of men who have been away from family and lovers for a long time and do not often see women on board their ships. Women might avoid packing sleeveless clothes or tight trousers as it may lead to some male crew to stare or even develop the desire to try to touch them.

Women tend to use these strategies by obscuring their femininity to avoid being viewed as objects of desire and wanting to be accepted as colleagues. They have to often hide expressing their emotions and feelings, as such behaviour is considered feminine, unprofessional, looked down on, and can be problematic for them on the ship. While these strategies have helped women to enter this male-dominated profession, they may not always be sufficient to convince their male colleagues to accept them as part of the crew. Moreover, constructing a masculine identity just to find equality and acceptance on board ships can be challenging for women seafarers. Yet, in a bid to find a temporary escape from gender-related problems, some women resort to it consciously or subconsciously despite the challenges that they face in the way.

As many as 21 out of 36 women in the aforementioned study reported to have utilized the strategy of creating a masculine type of identity. Women using the strategy tended to appreciate being 'a man' because they felt that their behaviour would be considered 'appropriate' on board if they acquired an identity that is characteristic of males. In that, they might adopt a masculine style of behaviour while at sea and copy the roughness and imbibe the way of speaking of their male colleagues. Indeed, such a newly created masculine identity seems to perfectly integrate into the occupational culture of seafaring, although challenging for women.

Another type of strategy often found to be in use is the art of blending in. Out of 36 women in the study, 13 appeared to apply this strategy. Women seem to use this strategy to mask their true selves, including their femininity, tactically and elaborately, in front of their male colleagues to maintain their identities. They do so by not expressing their feelings openly and holding back from being their true selves.

Being a woman often appears to be disadvantageous and problematic in the occupational culture of seafaring that tends to reflect masculine norms and values. However, the strategy supporting the concept of femininity in a subtle way may intentionally create an imaginative patriarchal relationship between women seafarers and their male colleagues by keeping a low profile. Such a strategy will only temporarily prevent conflicts at an intellectual and professional level.

Research has found that many women seafarers on cargo ships experienced gender-related problems, including sexual harassment by their male colleagues, similar to observations made with respect to women in certain other sectors, such as firefighting, (Yoder and Aniakudo 1995, 1996), army (Pettersson et al. 2008), police force (Holdaway and Parker 1998) and navy (Newell et al. 1995).

According to interviews with women seafarers, their gender-related problems were brought about by the working environment and occupational culture that accepted masculine norms and values. In order to fit into such a male-oriented culture on board ships, women seafarers learned by themselves and invented various identity management strategies.

On the bright side, the atmosphere on some ships fosters the growth of women seafarers and is conducive to their working atmosphere, and the adaptation of women seafarers goes a long way in this aspect.

#### **4.7 Ways to Encourage Women to be a Part of Maritime**

The issue of gender inequality needs to be addressed by companies and zero tolerance built for the same at all levels. Also required are new policies that ensure friendly practices for women and that are followed strictly by all members of the maritime industry. With the help of trade unions and independent organizations, this radical change can be extended in society. Such encouraging steps will not only increase the confidence of women but also allow them to contribute their best to the industry.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has recognized the need for bringing about changes for the betterment of seafarers which has consolidated many maritime labour conventions into a single and consolidated standard. Their aim is to adopt a standard that is widely – if not universally – accepted, and which will benefit all seafarers. At the national and company level, there should be increased emphasis on improving shipboard conditions. These should

include several aspects like pay, accommodation, safety, longer leave periods, etc.

#### **4.8 Safety Concerns of Women Seafarers**

Being at sea can often make a seafarer feel isolated and lonely. Each seafarer may, at some point, experience these feelings, and they might develop and be vulnerable to health concerns as well. A survey conducted in 2015 by the International Harbour Masters Association (IHMA), International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and Seafarers Hospital Society, consisting of 595 female seafarers, identified joint/back pain and anxiety/stress/depression as the two biggest health challenges that half of the respondents faced.

The ILO data also indicated that women seafarers face more other concerns, such as the risks associated with their sexual health, confidential access to a ship's doctor, and a few opportunities to seek medical advice or treatment ashore.

Following are the key safety, health, and social concerns women seafarers may encounter during their voyages or missions:

- **Access to Sanitary Products:**  
In a data estimate by the ILO, 40 % of female seafarers don't have access to sanitary products on board ships. It has been observed that some female seafarers have to pack their menstrual products in their own luggage throughout the contract period to ensure that they have enough of them available. Moreover, disposal of used items has been an issue too, as ship toilets are incapable of handling them. In such cases, women have to wait till they reach a port to dispose them off in bins maintained there, and that often comes at a cost.

#### **4.9 How can this issue be dealt with?**

Access to female sanitary items and discreet disposal mechanisms needs to be availed onboard ships. The restrooms on board ships need to be equipped with sanitary disposal bags or bins too.

- **Maternity Constraints:** Maternity is sometimes considered as a constraint while hiring women seafarers. 54 countries out of 88 provide maternity benefits as a part of their social security protection. Pregnancy testing is widespread for women seafarers before going onboard, mostly in the

cruise sector, despite it violating the ILO's Maternity Convention of 2000. According to the ILO's findings, women seafarers may face disembarkation at their own expense as a response to pregnancy. They may be offered a transfer to shoreside posting. This phenomenon can be also a part of maternity harassment.

#### **4.10 Organizations/Institutions working for the cause**

1. The International Labour Organization (ILO): A United Nations specialized agency, the ILO promotes social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. It also promotes other trade unions to prioritize safety at maritime workplaces and helps in reducing discrimination and harassment for women seafarers.
2. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF): The ITF is working on a few important issues faced by victims of discrimination. It is working on obtaining the support of industry leaders and shipowners around the world to address those issues.

Among the issues the ITF is fighting for are:

- Reducing gender stereotypes within the maritime industry
- Provision of sanitary items on board vessels
- The right of women seafarers to obtain confidential medical advice and contraceptives
- Improvements to maternity benefits and rights policies
- The development of sexual harassment policies and training against discrimination within the industry

Anytime someone faces sexual harassment or any other form of discrimination in the maritime workforce, they have a right to turn to a seafarerlawyer for assistance in protecting their rights. Attorneys can defend both female and male seafarers alike, helping to put an end to the hostility faced at work.

Even though the victims of discrimination may often feel embarrassed or afraid to come forward, doing nothing about the situation may only worsen matters. Working in a hostile environment can lead to prolonged mental anguish, anxiety, and an overall deteriorated health.

3. Department of Mental Health Support Services (MHSS):  
The MHSS organizes events which provide professional mental health support and guidance across the maritime sector, and explore the challenges faced by female crewmembers, such as sexual harassment,

bullying, gender discrimination, and the stresses of life aboard a vessel. It also covers resilience strategies for women in shipping and the issues that need addressing to improve their working lives and wellbeing.

#### **4.11 Laws against Harassment in Maritime**

There are several federal and state laws outlining protections against unlawful discrimination for women in workplaces. State-wide laws are specific only to the states in which they have been passed, while federal laws apply to employees nationwide.

Employee Rights In The Workplace are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- No one should tolerate workplace discrimination on account of his/her gender.
- The right to work in a safe and discrimination-free environment.
- The right to report gender discrimination at work to your boss or human resources (HR) personnel.
- The right to equal opportunity for hiring, promotions, and employee benefits available to non-female employees in similar positions.
- The right to file a grievance for breach of contract.
- The right to protest gender discrimination in your workplace.
- The right to resist sexual advances in the workplace, or intervene if you witness an incident of sexual harassment/assault.
- The right to testify as a witness in an investigation into discrimination at your workplace.

#### **4.12 The Way Forward**

Organizations can conduct workshops and seminars to help young women exchange their views with experienced women seafarers and help them develop a strong presence in the maritime sector. Organizations can also provide mentoring and sponsorship. Furthermore, support groups can be created and help be provided in enhancing their career prospects, which will push more women seafarers in the industry.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://florinroebig.com/workplace-discrimination-women/>

The theme 'Empowering women in maritime community' was chosen by the IMO for the World Maritime Day 2019. It was stated by the IMO's Secretary-General on the occasion of the World Maritime Day, 'Empowering women isn't just an idea or a concept. It is a necessity that requires strong, positive action to address deep-seated structural, institutional and cultural barriers' (World Maritime Day 2019).

The endeavour is to reach a barrier-free environment for women by considering ways to continuously identify and overcome the existing constraints (i.e., recruitment, training, capacity-building, technical cooperation and promotions), so that all women can participate in the activities of the maritime community, including seafaring and shipbuilding activities.

This purpose is to encourage and share best practices in achieving gender equality, with a view to reach a barrier-free working environment for women in the maritime community.

## Module 5

### Gender Harassment

Gender harassment encompasses a broad range of verbal and nonverbal behaviours ranging from insults to hostility to aggressive attitudes, aimed at individuals based of their gender.<sup>1</sup> It is, by far, one of the most common forms of harassment prevalent in workplaces, especially in male-dominated professions, such as shipping and maritime. Harassment of this form can be perpetrated by any person from the workforce. Gender-based harassment can be meted out using physical force, verbal or psychological tactics, and it can be discreet, subtle, overt or evident. Any form of gender harassment can be damaging to the victim's physical and psychological health.

Incidents of harassment turn the work environment harmful and unsafe for the victim and other employees who are a witness to it. The victim may face isolation in workplace because the hostile environment and behaviours towards him/her or concerning him/her. It can impact the unity and peace of the workplace and produce worry among other employees as well.

This chapter will discuss the various forms of harassment faced by women with special reference to the maritime industry.

#### 5.1 Types of Harassment

Broadly, harassment at workplaces can be categorized into the following three types:

- Verbal Harassment
- Physical Harassment
- Sexual Harassment

1. **Verbal Harassment**: When harm is inflicted upon an individual in the course of verbal interactions, by verbal means, it is said to be verbal abuse or harassment. While verbal harassment may not always be as easily identifiable as other types of harassment, such as physical or sexual, it is disturbing nonetheless for the victim. It leads them to question their own identity, experience feelings of inadequacy, and lowers their self-esteem. For the harasser, it is a way to control and maintain power over their victim. Verbal harassment can leave the victim feeling confused, uncomfortable, threatened or even intimidated.

Commonly, verbal harassment can take the following forms:

- Teasing or making inappropriate jokes or remarks (e.g., remarks or jokes based on one's sex, gender or race).
- Asking someone to go out with them repeatedly, despite their refusal.
- Making sexual advances and/or seeking sexual favours.
- Inquiring about sexual preferences or history of a colleague, or asking questions based on their sexual life, in the workplace, despite the other person having expressed discomfort in talking about them.
- Maligning a colleague's character in the workforce or team.
- Using abusive language or indulging in offensive name-calling.
- Negatively commenting about a person's clothing or body.
- Making inappropriate sounds such as that of kissing or whistling, or smacking or biting lips upon seeing the victim.
- Sending sexual emails, notes or letters.
- Verbally attacking the individual; for instance, arguing with them using threatening, discriminatory, or demeaning words, or embarrassing someone in front of people. For example, an employer shouting and yelling at an employee over poor performance and manipulating them.

The law does not consider all forms of verbal harassment illegal unless something appears unlawful under the rule of the law and consists of a clear intent to malign or harass someone. In instances where a verbal abuse is not considered illegal by the law but makes the victim feel uncomfortable, the victim should communicate her discomfort to the abuser firmly and assertively. For example, a comment like 'You have a frail upper body for a seafarer' may make a woman seafarer feel objectified and uncomfortable. When passed at workplaces, the person must communicate to the one making the comment, preferably through an email, as it is considered an official channel of communication, that such comments are not appreciated and should not be repeated. Yet, if the person making the comments does not relent, the matter should be escalated and the superiors, grievances team or human resources department of the company should be involved.

2) **Physical Harassment**: When a person acts or behaves inappropriately using physical actions, gestures or force, it is called physical harassment. It may include intimidating, embarrassing or threatening a victim. For example, touching someone against their consent or will. Physical harassment in workplaces is also called workplace violence. Apart from the psychological trauma, physical harassment can sometimes cause physiological injuries to the victim.

Most common forms of physical harassment include:

- Physical or sexual assault or abuse

- Rape
- Intentional inappropriate touching or grabbing someone
- Using intimidating gestures
- Deliberately rubbing on someone or someone's body
- Blocking movement of the employee being harassed
- Forcefully kissing or hugging someone

**3) Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment includes a variety of inappropriate behaviours that range from physical and verbal to non-verbal forms. Sexual harassment primarily constitutes any unwanted and non-consensual exposure of sexual organs, displaying of sexual images, or making of sexually inappropriate gestures at work. Sexual harassment may sometimes, but not necessarily, occur alongside verbal or physical harassment.

A few of the ways in which one can be sexually harassed and that female employees must beware of are:

- Exposure of private parts.
- Sending sexual images to another person. For example, sending pornographic videos to another woman through a social media platform, without the consent of the person.
- Making gestures which are sexually inappropriate.
- Staring at a person's body offensively and making the victim feel uncomfortable through eye gaze.
- Sharing with or displaying nasty messages or content from a website, book or magazine without the consent of the person.

Physical and sexual harassment are serious types of harassment in and out of workplaces. Even though India has strict laws against harassment, physical and sexual harassment continue to be perpetrated. In a survey conducted by the International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) in 2015, 595 female seafarers revealed that over 18% of them had been subject to sexual harassment on ships. While male seafarers can also be victims of sexual harassment, most reported cases are related to women seafarers. Harassment of this sort is driven by the establishment of a male-generated culture in this industry.

## **5.2 Power Dynamics and Harassment**

Psychology behind harassment reveals that the perpetrator is usually in a powerful position at the time of harassing another person. The position of power may come from age, greater body size, gender, seniority and economic or social status, and is misused in various contexts from home to school and even workplace. An imbalance of power creates an atmosphere where honest communication is not possible and may discourage victims from speaking up.

Harassment at workplaces may be subtle and insidious, so much so that the victim is often left wondering if their discomfort is all in their mind. The silence on the part of the victim can be misinterpreted by the harasser as a green signal or encouragement for the unwanted behaviour. The greater the power wielded by the harasser, the lesser the chance of the victim speaking out against the inappropriate behaviour.

The harasser might make a few 'harmless' jokes with their colleagues, or give off a large chunk of the workload to the 'newbie' at work when their inappropriate advances are rejected or rebelled against. In such an environment with unequal power dynamics, it becomes very difficult for the victim to even step forward to report the incident or file an official complaint.

Sometimes, for a worker to tell her senior to not make sexual innuendoes can be difficult and leave the superior feeling offended and outraged.

It is up to each one of us to make the working environment safe enough for each employee to function to their best ability and enable victims to speak out and empower them with confidence and assurance that help and support are available. The victim should not be singled out and further humiliated. A safe working environment for women can only be created with stringent laws and policies, a supportive environment and responsible expression of power. The issue of sexual harassment as a significant concern needs to be redressed firmly, however challenging it may be.

### **5.3 Gender Harassment in the Maritime Industry**

Maritime law protects all seafarers against discrimination and sexual harassment. Yet, these rights are often reported to be violated.

There are instances where no such protection against harassment and sexual assault incidents is offered, leading women to suffer in silence and never receive the compensation they deserve. As a result, many such acts go unreported, worsening the situation. When the issue is brushed under the carpet, there is no record of it. Women seafarers who are sexually harassed are often reluctant to file a complaint out of the fear of being tainted socially and professionally, or losing their job.

An issue is that of a country-to-country difference in the perception of what sexual harassment is and especially plays out on ships that have a crew with different cultures, where there is a challenge of establishing a common understanding about gender equality on board. Absence of a clear consensus or rules on appropriate conduct may lead to misbehaviour towards the other gender.

A look into research studies shows observations that European women seafarers might encounter different perceptions and expectations about gender when working with Asian male seafarers. There have been cases of women seafarers finding it problematic to wear sleeveless clothing in front of the Filipino crew. Women have even felt conscious about their appearance and adapted to more masculine clothing, hairstyles and body language in a bid to gel in.

There are other risk factors like isolation at workplace and the inability to leave it after the shift. In the cruise sector, the interaction with third parties also poses risk to women seafarers at times. Further, the intersectionality of gender such as race, age, social class and marital status is relevant to the vulnerability of women being subject of sexual harassment. A few surveys and research on sexual harassment state that sea-based women professionals are more vulnerable to sexual harassment in the form of physical behaviour than shore-based women professionals because of the confined space onboard, which increases the risk of sexual harassment. The residential and isolated nature of the ship may increase the chance of sexual harassment.

Some of the incidents that women have had to face are:

- A male colleague visiting a woman seafarer's cabin or forcing her to enter his cabin.
- A couple of holes were found to have been created in the female toilet.
- Sexual overtures or sexually disinhibited behaviour have been noted in addition to physical behaviour. Verbal and non-verbal sexual harassment are also reported on board.
- A male seafarer commenting about a woman seafarer's appearance, making sexist jokes and remarks about inevitable sexual abstinence onboard.
- Constantly staring at women seafarers' physique, displaying inappropriate photos, and stealing or playing with their personal clothes.
- Calendars or photographs with nude content of female genders are commonly displayed in the workplace or on computer screens.

Cultural background casts an influence on the approach to what sexual harassment is, affecting not only perpetrators but also victims. A ship functions as a micro-universe when it comes to these matters, adding layers of difficulty to addressing this complex problem.

Women have also shared several incidents on social media platforms regarding harassment that they have gone through – these incidents include experiencing direct sexual advances from crew members of a superior rank despite clearly expressing disinterest and discomfort, receiving poor evaluation after rejecting sexual advances and getting touched inappropriately, or male crew member inappropriately revealing himself in front of them.

To avoid such experiences women seafarers have reportedly changed their appearances and tried to hide their femininity by shortening hair, wearing loosely fitting clothes, and even looking consciously unappealing.

While sexual harassment is not an offense punishable under the seafarers' standard contract, survivors can lodge complaints for 'gross misbehaviour' or 'abuse of authority' if the perpetrator is an officer or supervisor.

#### **5.4 Consequences of Harassment**

Harassment, be it verbal, physical or sexual, can have serious physical as well as psychological consequences. These incidents can also be categorized as psychological harassment and can cause victims to experience concerns such as anxiety, depression, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, to name a few.

According to the Canadian Act Respecting Labour Standards (ALS), the following criteria is considered as psychological harassment in the workplace:

- Vexatious Behaviour

Vexatious behaviour includes being abusive and humiliating towards a person and treating them offensively, which might, in turn, affect the individual's self-esteem and cause anguish.

Considered on its own, a verbal comment, gesture, or behaviour may seem innocent. It is the accumulation of all of these behaviours that may snowball into harassment. It could, however, also be a single serious gesture that triggers an alarm. For example, an employer who touches his employee's private parts without her consent during a party is committing sexual harassment, which is also a kind of physical and psychological harassment.

- Hostile Conduct

A hostile conduct comprises of behaviour that is violent, aggressive, threatening or harmful towards an individual.

- Harming the Dignity/ Psychological or Physical Integrity

These behaviours could include those that belittle or devalue an individual, which may lead to the individual suffering permanent psychological or physical harm.

### **5.5 What could be done by victims?**

- Clearly Assert to the harasser your disagreement and discomfort caused by their behaviour.
- Speak about your experience to your colleagues or a trustworthy person.
- Write a journal of incidents with places, dates, times, facts, gestures and witnesses mentioned, as it can be helpful in reporting them.
- Contact a support group if available.
- Get in touch with a person in an authority position and report an incident.

### **5.6 Indian Laws Against Psychological Harassment**

Guidelines applying to ship-owning and managing companies that operate ships over 500 Gross Register Tonnage (GRT) registered under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1958, India's maritime administration, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), announced guidelines, the first of their kind, outlining measures to promote women, seafarers, by providing a conducive work atmosphere on-board ships.

Moreover, as part of an Indian law, the Vishaka Guidelines are set to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplaces and ensure that the people who indulge in the act of sexual harassment are given a justifiable punishment.

### **5.7 What kind of change is necessary to promote a culture of gender equality on board?**

Reporting of incidences is indeed important in terms of understanding what is happening on board, applying laws and policies, and taking appropriate care of victims. However, it is important to combine such reactive measures with more proactive measures to protect seafarers from sexual harassment and bullying.

Gender discrimination is pervasive in many societies and multicultural male-dominated environment on board ships. In some countries, it is also a

requirement to avoid employer liability for not providing a work environment free from sex discrimination. Hence, while businesses do comply in making their anti-harassment policy and provide grievance procedures, it is mainly to avoid liability.

Against this backdrop, other measures that specifically aim to bring a cultural change by raising awareness of maritime professionals towards sexual harassment behaviours and promote a culture of gender equality onboard have to be taken. Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) are an important tool and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) Standard CBA includes an equality clause that reads as follows: ‘Each Seafarer shall be entitled to work, train and live in an environment free from harassment and bullying whether sexually, racially or otherwise motivated, in accordance with ITF policy guidelines.’

However, such a clause still needs to be made operational, for example, by providing a guide of best practices as has been done by the Ship Operations Cooperative Program in the United States parallel to the adoption in 2016 of the law ‘Subtitle C- Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)’ of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, as a reaction to 21 cases reported in a short period of time. This ‘Best Practices Guide on Prevention of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Merchant Marine’ specifically targets and sends the right message about this type of abuse.

The ILO has also integrated within the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006, through 2016 Amendments, the provisions for eliminating shipboard harassment and bullying, as published in the ICS/ITF guidelines.

In addition to reporting and grievance proceedings, prevention policies and programs are required at company level. A zero-tolerance policy in these matters starts with a clear and strong stance by company management and a top-bottom implementation. Research in the public sector and other sectors, such as manufacturing and higher education, shows how important it is to have several policies or programs put in place at the company level to properly combat sexual harassment as they encourage harassed women and men to take a more assertive stand against harassment. The point is to make personnel onboard aware of the zero-tolerance policy adopted by the State and, in particular, the company.

For example, Anglo-Eastern, one of the largest ship management companies based in Hong Kong, published a booklet on gender diversity in order to raise awareness about gender among its crew from different countries. It includes the definition of sexual harassment as ‘making unwanted advances of a sexual

nature towards a particular person' which affect the dignity of women and men at work. The booklet was not only used as a training material but also widely shared with other maritime organizations to promote gender equality. Likewise, as a part of preventative measures, educating crew is seen as a powerful tool to prevent harassment onboard.

Any tools for promoting gender equality on board require an effective implementation scheme. To this end, education and training programs have delivered better outcomes than just establishing an anti-harassment policy along with complaint mechanisms.

Against this background, the trainer should alert trainees about the impact of any form of sexual harassment upon the victim and ultimately the whole work environment. The point to be clearly made is that all employees onboard are responsible for a work environment free from gender discrimination. In other words, passive bystanders are to be considered accomplices in any abuse.

Because it is about raising awareness, training should be face-to-face, at least the first time it is provided, in order to promote discussion. In general, tailor-made courses should be designed taking into account the diverse cultural background onboard. Maritime institutions mainly take a technical approach to training that is long overdue and requires mainstreaming in terms of diversity.

## Module 6

### Digital Media: A Boon and Bane for Women at Sea

The maritime industry continues to be plagued by gender imbalance even today. Globally, women represent only around 1.28% of the world's 1.9 million seafarers population<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, key positions and roles such as those pertaining to decision-making seem to be at arm's length for this small fraction of women in the workforce. In the Indian maritime sector too, an underrepresentation of women was found in a survey conducted in 2019 with the support of the Director General of Shipping.

Enough emphasis has been laid on the necessity to empower and boost the women workforce in the sector. Participation of women at par with men can be fruitful for the industry. For one, it will encourage gender equality in an industry that has been long dominated by men. It can also be economically advantageous giving an impetus to the GDP.<sup>2</sup> However, to encourage more and more women to join seafaring, identifying challenges, alleviating distress and creating a safe space will be of utmost importance.

#### 6.1 The Boons and Banes of Internet and Digital Media

Humans are social beings that survive on interpersonal communication and cooperation.<sup>3</sup> One of the challenges for seafarers – men and women alike – is the separation for days at the end from their kith and kin. This coupled with the sparse number of women onboard as compared to men often leaves women in a vulnerable position on board. There have been multiple instances of harassment and abuse which have been documented over the years. While women are achieving great heights, they are mostly in the minority on ships, making it difficult for them at times to feel protected and safe.

The advent of the internet and technological developments may be ensuring continued communication and a reduced feeling of loneliness and minority on board.<sup>4</sup> However, for women seafarers, digital technology can come with its own set of challenges. Anecdotal accounts suggest that women on ships often find themselves at the receiving end of harassment and bullying. While at sea, these cases can often be in the form of cybercrimes, such as cyberbullying, cyberstalking and blackmailing to name a few. Not only do such instances

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1<https://unctad.org/news/diversity-indian-maritime-industry-hiring-more-women-profitable-businesses>

2<https://www.ship-technology.com/features/industry-views-addressing-gender-inequality-maritime-sector/>

3<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-018-0389-1>

4<https://safety4sea.com/cm-socialization-challenges-for-female-seafarers/>

create an unsafe work environment but also produce mistrust within the team and trauma and distress in women working in an already male-dominated workforce.

Therefore, generating awareness within the workforce regarding such malicious acts can be the crucial first step in preventing them and ensuring a safe workspace for women seafarers.

## **6.2 Potential Threat of Cyber Crimes against Women Seafarers**

Cyber crimes consist of activities committed by using information technology as well as the internet, and that are deemed criminal and punishable by the law.<sup>5</sup> According to the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB) data, cyber crimes against women in India jumped consistently in the last three years, with 6,030 cases in 2018,<sup>6</sup> to 8,379 cases in 2019<sup>7</sup> and a whopping 10,405 cases in 2020.<sup>8</sup> Anger, revenge, extortion, prank and sexual exploitation emerged to be some of the motives behind these crimes.<sup>9</sup>

- **Cyber Stalking**

At a time when social media is bridging distances, filling in the void and bringing people closer at the tip of a finger, cyber stalking has emerged to be a prominent cybercrime in India. It can be perpetrated in the form of harassment, torture or threats through any of the internet platforms or social media.

If perpetrated while at work among a male-dominated crew, cyber stalking can be a tormenting experience for women sailors. Women can be stalked through their social media or internet profiles and accounts, their personal information can be obtained without their knowledge and awareness and used to cause distress to them. The victim in such instances may feel helpless and turmoiled till the ship reaches a port and she can find help. Away from their kith and kin on voyages, it can be lonely suffering for women sailors.

- **Blackmailing**

With the intent of blackmailing a woman, the perpetrator(s) may target them by obtaining their pictures, videos or personal data, and seeking inappropriate

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5 Outlawing Cyber Crimes Against Women in India by Saumya Uma -

<http://docs.manupatra.in/newslines/articles/Upload/CE3E0AE8-DE2B-41EA-92A2-8A46035DECEB.pdf>

6 [https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime\\_in\\_india\\_table\\_additional\\_table\\_chapter\\_reports/Table%209A.10.pdf](https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime_in_india_table_additional_table_chapter_reports/Table%209A.10.pdf)

7 [https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime\\_in\\_india\\_table\\_additional\\_table\\_chapter\\_reports/Table%209A.10\\_1.pdf](https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime_in_india_table_additional_table_chapter_reports/Table%209A.10_1.pdf)

8 [https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime\\_in\\_india\\_table\\_additional\\_table\\_chapter\\_reports/TABLE%209A.10.pdf](https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime_in_india_table_additional_table_chapter_reports/TABLE%209A.10.pdf)

9 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/meerut/up-cybercrime-capital-with-over-11k-cases-maha-has-most-cases-of-cyberstalking/articleshow/86302510.cms>

favours against the threat of leaking them. This data could be acquired by the perpetrator(s) forcibly or unknowingly, from the victim's personal digital handles or while they are engaged in a private activity or task. The intent in such instances is malicious.

Such incidents may slip out of hand and escalate on voyages, leaving the woman in danger and making it difficult for her to trust those on board with her.

Sometimes women can also fall prey to morphing, wherein a man procures a woman's photograph without her knowledge or consent and edits them inappropriately. Perpetrators then seek sexual or intimate favours from the victim against the threat of making these pictures public. Such crimes can also be committed against women for refusing to indulge in advances made by perpetrators.<sup>5</sup>

- **Cyberbullying**

A comprehensive definition attributed to Smith et al (2013) states that cyberbullying is an aggressive and intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and overtime against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself<sup>10</sup>.

According to the NCRB, cyber bullying is the second biggest cybercrime against women in India and has been on a steady rise, with 738 cases in 2018,<sup>6</sup> 791 in 2019<sup>7</sup> and 887 in 2020.<sup>8</sup>

Cyber bullying can take place in any form on an electronic device or social media ranging from hurtful words, derogatory comments, fake information, threats of death or rape, and can lead to physical distress in the form of head and stomach aches and psychological distress in the form of depression and anxiety.<sup>10</sup>

Cyberbullying on ships can be tormenting for women seafarers, further pushing them into isolation.

### **6.3 Prevention is Key**

Falling victim to cyber crimes, especially in an isolated environment such as a ship, can be a harrowing experience for women seafarers. It should, therefore, be a collective task within the ship and each team to prevent them. The following Dos and Don'ts for seafarers can be helpful.

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5914259/>

## **6.4 Dos and Don'ts for Male Seafarers**

- Maintain on board protocol mandated by the company at all times.
- Maintain a respectful and professional relationship with women team members while on a voyage.
- Ensure women on board feel safe and comfortable around the male members.
- Avoid being silent spectators to on board abuse or harassment on board. Support women members by alarming the captain or relevant authorities who can initiate actions against the perpetrator.
- Maintain professional boundaries on board – for example, meeting women in common meeting areas or in the presence of the team, and not in enclosed spaces.
- Avoid contacting women colleagues at odd hours or during their breaks unless an emergency.
- Follow professionalism in communication.
- Avoid untoward conversations or remarks – such as sexual, on physical appearances or anything personal – that may make a woman seafarer uncomfortable.
- Establish and maintain communications only through professional channels and mediums and not via social media or internet networks.

## **6.5 Dos and Don'ts for Women Seafarers**

- Be firm and assertive – when a male on board is sensed to be making unprofessional advances or approaches, take a firm stand from the very beginning.
- Make sure to meet or speak with male colleagues in common areas only to avoid any untoward incidents.
- Avoid meeting male colleagues in enclosed spaces where help will be inaccessible.
- Immediately report any unusual experiences from male colleagues – for example, being spotted lurking around your room or washroom, following you on board, contacting you on your personal mediums, etc.
- Immediately send a distress call or message to others on board for your safety and security, in case you sense any harmful intentions from a male colleague.
- In case of any personally tormenting incidents, get in touch with your designated safety or welfare officer immediately via email or other official channels. Make sure to report the incident immediately.

- Cyber crimes can be a scary experience. However, remember that you have help and are not alone. Do not let fear and worry conquer you.
- Do not respond to threats or blackmails of any kind. Remember that crimes such as these are punishable by law and legal recourse can be sought.

Make sure you have an official and authorized person, preferably a woman, on or offshore, who you can communicate with about any challenges that you may be facing on board.

## **Module 7**

### **Legal Factors in Gender-Related Issues On board**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Women have been fighting for their place and rights for centuries, and laws in several parts of the world are severely lacking in providing them with an equal ground. Their voices remain unheard as there are instances of blatant disregard of women's rights and freedom even today.

Prejudice against women is prevalent in areas like their social roles, efficacy at work, productivity, and marriage among others. Places of employment do not maintain clear standards of recruitment, termination and pay.

Gender sensitization brings with it the concept of 'equality'. Equality emphasizes that all should be treated with the same standards. While this is a noble way to live, it often blinds us to reality. It also blinds us to the preceding obstacles, prejudice, and struggles women face to reach where they are. When it becomes clear that two individuals did not start at level 0, we need to employ equity instead of equality.

Substantive equity in law takes into account the economic, social and educational differences one may have. Instead of equality of treatment, substantive equity focuses on equality of outcome. This ensures that people with able bodies and disabled bodies have equal representation before the law. This ensures that women who have faced multitudes of discrimination and prejudice more than their male counterparts have an equal representation before the law.

Our society needs to undergo a change by evaluating our attitudes and behaviour towards women. We need to reflect on what we think happens and what happens. Several nations have implemented laws, policies, and started organizations to safeguard women's rights, opportunities, and their freedom. Organizations started by women give this population a platform to share concerns and discuss prevalent issues.

## **7.2 Global Recognition of Women Seafarers' Rights and Regulations for the Same**

### **United Nations and Gender Sensitivity<sup>1</sup>**

On 10<sup>th</sup> December 1948, the United Nations passed the notion of Gender Equality under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The milestone marked all human beings as born free and equal regardless of their race, gender, colour, language, religion, status, and others. The United Nations declared 1975 as the International Women's Year and subsequently the years 1976–1985 as the UN Decade for Women.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) established in 1947 is the primary governing body that is dedicated to the promotion of women's welfare and safety. They set guidelines and global standards for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Seventeen new gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets are set to be achieved by the year 2030.

The Covid-19 pandemic severely affected women's livelihood and progress, with several not having recovered yet from the losses:

- 55% of mothers with new-borns received no maternity cash benefits.
- Women's food insecurity levels were 10% higher than men's in 2020.
- Half of all refugee girls enrolled in secondary school before the pandemic will not return to school.
- During the pandemic, women with children at home spent 31 hours per week on childcare.
- The number of employed women declined by 54 million in 2020 and 45 million women left the labour market altogether.
- Only 4% of clinical studies on COVID-19 treatments considered sex and/or gender in their research.
- Only 29% of featured speakers at international ocean science conferences are women.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Progress-on-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals-The-gender-snapshot-2021-en.pdf>

- Only 1 in 4 parliamentary seats are held by women. In conflict-affected countries, women's representation is even lower.
- 245 million women and girls aged 15 years and older were subjected to sexual/physical violence and the number has only increased during the pandemic.
- There is still a substantial gap in income between men and women holding the same position.<sup>2,3,4</sup>The CSW reviews the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action every 4 years and reinstates themes to promote the economic and social development of women.

The priority theme set for the 65<sup>th</sup> session in 2021 was 'Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.'

In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This convention is also referred to as the International Bill of Rights for Women.

The 30 articles included in this convention are aimed at:

- Increasing women's participation in strengthening international peace and security.
- Declaring International Women's Year.
- Equality between men and women and eliminating discrimination against women.
- Improving women's economic status so as to increase their participation in developing their own nations.

Article 11 in the CEDAW states the elimination of all discrimination against women in their workplace by ensuring equality of men and women, upholding their rights, freedom of choice, right to equal benefits, health and safety; and prohibition of discrimination based on maternity or marital status. Article 13 focuses on eliminating discrimination against women in their economic and social life.

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<sup>2</sup><https://undocs.org/en/E/RES/2020/15>

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3520%20\(XXX\)](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/3520%20(XXX))

<sup>4</sup><https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2019/12/infographic-human-rights>

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), an organization operating under the United Nations, laid down some guidelines for gender sensitization. Their research showed four major factors which contribute to the reduced female workforce:

- the hostility of the workplace culture;
- a sense of isolation as being one of the few, or the only, females in the team;
- extremely demanding tasks with long work weeks and a tedious travel schedule; and
- lack of sponsors for career advancement.

The actions to implement bridge the gap the same stated:

- Provide counselling to staff and management, ensuring that all gender-relevant policies are implemented and respected by management and staff alike.
- Analyse and strengthen gender aspects of systematic exit questionnaires and other questionnaires using the input for policy formulation/modification and for the design of a more targeted strategy to retain qualified women.

The UN established the concept of Gender Equality that reflects a commitment to the equality of men and women in all aspects of human endeavour. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that there can be no distinction or discrimination based on gender (Articles 217 and 2318).<sup>5</sup>

### **7.3 United Nations for Seafarers**

The United Nations held its first Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1956 and had 167 countries and the European Union under it as of 2016. This ruling body determines the general rules and responsibilities of the States in different maritime zones. The UNCLOS, in accordance with the UN Charter (Articles 815 and 10116) enforces the principles of justice and equal rights, promoting economic and social growth of all. It also enforces the protection of women's rights and gender equality.

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/cedaw.pdf>

Prejudice against women has been a persistent trend across decades. While several global organizations, movements and non-profit organizations are attempting to change this scenario, the maritime industry continues to be a largely male-dominated and male-oriented sector.

The number of women seafarers have risen in the last decade or so, but not so much in the Cargo Ships. According to the BIMCO/ ICS report in 2021, women make up only 1.28% of the total global seafarers' workforce. And according to the data provided by the ITF, 40% of women seafarers are employed in the cruise sector.<sup>6</sup> While this shows growth in the number of women seafarers, there still is a long way to equality in this area. This male-dominated industry poses several risks to women interested in joining the workforce, some of which are:

- Being susceptible to various types of discrimination because of there being a lower number of females.
- Issues in applying to academies and companies, with several denying them education and employment.
- Facing prejudice from shipowners based on their gender.
- Absence of adequate facilities on board for women seafarers like proper uniforms or medications.
- Sexual harassment and abuse while at sea.

The two most important specific obligatory agreements in the maritime industry are:

- IMO International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) (1978).
- ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) (2006).

These conventions did not prioritize women's equal rights and employment opportunities at the time of their conception. Later during revisions and amendments, articles for the same were added.

For instance, the Manila Amendment of STCW (2010) stated in Resolution 14 'Promotion of the participation of women in the maritime industry.'

It encouraged States to:

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<sup>6</sup> Review of Maritime Transport, 2019, p. 100)

- to give special consideration to securing equal access by men and women in all sectors of the maritime industry; and
- to highlight the role of women in the seafaring profession and to promote their greater participation in maritime training and at all levels in the maritime industry.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) formed in 1948, encourages enrolment of women in seafaring through the programme 'Women in Maritime', with the slogan 'Training-Visibility-Recognition'.

The IMO's gender programme was started in 1988 and aims to attain the 17 SDGs by 2030.

The IMO also has the following gender-specific fellowships to encourage more women into this industry:

- Women in Port Management course, Galilee International Management Institute (GIMI), Israel
- Courses on Women in Port Management, **L'Institut Portuaire d'Enseignement et de Recherche (IPER)**, France
- AtoN managers courses, International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), France

Eight Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs) have been established under the IMO's guidelines. These organizations give women seafarers a platform to discuss gender gaps, cultural stigma, barriers, and technical issues among others.

The World Maritime University (WMU) in Malmo, Sweden has seen a steady increase in female graduates. The University has a Women's Association that works to connect female seafarers.

The IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) in Valletta, Malta was the first UN body to mandate 50% reservation for women.

## **7.4 Maritime Labour Convention (2006)<sup>7</sup>**

The Maritime Labour Convention (2006) was amended to take into account the needs of women onboard and their working conditions. For example, it requires separate sleeping rooms and sanitary facilities to be provided for men and women (Standard A 3.1).

Article 3 of the MLC (2006) states Fundamental Rights and Principles which guarantees freedom to all and elimination of discrimination in respect to employment and occupation.

Article 4 asserted the right of every seafarer to:

- a safe and secure workplace that complies with safety standards.
- a right to fair terms of employment.
- a right to decent working and living conditions onboard ship.
- a right to health protection, medical care, welfare measures and other forms of social protection.

The MLC (2006) also guarantees equal remuneration for work of equal value to all seafarers irrespective of their race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

Shore-based welfare facilities are also made available to all seafarers, should they need it, without any discrimination based on their gender, among other things (Standard A4.4).

## **7.5 Indian Regulations for Women Seafarers**

According to the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020, India ranked 112 out of 153 countries. This gap encompasses economic participation and opportunity, education, health, survival, and political empowerment.

The Government of India developed various schemes and programs to empower women such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK), Working Women Hostel (WWH) among others. Several educational grants and scholarships, special reservations, and schools have been started to reduce the gap in women's access to education.

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<sup>7</sup>[https://www.itfglobal.org/media/581902/sbor\\_english.pdf](https://www.itfglobal.org/media/581902/sbor_english.pdf)

## **7.6 Indian Constitution and Gender Sensitivity**

The Constitution of India, the supreme law of India, established in 1950, demands no discrimination based on gender, race, religion, or caste among others.

Article 14 of the Indian Constitution states Equality before Law which guarantees equal rights and protection from the state irrespective of one's gender.

Article 15 bars any discrimination based on gender, religion, race, caste, etc.

Article 16 enforces equal opportunities for employment for all citizens.

Article 39 (d) emphasizes equal pay and work for both men and women.

The Indian government has also enacted legislations for women empowerment such as:

- Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

The Government of India also mandates 33% reservation for women in local government bodies through its 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution.

## **7.7 Vishaka Guidelines**

After a shocking event in Rajasthan where a social worker was brutally gangraped for preventing child marriage, and her rapists walked free, the lack of safety guidelines for women became glaringly obvious.

There was an urgent need to lay down detailed guidelines that safeguarded a woman's health and sexuality at the workplace. Definitions, acceptable and unacceptable mannerisms, language, conduct, and process of complaint redressal were required. This guideline was strongly rejected and faced a lot of protests but was fully established in 1997 by the Supreme Court of India.

According to the Vishaka guidelines, employers of the organization are responsible for safeguarding their female employees. They are expected to conduct their company in a way that sensitizes their staff and prevents instances of sexual harassment. It defines sexual harassment as an unwanted sexual determination that is directly or impliedly intended to cause the following:

1. Physical contact or advances
2. A demand or request for sexual favours
3. Sexually coloured remarks
4. Showing pornography
5. Any other unwelcome conduct whether it is physical, verbal or non-verbal

The following areas are outlined in these guidelines:

- Managing complaints
- Transparency and confidentiality of the process
- Guidelines to form Internal Complaints Committee
- Simplifying Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013
- Analytics
- Training to prevent future instances

The Vishaka Guidelines have made way for the reformed Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act, 2013.

## **7.8 Kudumbashree**

The State Government of Kerala launched a program called Kudumbashree (1997) under its State Poverty Eradication Mission. Kudumbashree is the largest

women network in Asia which focuses on women empowerment, gender sensitivity, and gender equality. It works in a three-tier system – Neighbourhood Groups, Area Development Societies, and Community Development Societies.

Law and legislations have been repeatedly amended to clarify terminology, definitions and boundaries. This is proof that discrimination and crime are prevalent against women even today. In 2012, the National Crime Records Bureau of India reported a crime rate of 46 per 100,000. The numbers have steadily increased in the last couple of years as many were homebound during the pandemic.

What often stops women from reporting the atrocities committed against them is not the lack of system or infrastructure, but society's approach towards such situations and the accompanying stigma. Women who report crimes against them face repercussions, often more than their perpetrators. Domestic or marital abuse is treated as 'family business' and women are often denied a fair representation and redressal.

Women at workplaces face the constant fear of being harassed by their male counterparts, promotions and accolades being withheld, and reduced pay. On reporting workplace harassment, these women are often never promoted or asked to leave the company with compensation. They are seen as victims, as a traitor in a team, or as a trouble maker. So besides undergoing such a traumatic experience, the victim is also subjected to an uncertain career and poor work environment. Such crimes are underreported which results in an underdeveloped redressal system.

It is these subsequent factors that often discourage women from reporting a crime. They either choose to live with it or avoid the situation altogether. Such maladaptive coping patterns lead to pent-up aggression, frustration, disappointment, and dejection. The #MeToo movement in 2017 was an eruption of these bottled feelings in women across the globe. It was an attempt by women to show the reality that their gender faces. However, this movement caught a lot of backlash such as people asking:

‘Why didn't she report this crime when it happened?’

‘Why bring this up now?’

‘This is a deliberate attempt to ruin someone’s image.’

It is this very mindset that prevents women from coming forth or fighting back. They feel their efforts will be wasted. It is an entire generation’s responsibility to change this and not subject half the population on this planet to such pain and atrocities.

## **7.9 The DG SHIPPING GUIDELINES Notice No. 07 of 2019**

After reviewing the mandates by MLC (2006) and Resolutions in STCW, the Directorate General of Shipping in India laid down some guidelines that outline the rights of women seafarers. This is an attempt to promote the number of women in the industry, safeguard and promote their rights, ensure their well-being, and encourage their career growth in the industry.

The Notice defines 'Sexual Harassment' as The Sexual Harassment of women at the workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, as amended and includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour: (whether direct or by implication), namely:

- physical contact or advances;
- a demand or request for sexual favours;
- making sexually coloured remarks;
- showing pornography;
- any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature;

Title 1 of the DG Shipping Notice eliminates discrimination at the recruitment and placement level. It bars any bias based on gender when allocating wages and promotion opportunities. The appraisal officer must follow this during their procedure.

The Notice follows the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 to provide maternity leave for female seafarers. If pregnancy is detected on board, that seafarer must be repatriated at the earliest. Upon her completion of the maternity leave, she must be reinstated immediately and at least at the same rank as when she signed off.

If pregnancy is detected outside of employment, she should be reinstated after the completion of a maternity break of up to 24 months. It’s the woman seafarer’s responsibility to apprise the shipowner of her date of re-joining.

Pregnant women seafarers may also be given onshore duties and employment opportunities, should they be deemed medically advisable.

The sanitary needs of women seafarers must be met by shipowners. Sanitary napkins and proper disposal means must be present on board. Further, there is also an emphasis on seafarers being informed on the procedure for disposing of sanitary napkins. Medications with Mefenamic acid and dicyclomine and Tranexamic Acid must be in the Medicine Chest for any menstrual cramps or severe bleeding.

Title 2 covers the broad topic of sexual harassment. The Notice asks all on board complaints to be resolved fairly and effectively on board itself as much as possible. Procedures and guidelines set by the MLC (2006) must be followed to resolve such issues. The Notice has provided guidelines on how to form a Shipboard Enquiry Committee. Complaints must be given to them in writing which need to be addressed in 7 days.

The Directorate General of Shipping e-governance site has also provided an online forum 'Grievance report for female seafarers' where complaints can be registered. If there are any unresolved complaints, the 'Complaints Committee' onshore must be addressed and the issue must be resolved in a definite timeline. This Complaints Committee should include two senior women seafarers.

The complainant is only allowed to leave the ship if her safety is at risk or if the Shipboard Enquiry Committee decides.

Onshore, the law to be followed is The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, prohibition, and redressal) Act, 2013.

The rights and security of the job of the complainant should be safeguarded.

It is the shipowner's responsibility to provide a person of contact onshore for such redressal. It is also their responsibility to prevent such instances of harassment on their ship.

Title 3 establishes guidelines for gender sensitization on board. Regular training should be undertaken on board. All seafarers must go through onshore training before they join a ship. They must be sensitized to gender diversity and the ship's management should also mention this once the seafarer joins the ship.

Shipowners can also prepare training modules to prevent sexual harassment which outlines concepts including appropriate clothing, pornography and similar literature, appropriate language, etc.

### **7.10 Redressal of Complaints<sup>8</sup>**

The International Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) has provided multiple online portals where you can find the nearest ITF inspector and seek redressal.

The first ITF inspector was appointed in 1971 and today this has expanded to more than 140 inspectors in over 120 ports. These English-speaking officers are usually ex-seafarers who conduct regular checks of ships docked in their port. Some of their duties include:

- Inspect a ship for problems related to employment and living conditions.
- Advise what the legal possibilities are for resolving a particular problem in that port/ country.
- Apply pressure on a shipowner to resolve shipboard problems.
- Act as a representative for the crew in contractual disputes.

Every seafarer on international waters has the right to free translations and interpretations. They must be explained their legal rights and then be allowed to make an informed decision on seeking legal representation. According to Art.5 in MLC (2006), seafarers have the right to complain directly to their master, shipowner, or even external authorities.<sup>9,10</sup> They have the:

- Right to be accompanied or represented during the complaints procedure,
- Right not to be victimized for filing a complaint,
- Right of confidentiality throughout the process, and
- Right to seek redress for complaint using whatever legal means the seafarer considers appropriate.

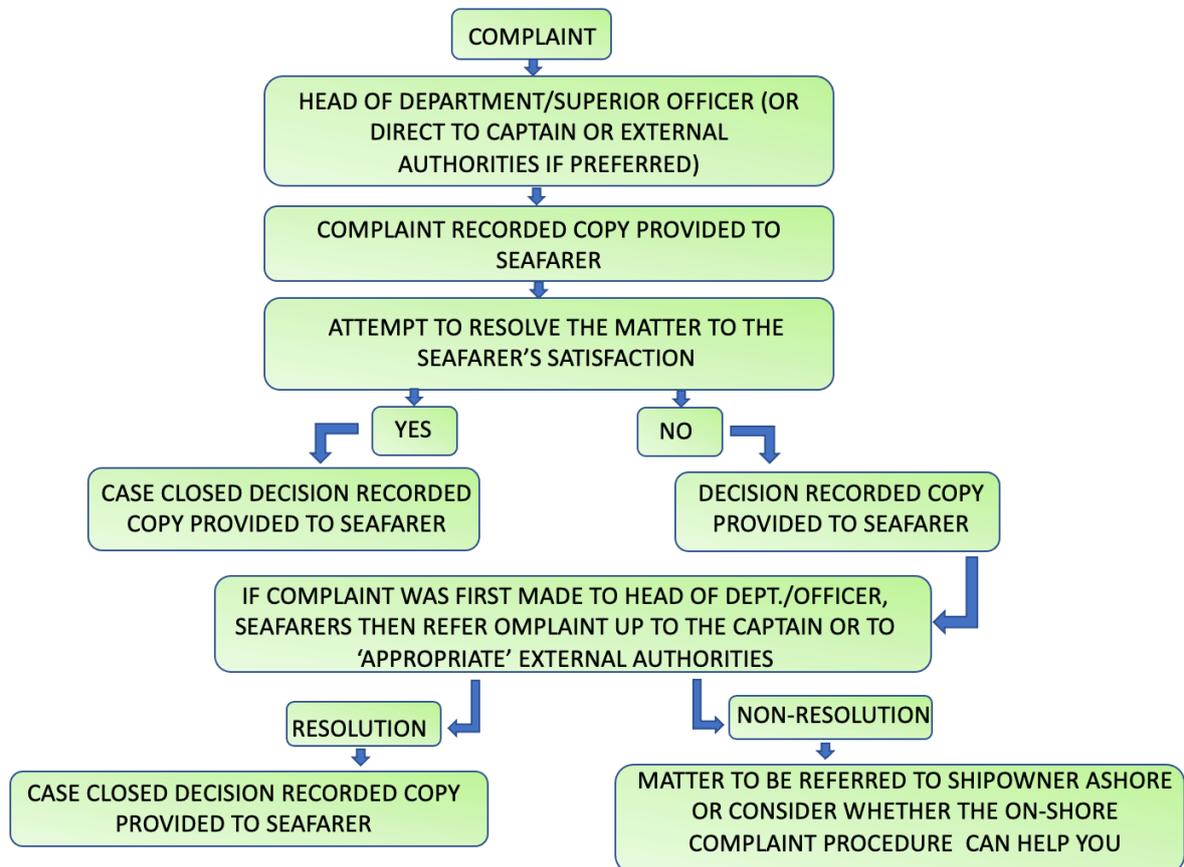
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<sup>8</sup><https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/look-up>

<sup>9</sup>[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---normes/documents/publication/wcms\\_177371.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/publication/wcms_177371.pdf)

<sup>10</sup><https://helpful.foundation/seafarer-complaints/>

Every ship must have its on board complaint procedure which must be provided to every seafarer on board. An appointed seafarer must integrate everyone on this procedure. Every complaint must be written and its proceedings are recorded methodically. According to the guidelines given by MLC (2006), the ITF has presented a flowchart for redressal of complaints.



## Module 8

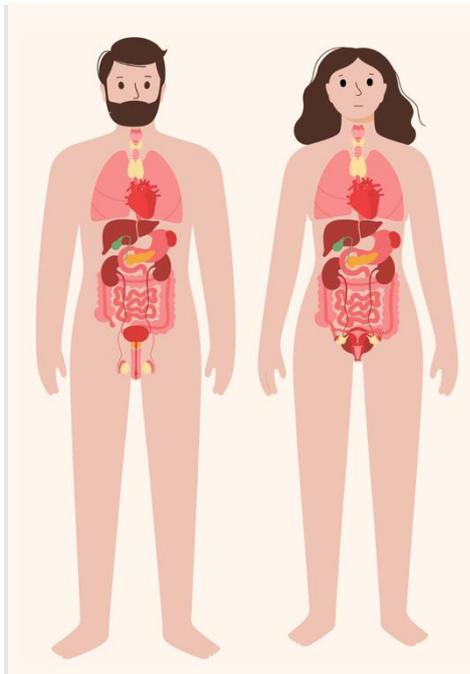
### Physical and Mental Health in Women Seafarers

Women and men are different not only in their distinct physical attributes but also in their psychological makeup. There are actual differences in the way female and male brains are structured and in the way they process information and react to events and stimuli. Women and men differ in the way they communicate, deal in relationships, express their feelings, and react to stress. Thus, gender differences are based on physical, physiological, and psychological attributes.<sup>1</sup>

#### 8.1 Physical Health

In physical health, it is important to understand the hormonal cycle of women.

#### Menarche (Menstruation)



Menarche, also known as the beginning of a female's monthly menstrual cycle, is the culmination of a series of physiological and anatomic processes of

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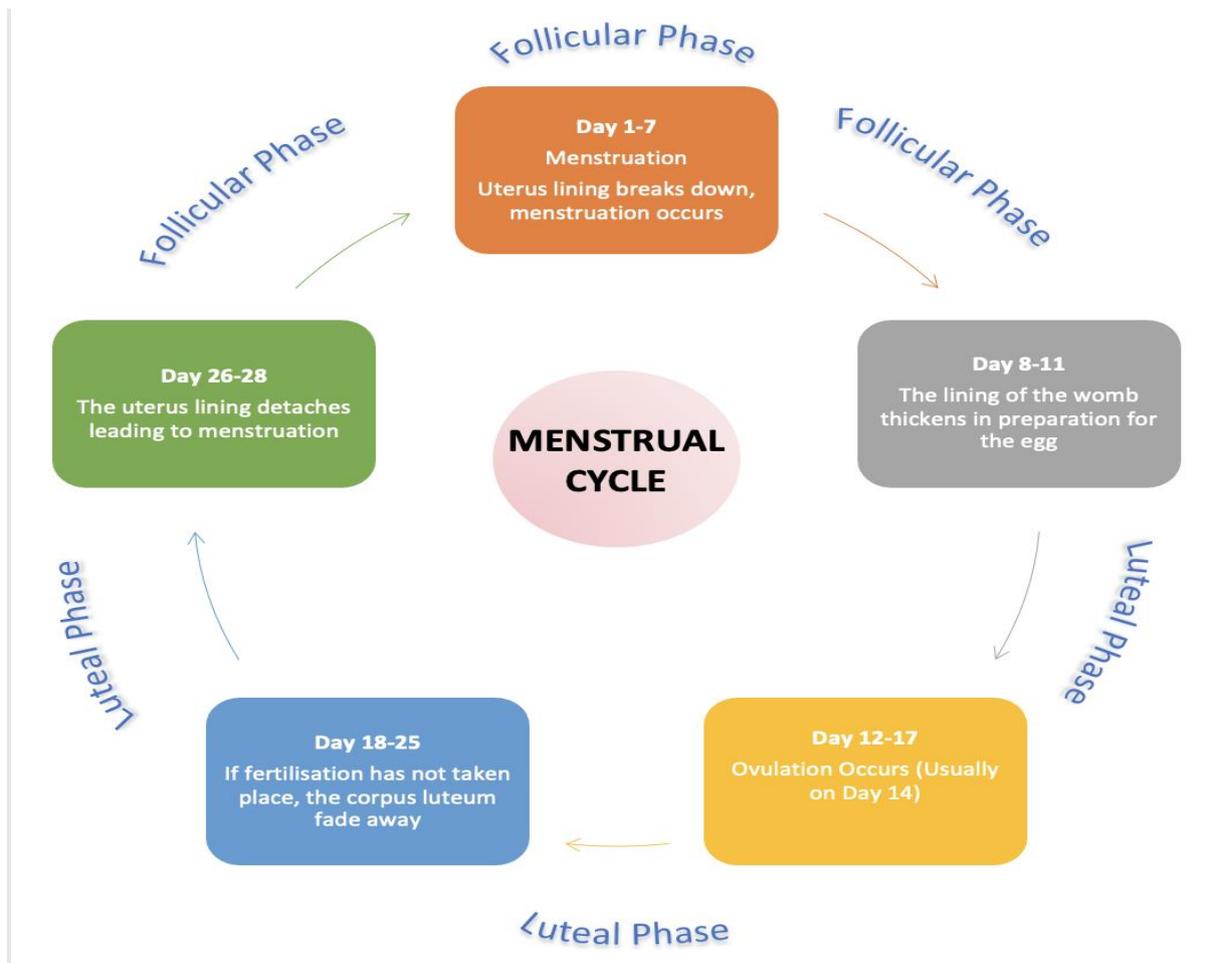
<sup>1</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4539863/>

puberty. During this period there are fluctuations in the hormonal levels leading to several changes in the body.

In some previous studies menarche, age was found to be positively associated with height and negatively associated with weight and BMI. The various factors, directly and indirectly, affecting the age at which menarche is attained are geographic, socioeconomic, and environmental.

Menarche is attained earlier by well-nourished adolescents. These adolescents look clumsy in the first phase of their development as the growth pattern is uneven including the lengthening of the calves and forearm followed by the hips, chest, and shoulder. Boys attain a surge in height after the age of 13 while a typical girl attains 95% of her adult height at about 1 year before menarche and the rest after attaining adolescence.

After the main growth spurt (the period during which the adolescent starts experiencing bodily changes) begin, it continues for 2–4 years at a much slower rate in boys whereas girls outperform boys in growth. The beginning of the increase in growth velocity is about age 11 in boys and 9 in girls but varies widely from individual to individual. The peak of height velocity in this study occurs at about 14 and 16 years.



A typical cycle lasts approximately 28 days; the luteal phase lasts 14 days, while the follicular phase is more variable in its time course.<sup>2,3,4,5,6,7,8</sup>

2 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK537132/>

3 <https://images.app.goo.gl/mR3S8PjFag19v6o39>

4 [https://www.google.com/search?q=menarche+hormonal+changes&rlz=1C9BKJA\\_enIN979IN980&hl=en-GB&prmd=invx&sxsrf=AOaemvIIAGCaMYBJSRNsMmYB08UHwcDeaw:1640846751973&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwivpKC-](https://www.google.com/search?q=menarche+hormonal+changes&rlz=1C9BKJA_enIN979IN980&hl=en-GB&prmd=invx&sxsrf=AOaemvIIAGCaMYBJSRNsMmYB08UHwcDeaw:1640846751973&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwivpKC-)

5 [https://www.google.com/search?q=menarche+hormonal+changes&rlz=1C9BKJA\\_enIN979IN980&hl=en-GB&prmd=invx&sxsrf=AOaemvIIAGCaMYBJSRNsMmYB08UHwcDeaw:1640846751973&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwivpKC-](https://www.google.com/search?q=menarche+hormonal+changes&rlz=1C9BKJA_enIN979IN980&hl=en-GB&prmd=invx&sxsrf=AOaemvIIAGCaMYBJSRNsMmYB08UHwcDeaw:1640846751973&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwivpKC-)

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6 [https://www.google.com/search?q=menarche+hormonal+changes&rlz=1C9BKJA\\_enIN979IN980&hl=en-GB&prmd=invx&sxsrf=AOaemvIIAGCaMYBJSRNsMmYB08UHwcDeaw:1640846751973&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwivpKC-](https://www.google.com/search?q=menarche+hormonal+changes&rlz=1C9BKJA_enIN979IN980&hl=en-GB&prmd=invx&sxsrf=AOaemvIIAGCaMYBJSRNsMmYB08UHwcDeaw:1640846751973&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwivpKC-)

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7 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3232023/>

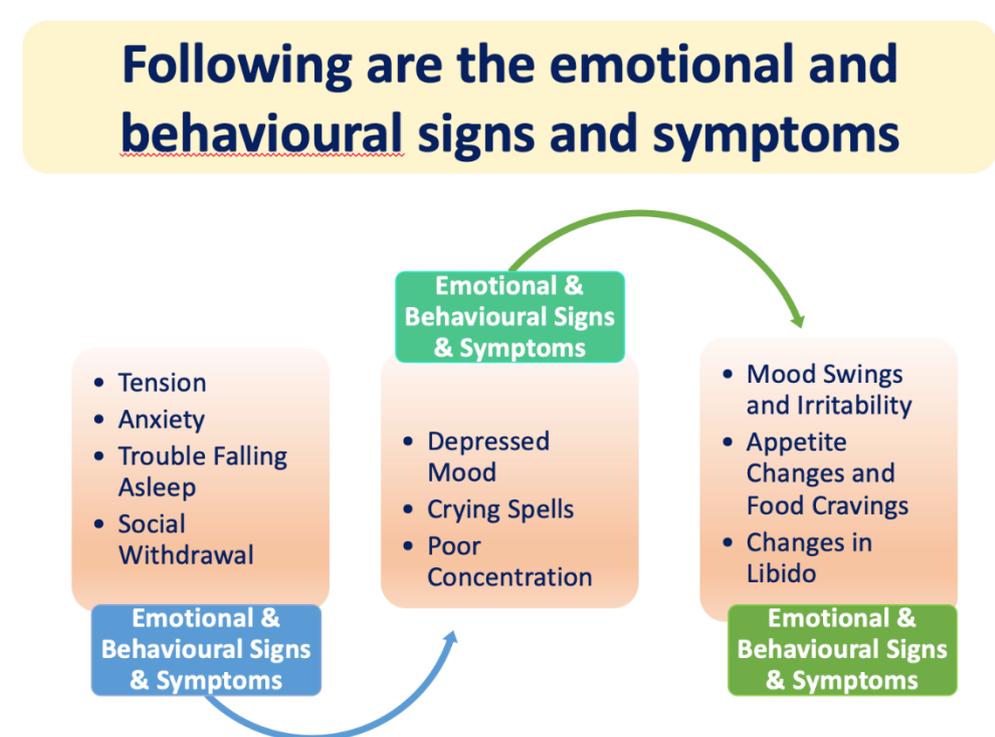
8 <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/155651>

## 8.2 Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)<sup>9</sup>

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) refers to behavioural and physical symptoms that recur in a predictable pattern every menstrual cycle. These symptoms can occur one or two weeks before menstruation begins and resolve once menstruation starts. PMS has a wide variety of signs and symptoms, including mood swings, tender breasts, food cravings, fatigue, irritability and depression. It is estimated that as many as 3 in every 4 menstruating women have experienced some form of premenstrual syndrome. To understand what the exact symptoms of PMS are, a woman must note down the physical and emotional symptoms for a few months.

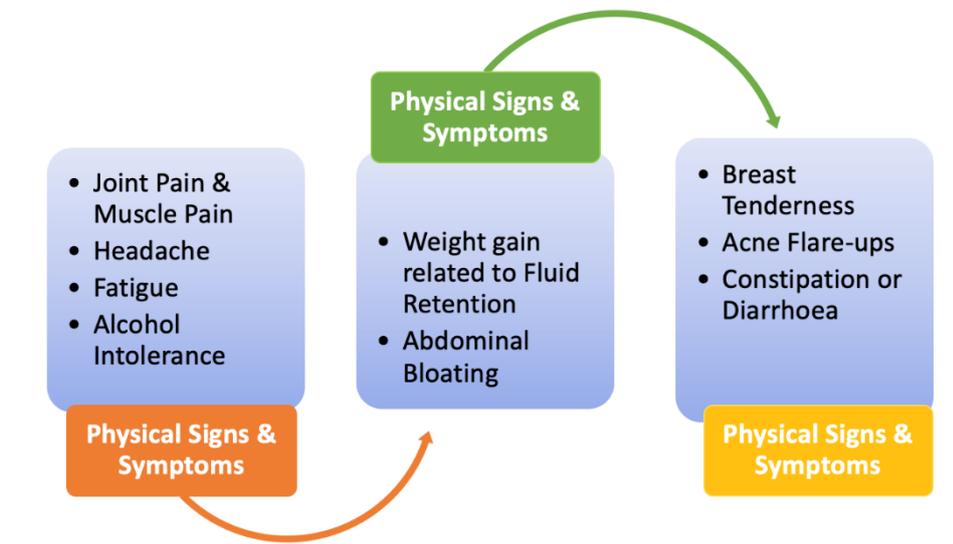
The physical and emotional changes that one experiences with PMS may vary from just slightly noticeable to outright intense.

The list of potential signs and symptoms for PMS is long, but most women only experience a few of these problems.



<sup>9</sup><https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/premenstrual-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20376780>

## Following are the physical signs and symptoms



For some, the physical pain and emotional stress are severe enough to affect their daily lives. Regardless of the severity, the signs and symptoms of PMS generally disappear within four days after the start of the menstrual period in most women. However, a small number of women with PMS have disabling symptoms every month. This form of PMS is called a premenstrual dysphoric disorder.

### 8.3 Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

This condition can affect women from any and all ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic backgrounds. PMDD is a chronic condition and can seriously impact a woman's quality of life. Self-care measures and various treatments are available to control the symptoms in most women.

PMDD signs and symptoms include depression, mood swings, anger, anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, difficulty concentrating, irritability and tension.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup><https://embrywomenshealth.com/difference-between-pms-vs-pmdd/>

## 8.4 Menopause

Menopause is the time that marks the end of one's menstrual cycles. Menopause is not a health problem, and some experience it as a time of liberation. However, hormonal changes and other factors involved can cause discomfort.

Menopause usually starts between the ages of 40 and 58 years in developed countries. The average age is 52 years.

## 8.5 Symptoms of Menopause

Various physical and mental changes can occur around the time of menopause, causing symptoms. Some of these start before menopause (perimenopause), and some continue after it. The changes involved in perimenopause and menopause include:

- **Lower fertility:** As a female approaches the end of the reproductive stage, but before menopause begins, estrogen levels start to fall. This reduces the chances of becoming pregnant.
- **Irregular menstruation:** Usually, the first sign of an approaching menopause is periods occurring less regularly. They may come more or less frequently than usual, and may be heavier or lighter. However, it is important for one to consult a doctor regarding concerns about menstrual changes as they may also indicate pregnancy or some other health issues.
- **Vaginal dryness and discomfort:** Vaginal dryness, itching, and discomfort may start during perimenopause and continue into menopause.
- **Hot flashes:** Hot flashes are common around the time of menopause. They cause a person to feel a sudden sensation of heat in the upper body. The sensation may start in the face, neck, or chest and progress upward or downward. A hot flash can also cause sweating and/or red patches to form on the skin. Some people also experience night sweats and cold flashes, or chills, in addition to or instead of hot flashes. Hot flashes

usually occur in the first year after menstruation ends, but can continue for up to 14 years after menopause.

- **Sleep Disturbances** - Sleep problems can arise during menopause, and they may stem from anxiety, night sweats and an increased need to urinate. Getting plenty of exercise and avoiding heavy meals before bedtime can help with managing these issues.
- **Emotional changes:** Depression, anxiety, and low mood are common during menopause. It is not unusual to experience irritability and crying spells. Hormonal changes and sleep disturbances can contribute to these issues. A person's feelings about menopause may come into play too. For example, distress about low libido or the end of fertility can contribute to depression during menopause.

While feelings of sadness, irritability, and tiredness are common during menopause, they do not necessarily indicate depression. However, anyone who experiences a low mood for 2 weeks or longer should see a doctor, who will be able to advise the best course of action.

There may, in some cases, be a link between menopause and suicide. Anyone who is thinking about suicide should seek help from a psychiatrist, psychologist or a trained medical or mental healthcare professional.

## **8.6 Physical Activity and Women<sup>11</sup>**

Social inequality, poverty and inequitable access to resources, including health care, result in a high burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) among women worldwide. Although women generally tend to live longer with NCDs than men, they are often in poor health.

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<sup>11</sup>[https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet\\_women/en/](https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_women/en/)

## 8.7 Benefits of Physical Activity

Regular physical activity can improve one's health and help prevent many of the diseases and conditions that are major causes of death and disability for women globally. Data suggest that many women suffer from diseases that are associated with inadequate participation in physical activity, such as:

- Cardiovascular diseases account for one-third of deaths among women around the world and half of all deaths in women over 50 years old in developing countries.
- Diabetes affects more than 70 million women in the world and its prevalence is projected to double by 2025.
- [Osteoporosis](#) is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break and is most prevalent in post-menopausal women.
- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women.

Physical Activity has also been associated with improved psychological health by reducing levels of stress, anxiety and depression. This is particularly important for women who demonstrate an incidence of depression that is reported to be almost double than that of men in both developed and developing countries. It has also been suggested that physical activity can contribute to building self-esteem and confidence, and can provide a vehicle for social integration and equality.

## 8.8 Reasons for Physical Inactivity in Women

The absence of physical activities is generally more prevalent among girls and women than their male counterparts. Many factors hinder the participation of women in physical activity and their access to health care, and are listed as below:

- An agreement may be required from senior members of the household who control household resources.
- Women often have workload at home and caregiving roles for other family members, which may limit the time available for them to engage in physical activity.

- Women who have limited mobility may be unable to travel to health centres or physical activity facilities.
- Cultural expectations may restrict the participation of women in certain forms of physical activity.

## 8.9 Appropriate Physical Activity for Women<sup>12</sup>

A relatively small number of physical disorders are unique to women, more prevalent or serious in women, or require special prevention or intervention strategies. Among the earliest of these to appear developmentally are precocious puberty, for which an effective treatment has recently been developed, and [anorexia](#) and [bulimia](#), which are increasing in frequency among young women without effective treatment. [Arthritis](#), [diabetes](#), [lupus erythematosus](#), [gallstones](#), and [osteoporosis](#) are other diseases in this category.

Reproductive health concerns are a major focus in the area of women's health.

### Some Key Points:<sup>13</sup>

- Physical activity need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits.
- Women of all ages benefit from a moderate amount of physical activity, preferably daily. The same moderate amount of activity can be obtained in longer sessions of moderately intense activities (such as 30 minutes of brisk walking) as in shorter sessions of more strenuous activities (such as 15-20 minutes of jogging).
- Additional health benefits can be gained through greater amounts of physical activity. Women who can maintain a regular routine of physical activity that is of longer duration or greater intensity are likely to derive greater benefit.
- Previously sedentary women who begin physical activity programs should start with short intervals (5-10 minutes) of physical activity and gradually build-up to the desired level of activity.

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<sup>12</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1478036/>

<sup>13</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/women.htm>

- Women with chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, or who are at high risk for these conditions should first consult a physician before beginning a new program of physical activity.
- Women over age 50 who plan to begin a new program of vigorous physical activity should first consult a physician to be sure about not having heart disease or other health problems.

The emphasis on moderate amounts of physical activity makes it possible for varied activities to meet individual needs, preferences, and life circumstances.

## **Facts**

### **Benefits of Physical Activity**

1. Reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.
2. Helps maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
3. Helps control weight, builds lean muscle, and reduces body fat.
4. Helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis.
5. May enhance the effect of estrogen replacement therapy in decreasing bone loss after menopause.
6. Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression and fosters improvements in mood and feelings of well-being.
7. Can help reduce blood pressure in some women with hypertension.

### **What Communities Can Do<sup>14</sup>**

- Provide environmental inducements to physical activity, such as safe, accessible, and attractive trails for walking and bicycling, and sidewalks with curb cuts.
- Open schools for community recreation, form neighbourhood watch groups to increase safety, and encourage malls and other indoor or protected locations to provide safe places for walking in any weather.

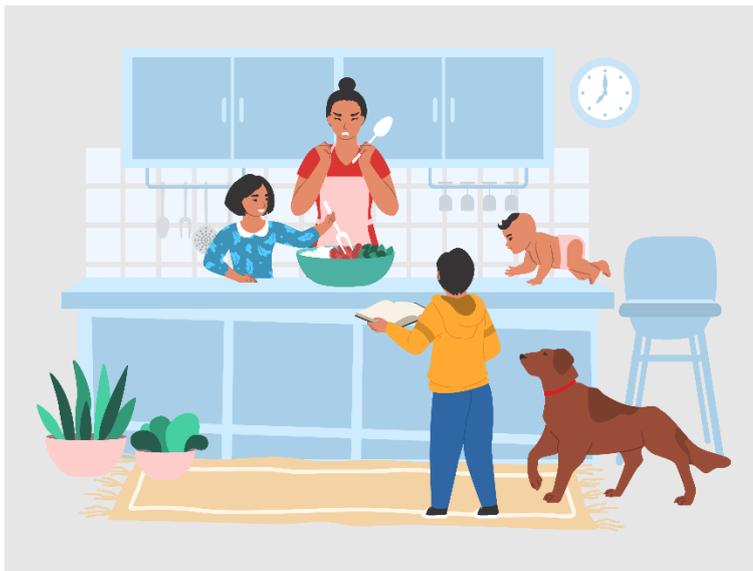
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<sup>14</sup><https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyiving/physical-activity-for-women>

- Encourage employers to provide supportive worksite environments and policies that offer opportunities for employees to incorporate moderate physical activity into their daily lives.
- Provide community-based programs to meet the needs of older women, women with disabilities, women of racial and ethnic minority groups, and women with low incomes.
- Include childcare arrangements to encourage the participation of women with children.
- Encourage healthcare providers to talk routinely to female patients about incorporating physical activity into their lives.

### 8.10 Barriers and Tips for Women to Overcome those Barriers to Exercise

- **Lack of time:** Many women juggle between child-rearing, household duties and paid work, and don't find time for themselves.



#### Tips

- Try to exercise whenever you get a chance.
- Three 10-minute bouts of physical activity over the day have the same health benefits as a continuous 30-minute session.
- Also building in activity with your children, such as walking to the shops or playing in the park, is a great way to stay active.



- **Lack of motivation:** Some women say they don't feel motivated without a training partner. Others think that to be useful, exercise must be painful, sweaty and gruelling (which isn't true).

### Tips



- Find a training partner if you feel this way.
  - One could also contact their local council or community centre for information on exercise clubs in your area. For example, one could join a local walking group.
- **Parenting demands:** Many women fulfil multiple household and caregiving responsibilities.



### Tips

- Try to share child-rearing and household chores with one's partner or friends.
- Perhaps the family could be of help, or maybe paid childcare can be considered.
- Ask friends if they are interested in swapping babysitting.



- **Lack of energy:** Fatigue is a by-product of a busy lifestyle. Mothers are often tired.



### Tips

- Exercising regularly gives the energy to better cope with the demands of daily life. If they keep this in mind, it may help them

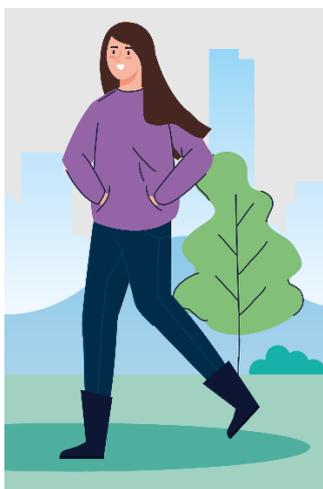
push past the tiredness during their first few weeks of regular exercise.



- **Health problems:** Older women are more likely to have a chronic health condition (for example, arthritis) that limits their participation in some forms of exercise. In most cases, physical limitations don't rule out all activities.

### Tips

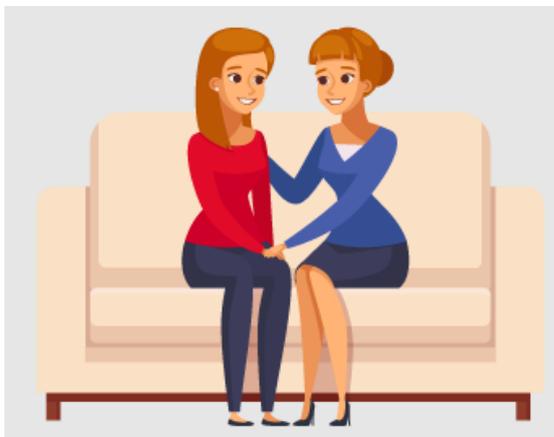
- Exercise doesn't require expensive clothes or a gym membership.
- One of the most beneficial forms of exercise is free – brisk walking.
- Most community centres offer a range of physical activity classes and childcare at modest prices.



- **Gender stereotyping:** Women who believe that child-rearing and domestic chores are ‘women’s work’ are less likely to take time to exercise – perhaps because they feel guilty taking time out for themselves.

### **Tips**

- If one feels this way, they should reevaluate their beliefs about women’s roles. It may be that sexism is one of their barriers.
- Talking to a counsellor can be helpful too.



### **8.11 Research article**

The authors of the research paper argue that discrimination plays a key role in the 'gender gap' in rates of mental illness. Women experience higher rates of most mental health conditions, including:

- **Depression**, which is **twice as prevalent** among women
- **Anxiety**
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**
- **Eating disorders**, which are **4–10 times** more prevalent in women

Women are also **1.5 times** more likely to attempt suicide than men, although men are more likely to die by suicide.

## 8.12 Effects of Gender Discrimination on Physical Health

Gender discrimination has direct and indirect effects on physical health. These include:

- **Physical Illness:** Some research suggests that experiencing discrimination is correlated with worse physical health. For example, a [2018 study](#) found that women who experience discrimination at work are more likely to report ill physical health, particularly women who have experienced sexual harassment. Stress from any source can also contribute to [many](#) chronic conditions, including chronic pain, high [blood pressure](#), and [diabetes](#).

Less healthy living conditions: Gender discrimination can also lead to a person having worse living conditions and less access to essentials for survival and thriving. Women also have lower savings in retirement and higher rates of poverty in comparison to men. Not only does this cause more stress, but it also reduces a person's ability to afford fresh food, safe housing, and [health insurance](#). This results in health inequity.<sup>15</sup>

- **Injury and death:** Discrimination in the form of violence also directly impacts health.<sup>16</sup>

## 8.13 Physical Health In Women Seafarers<sup>17</sup>

A research project was conducted during 2014–2015 jointly by representatives from the International Maritime Health Association (IMHA), International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and Seafarers Hospital Society (SHS). The study aimed to look at the health and welfare needs of women seafarers and how organizations can best make or campaign for improvements to the health information and services available to women seafarers. Participants were given a questionnaire. 595 responses were received from a range of nationalities, ages and positions on board ships.

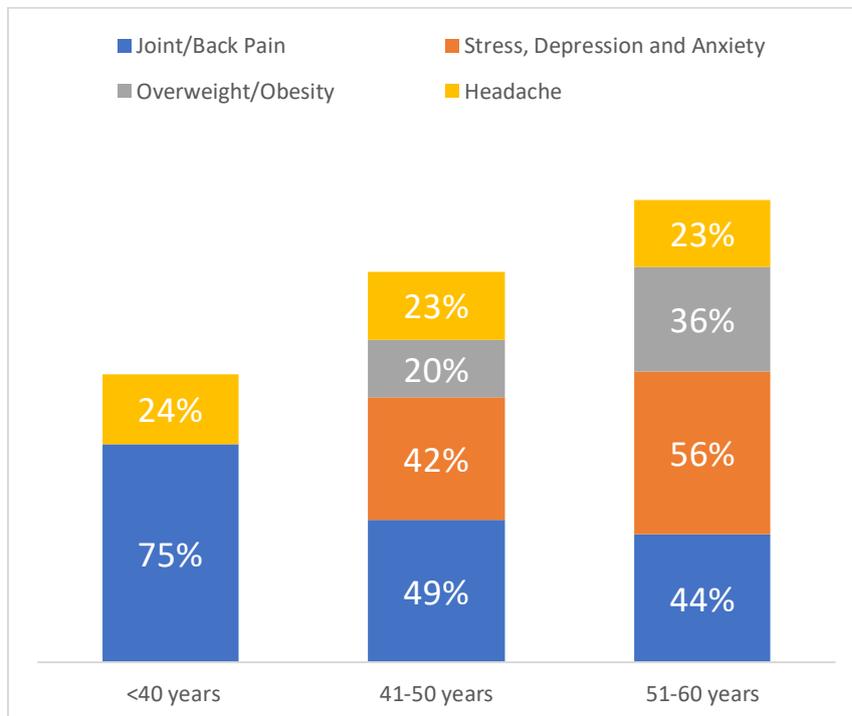
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<sup>15</sup><https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-gender-discrimination>

<sup>16</sup><https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-gender-discrimination>

<sup>17</sup>[https://journals.viamedica.pl/international\\_maritime\\_health/article/view/IMH.2015.0027/30330](https://journals.viamedica.pl/international_maritime_health/article/view/IMH.2015.0027/30330)

## 8.14 Health Challenges Related To Work



The projected findings from the survey conducted for women seafarers suggested that joint pain/back pain, stress/depression/anxiety and headache seem to be the most common symptoms reported by them. Over 55% of respondents felt that they experienced health issues because of their work, out of which 78% reported having ‘Stress/Depression/Anxiety’, 75% reported having ‘Joint/Back pain’; 75% mentioned that they are facing weight & obesity issues, and 70% reported having headaches. These numbers were very similar for both officers and ratings.

About 56% of ratings and 40% of officers reported ‘Joint/Back pain’. ‘Stress/depression/Anxiety’ was selected by a similar number of ratings and officers. 75% of the respondents who are under the age of 40 years selected ‘Joint/Back pain’ as a top health challenge. 56% of respondents from the age group of 51-60 years reports having ‘Stress/Depression/Anxiety’ and only 44% selected ‘Joint/Back pain’. For the respondents under the age of 50 years, about 42% selected ‘Stress/Depression/Anxiety’ and 44% said ‘Joint/Back pain’. In the age group of 51-60 years, about 36% of women chose ‘Overweight/Obesity’.

However, only about 20% of respondents chose ‘Overweight/Obesity’ in the age group of under 50 years.

It is important to note that respondents were not asked which specific health issues they felt were related to work, and as respondents were asked to select their top three health challenges, we cannot make a definite assertion about the link between a particular health challenge and a respondent’s role on board.

However, in the focus group sessions the following issues were reported in connection with joint/back pain:

- having to carry heavy trays while serving food/drinks;
- hallways too narrow to use trolleys;
- on some newer ships there is only one central galley, which adds to the burden of the restaurant personnel as they have to carry trays on escalators and through elevators between several decks;
- carrying passenger luggage to cabins;
- pressure to finish housekeeping work quickly (carrying linens in and out, putting linens back on beds).

### **8.15 Psychological Issues in Women Seafarers<sup>18</sup>**

‘Stress, depression and anxiety’ was the top reported concern for officers in the aforementioned survey (research project 2014–2015), although the number of ratings and officers reporting it was similar.

Gender is a critical determinant of mental health and mental illness. The morbidity associated with mental illness has received substantially more attention than the gender-specific determinants.

Gender determines the differential power and control that men and women have over the socioeconomic determinants of their mental health and lives, their social position, status and treatment in society, and their susceptibility and exposure to specific mental health risks. Gender differences occur particularly in the rates of common mental disorders - depression, anxiety and somatic complaints. These disorders, in which women predominate, affect approximately 1 in 3 people in the community and constitute a serious public health problem.

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<sup>18</sup><https://www.who.int/teams/control-of-neglected-tropical-diseases/yaws/diagnosis-and-treatment/mental-health-and-substances-use>

Unipolar depression, predicted to be the second leading cause of global disability burden by 2020, is twice as common in women.

Depression may be more persistent in women than men. More research is needed.

Reducing the overrepresentation of women who are depressed would contribute significantly to lessening the global burden of disability caused by psychological disorders.

The lifetime prevalence rate for alcohol dependence, another common disorder, is more than twice as high in men than women. In developed countries, approximately 1 in 5 men and 1 in 12 women develop alcohol dependence during their lives.

There are no marked gender differences in the rates of severe mental disorders like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder that affect less than 2% of the population.

The disability associated with mental illness falls most heavily on those who experience three or more comorbid disorders in which women predominate.

### **8.16 Raising Awareness! To Alarming Statistics on Women Mental Health**

- Depressive disorders account for close to 41.9% of the disability from neuropsychiatric disorders among women compared to 29.3% among men.
- Leading mental health problems of older adults are depression, organic brain syndromes and dementias. The majority are women.
- An estimated 80% of 50 million people affected by violent conflicts, civil wars, disasters, and displacement are women and children.
- The lifetime prevalence rate of violence against women ranges from 16% to 50%.
- At least one in five women suffer rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.

Through awareness and destigmatizing efforts, the physical health and mental health of women are now better understood by them and should seek help to ensure they receive the right care at the right time. This chapter is not to label any gender as more pathologically ill but just to highlight the differences in physical and mental health.

## Module 9

### Challenges Faced By Women Ratings Onboard

Ratings are skilled workers who cater to support tasks for members of various departments on ships. Ratings are involved in running their ships, and they work in deck, engineering or catering departments. The nature of their duties depends on the department they work in, but all are fully trained in basic seagoing and survival skills. Their work might require physical strength as they have to lift heavy weights many times.

Over the years, the number of seafarers on ships has gone down due to automation and technology on board, but the work to be done by people has remained the same and the work that ratings have to do has only increased.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, among ratings, the importance of physical strength in people of certain ranks has risen with there being a few people onboard to provide a helping hand.

While the number of women seafarers in higher ranks has increased in the past couple of decades in India, the number of women ratings has not increased as much among Indian seafarers.<sup>2</sup> There are some issues specifically faced by women ratings that need special attention.

#### 9.1 Work Stereotypes

The nature of work requiring physical strength creates a stereotypical belief that women are not suitable for it. Although it may be true for some women, it is certainly not a factor for most others. Physique also depends on a person's exercise and nutrition. Some women who might not be fit enough can always work to build their physique and maintain nutrition to improve on their physical strength. A person's physical strength is not only determined by their sex but also genetics.<sup>3</sup> Many women have as good physical strength as average men and some of them score better in this aspect than average men. Another fact that punctures this stereotype is the excellence of women in other sectors that

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<sup>1</sup>Bielic, Toni & Zec, Damir. (2004). Influence of Ship Technology and Work Organization on Fatigue. 110168. 12-2003.

<sup>2</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/there-is-very-little-awareness-among-masses-that-women-too-can-be-seafarers-suneeti-bala-5711788/>

<sup>3</sup>Silventoinen, K., Magnusson, P.K.E., Tynelius, P., Kaprio, J. and Rasmussen, F. (2008), Heritability of body size and muscle strength in young adulthood: a study of one million Swedish men. *Genet. Epidemiol.*, 32: 341-349. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gepi.20308>

require physical prowess such as the army, police services, paramilitary forces, agriculture, private security, combative sports, etc, to name a few. Seafaring is not the only profession requiring physical strength and thus this invalid stereotype.

## **9.2 Socio-Cultural Background of Ratings**

Ratings often come from a lower-middle-class background. Cultural norms in this stratum can discourage women from engaging in sports as well as physical activities that require muscle mass. Cultural norms can also sometimes discriminate between the nutritional needs of males and females in a family, ensuring proper nutrition and care for men while ignoring the needs of women, which can be one of the reasons for women not having enough physical power. It is well known that anaemia (wherein a person lacks enough healthy red blood cells that are essential in supplying oxygen to the body to ensure its healthy maintenance) is very prominent among poor Indian women. This also stands in the way of having enough endurance required for a rating's job on ships. Furthermore, having to be on cargo ships among a majority of men onboard can lead to opposition from family, friends and society for women coming from this socio-economic background.. As societal norms take many years to change unless more women ratings join the shipping industry, especially cargo ships, the stigma attached to one woman working among men on board will not go away.

## **9.3 Vocational Training Required for Ratings**

Oftentimes, women might not have the required training for some ranks such as oiler, wiper, motorman, bosun, etc. because of lack of adequate information and awareness on vocational training required for those ranks. Without the required vocational training, women will not be eligible for these jobs.

While awareness about the available training courses for various shipping-related careers needs to be enhanced, special efforts such as scholarships and quotas need to be considered as getting a job in the shipping industry can financially uplift a woman's family and bring gender equality in this aspect of seafaring subsequently.

## **9.4 Accommodation of Ratings**

The lifespan of a ship on an average is around 25 to 30 years. Several ships that are currently in use were designed in the days when the shipping industry was almost exclusive to men. These ships were designed to accommodate in a gender-blind way, and women joining ships as ratings were never even foreseen. These old ships do not have separate accommodation for men and women, with cabins in them being designed for shared accommodation for ratings. Given their cultural background, most women in India will not be comfortable in sharing a room with an unknown male colleague, and this becomes a major obstacle in employing more female ratings onboard. While there are some vacant single-accommodation cabins on ships, they are not meant for ratings. These accommodations can be used for women ratings. However, this can create another problem on board as male ratings might start feeling that women ratings are treated 'Special' and that they are being discriminated against because of being males. This may cause an attitude shift towards women ratings and men may refuse to cooperate with them. Changes at the design level of ships should be undertaken to tackle this problem. Also, there should be a discussion about this problem among the seafaring stakeholders.

### **Sharing and Cleaning of Common Toilets**

The use of common washrooms is another major concern on ships. Older ships have common washrooms for all ratings. The usage of common washrooms poses a challenge for Indian women and men who are used to having separate washrooms for the two genders, especially in public or workplaces. Common washrooms also increase the chances of sexual harassment as there is a possibility of men indulging in indecent acts against women. Besides, cleaning common toilets can be a difficult task as both men and women can find it uncomfortable to face a person of members of the other gender in the toilets when the cleaning process is underway.

### **Having Oversized Clothing**

Often, uniforms, security gear and shoes that are used on ships are designed keeping in mind the body size of average men. As a result, these essentials do not fit women properly. This problem might not be unique to women as slimmer

men on board may also not fit into them. However, making these essentials available by keeping all sizes in mind is necessary.

## 9.5 What is the Way Forward?

The problems of women ratings can have three types of solutions:

1. Immediate- This will require minor changes in the existing way of functioning.
2. Mid-term- This will require rulemaking from authorities and shipping companies.
3. Long term- Bringing changes in the mindset of seamen and society as a whole.

1. **Immediate Solutions**: Finding temporary, but immediate solutions to the most pressing issues faced by women onboard, such as accommodation and toilets, can be done on a ship-to-ship basis. Women ratings can at least be employed in newly designed ships in the beginning. Shipping companies can employ strict rules for tackling harassment of women on board and severe action should be taken against perpetrators. In such cases, perpetrators should be signed off instead of the women. At least some crewing companies should take the lead in employing more women ratings.
2. **Mid-term Solutions**: A recent survey has found that shipping companies lack practices to retain and hire women in the industry. Many high-ranking seafarers oppose women on their ships. This information is often kept a secret. Unless government authorities don't make rules and regulations based on the equality guaranteed to all by the Constitution, such discriminatory practices will continue.

The government should make laws that will keep a check on gender discrimination in the recruitment process. Strict laws to punish those who sexually harass women onboard should also be passed. Women's organizations, feminist groups and women seafarers' organizations should work hand in glove in bringing these changes at the government and administrative level. Quotas or incentives can be planned for women ratings to increase their numbers in the shipping industry.

3. **Long-term Solutions**: Change can be a difficult process. For all these years, men seafarers have become used to seeing only male members onboard. There can be resistance from many seamen about seeing seawomen on board. However, as the number of women onboard increases, a sense of change will start seeping into their mindset. Such a change has already happened in other professions, such as the police and armed forces, that were considered male-dominated in the past. If cases of harassment on board are dealt with strictly, the atmosphere on ships will become much safer for women. An assurance of safety and security will even drive a change in societal norms for women wanting to be a part of the profession.

## **9.6 Importance of Finding Solutions to the Problems of Female Ratings**

Real empowerment happens only and only when the masses are empowered. As women are excelling in every possible field in the world, gender equality in employment cannot be achieved unless every field is made accessible to women. Unless every post on the ship is made accessible to any and every woman wanting to and is qualifying/qualified for it, gender equality, in its true sense, will not be achieved.

Having any department or rank on the ship exclusively for men will only result in the continuation of gender stereotypes. Just like women going to space didn't demolish the stereotype that seafaring is not for women, having women in higher ranks will not demolish gender stereotypes among seafarers of lower ranks about them being tougher than women. In some countries like the United Kingdom, the percentage of women ratings onboard is almost equal to the percentage of women officers on board. Similarly in India, women ratings should get equal opportunity to work with respect and dignity on ships. Until they get that opportunity, gender sensitization efforts will be incomplete.

## **Module 10**

### **Education Among Seafarers**

“...there is nothing special about ships and shipping which should make it male-dominated, except habit.”

(Breaking down barriers, Lloyd’s List, 2008, 11)

Since the United Nations included ‘Women Empowerment’ as its official goal, the world has tried making reforms to improve women’s living conditions. Be it providing them free education or reserving seats in the cabinet, several nations have come together to empower women. However, there is still a major gap in the lived experiences of men and women who possess similar job roles.

For instance, according to a global report from the United Nations (2015), 77% of men of working age were employed whereas only 50% of women of working age were employed. This shows the nature of the workforce and its prejudice against women that is still pertinent today.

Seafaring for so many decades was a male-dominated field and, to some extent, it still is today. The culture among men is such that it becomes difficult for them to accept the presence of a woman onboard.

#### **10.1 Current Scenario in the Seafaring Community**

A Polish study in 2014 identified the major areas of diversity in seafarers’ education and recruitment process that may dissuade a woman from joining the service. According to the paper, a lot of it had to do with people’s outlook and their receptivity towards women seafarers.

When the researchers asked female students what their biggest fear was when starting this line of education, they pointed out some components such as:

- Them being the only female in class (13%).
- Not being hired (31%).
- Unsure about this career choice as the family hadn’t accepted it (5%).

When Myrna GalangDaite was admitted to the Philippines Merchant Marine Academy as the first female officer, the male students held a protest at this

admittance ('First Philippine woman', Jan/Feb 2000). The question we need to ask ourselves is why they thought it was okay to protest against a woman joining their academy. These male students probably were functioning under the biased perception that women did not belong in their academy and this manifested in the form of a protest.

Why does this biased perception exist? Why do men feel like they have a choice on where females can or cannot go? Who is inculcating such ideologies in men?

Marine recruiters may not be advertising vacancies at the level that those from other professions do. To add to that, when advertisements go with phrases such as 'Females can also apply', it does more damage than good. This gives off the impression that men are the target population, but they are legally liable to look into women's applications as well. Practices such as these deter women from applying as they feel unwelcomed from the very beginning. Moreover, a lot of countries still have not bridged the pay gap between genders, which dissuades a lot of women from joining this industry. Research has also shown faster promotion and growth for men in the industry as compared to women who start on the same level as them.

Companies often do not recruit women due to the age-old perception of 'family-work' balance. The stigma that women must stay at home once they are married as they will then have children to take care of continues to be prevalent. Men do not undergo this obligation and are believed to be capable of sailing and managing a family simultaneously.

Women who have graduated from a maritime academy find it very difficult to be recruited by an agency. They are turned away by citing reasons such as:

- The agency does not hire women
- Absence of provisions to accommodate women
- Hiring women will be expensive due to the added care

Oftentimes, even after joining, they face the brunt of preconceived notions held by the rest of the crew onboard. Officers do not give female ratings physical labour which increases resentment among male ratings. Women may not be assigned certain tasks such as lifting heavy ropes or boxes simply because the officers may feel women won't be able to do those tasks. Women are also

considered as a distraction onboard and shunned from certain tasks or areas on the ship.

Female seafarers are considered to be physically weaker than men. Shipowners and crew prefer having men in their teams because they are believed to be ‘an appropriate fit’. While the male anatomy may naturally be stronger than the female anatomy, exercise and fitness training can prepare a woman for the labour prerequisites onboard. However, quite often, women are denied the opportunity to physically train alongside men in training academies.

In a conversation with an Indian female captain, she mentioned the lack of opportunities women have to work out in the training institutes, which puts them at a disadvantage. She mentioned, ‘They (women) should have chances to train, especially (to) increase their upper body strength.’

Some ships are termed ‘women friendly’ owing to their structural provisions such as sleeping quarters and bathroom facilities. However, women may face challenges even then in terms of the equipment available on board. For instance, ships only have uniforms that fit an average male body. Women find it difficult to get a uniform that fits them to work efficiently.

## **10.2 Role of Family**

Another major deterrent for women in joining the academy, let alone the profession, is the approach by their families. When women express their desire to pursue the nautical sciences/marine engineering, it is their family’s responsibility to respond maturely and practically. Harshly dismissing the notion can impact a woman’s self-esteem and motivation altogether. Families must educate themselves about this line of profession and the respectable nature of the various jobs therein.

Support from one’s immediate family can, to a great extent, impact one’s intention and drive to see this through. It will result in lesser dropouts and turnovers.

Women are naturally more emotionally sensitive than their male counterparts. Some of them may find it difficult to stay away from their families for months together. However, it would be irresponsible of us to generalize this notion and assume that all women and no men face this struggle. This psychological

construct must be assessed scientifically rather than giving into age-old norms about the human psyche. The Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy (NVNA) saw an increase in the total number of female graduates from 3 in 2012 to 14 in 2016. While this may show an increase in the overall number, it must be kept in mind that this increase of 11 female graduates was across a span of 4 years. According to research on the analysis of female interest in maritime education, the number of women enrolling in navigation increased from 5 in 2012 to 20 in 2018. However, on the other hand, the number of women in the engineering and electrical sectors of the maritime industry grossly reduced.

### **10.3 Area of Improvement**

Any development in the field of education and training must happen at the developmental stage. Children, regardless of their gender, must be encouraged from a young age to pursue the field they wish to work in. They must be provided with realistic information on fields of science and technology. It is the responsibility of adults to nurture future generations in a way that doesn't inculcate biased or stereotypical views.

Education and academic counsellors should update their bank of information and include the scope of the maritime field. They must stay informed of the qualifications required in the field and various job prospects available. This helps in breaking misconceptions and misinformation that some may have and allows young people to know that seafaring is a viable career option.

Fields like engineering and maritime are treated as 'male-oriented' and women are made to feel like they don't belong there. There are comments like

“Women are not good drivers.”

“Women don't have an eye for detail.”

When women are raised with such ethos, they grow up believing they cannot make it in certain fields. When men are raised with such ethos, they grow up believing the same about women.

Improvement starts with change and change starts with intention. We must all inculcate the intention of growing but not at someone else's expense. When

women are berated or dismissed for entering a profession, we are forbidding their growth.

Besides inculcating a gender-neutral attitude from school, some other changes that can be inculcated in the academic front for seafarers is sensitization. Men only see men around them right from the academy. They are in tune with each other, enjoy a camaraderie, and are aware of possible concerns they may face. When a woman enters the space, men suddenly find themselves in an unchartered territory. They feel like they cannot be themselves around women.

Men must also be introduced to the experiences and concerns that women face. The intention should be awareness and nothing else. Knowing the struggles women face simply because of their gender can help men to grow into people who ask rather than assume.

#### **10.4 Efforts Taken**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has taken great effort to encourage increased involvement of women in the maritime industry by introducing gender-specific fellowships, increasing women's access to high-level technical training, and raising the number of high-ranking women in the industry.

The gender-specific fellowships by the IMO are as follows:

- Women in Port Management course, Galilee International Management Institute (GIMI), Israel
- Courses on Women in Port Management, L'Institut Portuaire d'Enseignement et de Recherche (IPER), France
- AtoN managers courses, International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), France

Furthermore, the International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) allocates 50% of its reservation for women in accordance with the guidelines set by the IMO.

## **Module 11**

### **Gender-Sensitive Communication**

Language is one of the primary aspects that determine how we understand the world, including how we think and behave. Word choices often contain unspoken ideas about gender roles.

Gender-sensitive language is the language that is gender-inclusive (or gender-neutral) and does not discriminate against gender identities and/or groupings. Using male pronouns or nouns for mixed-gender groupings, or defaulting to 'he/him' when a person's gender is uncertain or ambiguous, are instances of non-gender-inclusive language.

It is critical to remember that a poor choice of words, regardless of their intent, might be viewed as discriminating, insulting, or prejudiced. Especially at the workplace, language is a key aspect of creating a culture in which everyone feels welcome and included.

Avoiding gender discrimination begins with language. The use of gender-biased terminology impacts attitudes and expectations of people and may downgrade women or promote a stereotypical picture of masculine and feminine roles.

#### **11.1 Using Gender-Sensitive Language**

Our use of language frequently perpetuates gender stereotypes, which frequently leads to preconceptions about men and women. It is critical to avoid employing them since gender stereotypes confine and diminish both men and women, offering false representations.

It is critical not to portray specific occupations or roles as solely suited for, or held by, men and women. Doctors, for example, are males, whereas nurses are females.

It is also crucial not to indicate that women and girls are more timid than men and boys, or that females are submissive while males are dynamic. Similarly, statements that stereotype women's or men's conduct or mental processes should be avoided. Gender stereotypes, for example, are used when depicting males as aggressive or violent, and when describing women as emotional or submissive.

## **11.2 Body Language/Communication at Sea**

Body language encompasses all nonverbal modes of communication. Non-verbal is any communication made without the use of words. Facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other movement-based cues are all examples of body language. To communicate clearly and effectively, body language is usually linked with vocal information. Body language is one of the most important aspects of communication in many settings.

Not all body language is universal. There are differences in the way women and men emote and communicate. In order to prevent miscommunication, it is important to understand and learn the basics of different signals that can propagate appropriate body language in the workplace.

In the workplace, body language may convey a range of meanings. Body language is used in both private and public communication. Every time you talk to a co-worker, are in a meeting or introduce yourself to someone, you are making use of body language.

## **11.3 Facial Expressions and Eye Contact**

When you're talking to more than one person, make eye contact with each one of them to establish a stronger connection and to determine if they're paying attention.

Keeping too much eye contact may offend people. Making no eye contact may give the impression that you are insecure. If you're not used to making eye contact, it may seem awkward or frightening at first, but persevere and you'll become used to it.

Smiling, frowning, or rolling your eyes are examples of facial expressions.

## **11.4 Body Movements and Gestures**

Motions and movements of various body parts such as the head, hands, and so on are important in sending signals through body language. Without the need to talk or write, such body languages send signals that have linguistic equivalents.

Though distinct body gestures and movements have varied cultural meanings in different nations, they are nonetheless commonly employed for convenience.

Waving, encouraging someone to come closer, or counting on your fingers are all examples of hand gestures.

Slumping, sitting up straight, or leaning away from someone are all examples of postures.

Other indications, such as shrugging, clapping, or shaking someone's hand are also nonverbal cues that may convey our thoughts and feelings.

### **11.5 Personal Distances**

Personal space and personal distance vary depending on the individual. Everyone has their own concept of personal distance, which is the comfortable distance that they prefer to maintain from another person. Gender, on the other hand, frequently influences one's perception of personal distance.

In a professional setting, maintaining correct closeness is always regarded as positive body language. Some individuals like close communication and getting their messages through, while others are uneasy with less distance. Because the meaning of closeness varies by culture, you should use utmost caution while employing this body language. Maintaining a social distance may be advantageous in the job in terms of winning the trust of the other person. Maintaining such a distance that you aren't too close while maintaining a healthy vocal tone and good eye contact is more important.

When you are involved in a professional conversation or discussion, it is best to keep a formal distance between you and the other person. Personal space is defined as 4 to 8 square feet of space surrounding the body. When you violate this gap and move closer, bear in mind that the other person may become uncomfortable and annoyed. Crossing this line can lead to major problems at work.

### **11.6 Touch**

One needs to be extremely sensitive and alert when the issue of touch comes up. A physical touch is basically crossing a personal space, boundary and limit, and

may be interpreted as aggressive or unwarranted, making the other person feel uncomfortable.

The way men communicate and use touch among themselves should not be used as a thumb rule to be universally applied to other genders. In case of an unintended touch, an apology while maintaining a safe distance is most important and will clear the air and prevent misunderstanding.

Even if the occasion is celebratory or one that requires consoling, avoid physical contact and use that as a benchmark to stay safe on a personal level and ensuring that the opposite gender is comfortable in your presence. In unavoidable situations that require you to reach out and assist someone, vocalize your intentions in terms of physical contact that is required for safety.

## **11.7 Understanding Body Language**

- **Keep an eye out**

The first step in comprehending body language is to become aware of it. Improving your observation abilities may be simpler than you think. You most certainly understand body language daily without even recognizing it.

Think of the kindest employee you've ever met at work. Do they grin at you as you walk down the hall? When you speak to them, do they keep eye contact and nod? Their appropriate body language almost certainly adds to your perception of them as friendly.

Improving your ability to observe body language will need you to become more aware. In terms of body language, mindfulness involves making a concerted effort to observe other people and their activities. If you concentrate on being acquainted with others' regular standards of conduct, you will have a higher chance of appropriately understanding their nonverbal communication. Typically, bouncing or wiggling your leg under the table indicates unease. However, if you see that your boss always shakes their leg when they are pleased or interested, you will be able to appropriately understand that body language.

- **Be understanding**

One of the greatest methods of comprehending another person's body language is by trying to understand their point of view. You can get a better sense of what someone's body language is expressing by examining their personality or the specifics of their environment.

For example, if you meet a co-worker and they avoid eye contact, squeeze their lips together, and cross their arms, you could assume they are upset or annoyed with you. However, if you are ready to sympathize, you may discover that they are under a great deal of stress due to an impending deadline. You obtain a better understanding of their body language and what it expresses by taking into account their surroundings.

- **Be self-aware**

The third step towards improving your body language is to become more self-aware of your own nonverbal cues. You can be an expert at reading other people's body language, but if you are unaware of your own, you may not be communicating effectively. Being conscious of your body language is being aware of how you physically connect with others, controlling your facial expressions, and being deliberate with your motions. You may acquire an ability to express attention, involvement, and professionalism through body language by practising effective nonverbal communication.

## **11.8 Understanding Differences in Communication across Cultures**

The sailing profession attracts and draws a wide variety of applicants and job seekers across continents, boundaries and widely varying cultural backgrounds. This cross-cultural collection of individuals from both genders will be teamed together for months at a stretch on the high seas. They will need to understand the importance of working cohesively as one unit and this is possible if a healthy atmosphere and work culture is ensured. Any kind of discomfort caused deliberately/ inadvertently on account of varying backgrounds puts a speck in the smooth functioning of the unit.

While people across cultures might interact and present themselves in a manner that they are traditionally used to, this may be seen as potentially unacceptable in some cultures. Hence, the need to ensure that as far as possible people speak the same language which ensures clarity and leaves no doubt in the mind of people about attitudes, temperaments, or intentions.

## INDIA

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When meeting or leaving in India, males frequently shake hands

On the overall, Indians dislike flatly refusing something or someone

They use their right hand to give or accept anything

Indians don't stand too near to other people. They avoid standing at an arm's reach of others

They refer to people by their professional titles (doctor, professor, etc.) or by Mr. or Mrs., followed by their last name

In Indian culture, elders and superiors are greeted first

Displays of affection in public are discouraged

## SRI LANKA

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Many Sri Lankan women avoid establishing physical contact with males outside of their families. Thus, it is always best to wait to see whether a woman extends her hand for a handshake.

The most prevalent form of greeting is shaking hands. Firm handshakes are used.

Greetings are exchanged at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Men may shake hands with other men, whereas women may shake hands with other women.

## BANGLADESH

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If you come from a culture where direct communication is the norm, it's critical that you soften your message and elaborate where feasible. Also, try to pay attention to the context in which your Bangladeshi colleague speaks.

Personal space is less of a problem in Bangladesh than it is in many European countries.

Be mindful of visual cues, potential silence, body language, and what is not said in addition to what is stated (that is reading between the lines)

Unless a woman extends her hand, foreign males should not nod to Bangladeshi women for a handshake.

If you're speaking with someone of the opposite sex, though, you should give them more personal space and avoid making extended eye contact.

In Bangladesh, business etiquette is rather formal. It is anticipated that you behave properly.

When men arrive and leave, they greet each other with a handshake.

## RUSSIA

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Russians are transactional, meaning they don't need to build long-term personal relationships with someone before doing business with them.

When you initially initiate contact, it's preferable to err on the side of formality.

A hard, almost bone-crushing handshake is the standard greeting, with direct eye contact and the proper salutation for the time of day.

When men and women shake hands, the grip is less firm.

When female friends meet, they kiss each other three times on the cheek, beginning with the left and then alternating.

When close male friends get together, they may hug and pat each other on the back.

## UKRAINE

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A warm, strong handshake is standard, as is maintaining direct eye contact and repeating one's name.

When female friends meet, they kiss each other three times on the cheek, starting with the left and then alternating, but close male friends may pat each other on the back and hug.

When you arrive and leave, shake hands with everyone.

Handshakes should be firm.

Maintain eye contact while greeting someone

## POLAND

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In general, greetings are reserved but cordial.

A firm handshake, direct eye contact, a smile, and the suitable greeting for the time of day will suffice when welcoming someone.

Handshakes are firm, and eye contact is highly regarded.

Wait for a woman to reach out and extend her hand.

When meeting a woman, some older businessmen may kiss her hand. It's best not to replicate this behaviour because it is seen as poking fun.

## AFRICA

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Men should wait for a lady to extend her hand first before approaching her.

In business, handshakes are the most popular greeting.

## PHILIPPINES

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Initial greetings are formal, with the eldest or most significant person being addressed first.

The usual greeting is a handshake with a warm smile.

When close female friends meet, they may hug and kiss.

Use academic, professional, or honorific titles, as well as the person's surname, until you're asked to use their first name, or more commonly, their nickname.

## GERMANY

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Formal greetings are used.

The typical welcome is a short, firm handshake.

Titles are highly significant and convey a sense of respect.

Use a person's title and surname until they have asked to use their first name.

## ITALY

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The greetings are enthusiastic yet polite.

Between strangers, the standard handshake with direct eye contact and a grin suffices.

Air-kissing on both cheeks, starting with the left, is usual after a connection is made, as is a pat on the back between men.

## CHINA

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Chinese people value their personal space and dislike over-familiarity

Touching is only permitted between family members and close friends.

Prolonged eye contact may be perceived as aggressive, whilst avoiding eye contact may be perceived as respectful rather than disrespectful.

## UNITED

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## KINGDOM

The British have an intriguing blend of communication methods that includes both subtlety and straightforward communication.

When welcoming, it is customary to shake hands with everyone present, even youngsters.

When departing a social or commercial encounter, it is customary to shake hands. Handshakes should be light and courteous, not overly firm.

Unless clearly encouraged to use the first name, last names should be used with the appropriate title.

When interacting with people from different backgrounds, both sides need to be aware of the cultural differences and maintain necessary decorum and protocol. An attempt should be made to be aware of the do's and don'ts and basic etiquettes to ensure that confusion doesn't ensue.

## **11.9 Do's and Don'ts while communicating with women from different nationalities**

### **Don'ts**

- Do not speak to someone in a humiliating tone.
- Don't make assumptions about women, especially those from foreign cultures.
- Don't assume that a culturally diverse individual is representative of all members of his or her cultural group.
- Don't participate in actions that single out a culturally diverse individual, especially if that person is a member of your workplace's minority.
- Do not ask inappropriate questions related to someone's personal factors such as relationships, gender, etc.
- Do not try to speak or act like a culturally different person if you are not familiar with that particular culture.
- Don't make assumptions about women who talk freely with the opposite sex and dress the way they want.

### **Do's (General Etiquette)**

- If in doubt, it is always better to ask/enquire. This is most likely to cause the least amount of offence.
- Addressing a senior as 'Sir' or 'Ma'am' is generally safe.
- When in doubt, watch how others are behaving appropriately and inculcate that in yourself.
- Learn how women from another culture may interpret your beliefs, attitudes, actions, and communication style, for example, they may see humour as not taking things seriously. Seek input from your co-workers or a friendly party in the opposite culture.
- Approach each woman as an individual, not as a stereotype. Understanding the values, expectations, and beliefs that drive behaviours in other cultures should inform, rather than lead, your actions toward an

individual. Nothing is determined by culture, but everything is shaped by it.

- If you are unclear about what is suitable, be more organized and communicate more explicitly rather than less. Remember to communicate clearly and at an acceptable speed and level of language when speaking, but never disregard / snub the other persons interjections / views without paying attention or understanding properly.
- Inquire about how each individual likes to be addressed. Avoid using casual terms or terms of endearment such as “sweetie, dear, love”. Learn how to say and spell the names of the individuals you work with correctly. Discuss their expectations and how you can respect their position and the value they bring.
- Assume nothing: a grin and a handshake do not always indicate agreement; "yes" might imply "no", not smiling does not always indicate unfriendliness, and silence does not always indicate disagreement. Ask inquiries and be prepared to be adaptable. It is far simpler to influence your own conduct than it is to influence someone else's.

### **11.10 What to do When Faced with an Uncomfortable Situation?**

Unfortunately, there is no single "optimal" approach to respond to inappropriate or insensitive behaviour in every situation, whether in public or at work. Women can determine for themselves, based on what is occurring, where it is happening, and who is doing it, whatever reaction will make them feel secure and powerful.

Most individuals understand how to ignore, but many may not know how to respond assertively. Learning assertive replies is critical since they are often the most successful at holding the harasser accountable for his or her acts and discouraging future harassment, as well as feeling empowered to the wronged individual. Do not hesitate or be over-awed by a superior designation/position in the organization. There are clear guidelines against sexual harassment which are applicable to all irrespective of hierarchical positions

Some ways:

- Use assertive body language. Look the person in the eyes and say loudly and clearly. Name the inappropriate conduct and indicate why it is so. "Do not call me like that" for example, or "Do not touch me, I don't like it."

- Demonstrate assertiveness and power through your voice and facial gestures, and project confidence and composure. Even if you don't feel that way, it's crucial to project a sense of calmness, seriousness, and confidence.
- Do not apologise, provide an explanation, or ask a question. You don't have to apologise for how you feel or what you desire.
- You are not required to reply to diversionary tactics, questioning, threats, blame, or guilt-tripping. Maintain your stand. Keep your point in mind. You have the option of repeating your comment or leaving.
- When you're through, make a decision. If you've spoken what you needed to say and are ready to leave, do so.
- Attack the behaviour, not the individual. Tell them what you don't like about what they're doing ("You're standing too close to me and I do not like that") rather than condemning them as a person ("You're a stupid person").

### **11.11 Things to Keep in Mind while Communicating with the Other Gender**

- While addressing women, it is very important to use the right tone, the right language, stay on the subject matter and do not meander while completely avoiding the use of expletives and profanities (for example, abusive language or swear words) which are so common in male talk. The way men interact with each other is very different from how they interact with women. Usage of swear words and expletives may be quite normal among men, but is not so common in communication between women.
- The tone has to be measured, polite and business-like and the manner of speaking should make the opposite sex feel comfortable and equal rather than someone who is being talked down to.
- Do not digress into local dialect and ensure that the conversation doesn't foster any inherent/ inbred prejudices, biases and stereotypes.
- Avoid personal remarks and comments, compliments about appearance, dressing style or questions of a personal nature like relationship status. These are strictly off the table and a strict no-no in business and everyday communication.

- Inappropriate language and prolific use of cuss words and profanities tread the thin line between what is socially unacceptable. It is important to be sensitive about the use of language or colloquial slang as these can often be perceived as boorish and inappropriate.
- Any line of conversation that invades a personal space or a boundary has to be immediately discarded. Steer away from a conversation involving expletives, profanities and excessive use of double meaning terms and crude humour. Draw a line and try to understand how the two sexes interact with each other.
- Be more careful while working in a diverse multicultural/multinational work environment. Being aware of cultural differences and what is socially unacceptable necessitates that all due caution is exercised.
- Engaging in professional, well-worded communication and avoiding the use of expletives goes a long way in building bridges based on mutual respect and trust.

## Module 12

### Occupational Sexism

Traditionally, women were discouraged from focusing on anything other than domestic responsibilities. Education and employment were accessible only to men once upon a time, while females were looked at as the subordinate sex and expected to dedicate themselves to caregiving and caretaking. We are now in an era where women have broken glass ceilings and are walking shoulder-to-shoulder with men in every walk of life. Yet, unfortunately, they continue to experience gender stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination that often surface in the form of sexism.

The word sexism emerged from the second wave of the feminism movement between the 1960s and 1980s.<sup>1</sup> It is said to have been coined by Pauline M. Leet in 1965 in her writing ‘Women and the Undergraduate’, highlighting gender inequality.<sup>2</sup> The Oxford dictionary defines sexism as an unfair treatment meted out to people, especially women, simply based on their sex. A sexist outlook or belief is the one that holds one sex – mostly male – as superior over the other – mostly female. In that, sexist individual discounts all other factors – such as skills, education, capabilities, etc. that a woman may hold – and perceives them purely based on their sex. For example, a sexist person may disregard a woman driver as being rash or absent-minded purely because she is a woman.

When sexism is experienced at the place of work, it is referred to as occupational sexism. While both men and women are prone to experiencing occupational sexism, evidence indicates women to be more at risk of it, especially in male-dominated professions, such as the technical sector, engineering, shipping, to name a few. Examples of occupational sexism can range from denying a qualified and able female candidate a suitable job or promotion over a male candidate, purely because she is female; or disobeying or taking a female boss for granted as she is expected to not be as tough as a male boss.

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<sup>1</sup> Britannica explainer on sexism - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sexism>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-mysteries-love/202008/beware-these-10-sexist-fallacies>

## Case Study

Ms A worked hard to rise through the ranks to accomplish her dream of heading the engineering team on a ship. She was ecstatic about her first ship after the promotion. Not only was she the only woman on the ship – as always – but also the first female chief of department her team had ever had. Just into the voyage, she called in for a team meeting on the deck. She was surprised to see the nonchalant attitude of her staff. Most turned up late, spoke over her or walked out of the meeting as and when they liked and chatted amongst themselves, while she tried to discuss business. They simply refused to take her seriously.

Ms A tried to handle the disrespect politely but nothing she said could get them to follow her instructions seriously. One even blatantly told her that they were not used to a woman bossing around on board.

Philosophy professor and author of ‘Hatred: Understanding Our Most Dangerous Emotion’, Berit Brogaard, lists several fallacies – errors in reasoning – that people may hide behind to justify sexism.<sup>37</sup> For one, sexist individuals often fall back on history, arguing how men more than women have led to progression in their respective fields and ignoring the fact that women were prevented from putting their calibre to use outside of the home. Similarly, men sometimes hold prejudice against women based on their personal decisions, such as to start a family or separate from their partner, committing the fallacy of Ad Hominem. Another misconception called the slippery slope comprises irrelevant talks about the future involving women. For example, thinking that hiring a woman accountant can lead to fraud and everything will go downhill from there.

Sexism can take an aggressive turn. Sexist beliefs against women can instigate men to talk or behave indecently towards them, called hostile sexism.<sup>3</sup> Such men can have a coercive, manipulative and deceiving approach towards women. This type of sexism can often have its roots in prejudiced thinking. Hostile sexism can be seen in the form of insults, threats or indecent behaviour or language, or outright assault. For example, when a female employee instructs a male employee to perform a task that he has a disagreement towards, he may start being abusive verbally or otherwise only to get the woman to express himself towards the female employee as she is a woman. But when it comes to

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.uopeople.edu/blog/sexism-in-the-workplace/>

expressing a disagreement towards another male employee, he talks with respect and diligence. This signifies an attitudinal difference between male and female employees.

Another type of sexism has been termed benevolent sexism,<sup>38</sup> although it is nothing but discriminatory. Despite its acceptance of qualities and abilities that women bring to the table, it is sexist in nature, in that the belief of one sex being superior to the other prevails. A mixture of benevolent and hostile sexism is referred to as ambivalent sexism<sup>3</sup>. An ambivalently sexist person may support traditional characteristics, such as a good-looking woman or one who dresses conventionally and restricts self to home, but hates or calls out a woman each time she follows her own mind or chooses to be ambitious. Basically, ambivalent sexism supports women as long as they follow the traditional path and turn violent every time they do not. For example, a woman is selected for a position purely based on her looks being good, but she is hated on if she does not dress conventionally to work. When sexism is rampant within the functioning of an organization, in terms of their policies, patterns and outlook, it is called Institutional Sexism.<sup>38</sup>

## 12.1 Male-Domination and Sexism

Sexism may especially be experienced by women in male-dominated workplaces or sectors.<sup>4</sup> Certain sectors such as construction, maritime, engineering, to name a few, are often perceived as tough and fierce, and therefore male-dominated. On the other hand, female-dominated professions are traditionally thought to be those that are socially and emotionally-driven, and easy-going. While women have proved these stereotypes wrong over the years, they continue to be perpetuated and followed in certain workforces and sectors, individually or institutionally.

Following are some of how one can identify sexism at workplaces:<sup>5,6</sup>

- Outrightly refusing women's participation in workplaces, without taking into account their qualifications and skills.
- Disrespecting female employees within teams or workplaces by passing remarks and comments at them based on their sex.

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4 <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-male-dominated-industries-and-occupations>

5 Five Ways to Spot Sexism in Workplace – article

6 <https://www.fastcompany.com/3031101/the-new-subtle-sexism-toward-women-in-the-workplace>

- Attributing failure on the part of a woman in a particular task to their sex and genderstereotypes.
- Making sexual or intimate advances towards female employees.
- Refusing women to have their say at all, cutting them short or speaking over them in meetings.
- Refusing to follow or nonchalantly following orders and instructions given to be a female head or boss.
- Unfair distribution of tasks and responsibilities, with women being given the basic ones or less challenging tasks and men being given challenging and tougher tasks.
- Pinning blame of underperformance or failures on the women staff.
- Communicating and behaving disrespectfully with women; for example, shouting at them, calling names or being abusive.
- Focusing on facial appearance, dressing and other physical characteristics of women rather than their working abilities and talent.

Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where women have already made several strides in almost every sector and proved their capability time and again, sexism continues to exist in workplaces, especially in the ones where women are either in the minority or absence of redressal or grievance committees for issues faced by them. It is therefore important to identify sexism and encourage the attitude that supports workplace equality for a smooth and safe functioning for all.

## **12.2 Society and Sexism**

The social roles and norms once prevalent can shed some light on the roots of sexism. Socialization theory helps in understanding how the personalities of boys and girls shape up differently based on the societal norms of masculinity and femininity respectively.<sup>7</sup> For instance, rough and tough play, such as outdoor sports, were only encouraged for boys, whereas girls were encouraged to play indoors with soft toys.

In one of his widely followed books, Evolutionary Psychologist and researcher David Buss cite psychologist Albert Bandura's popular and crucial Social Learning Theory that captures how young boys and girls learn behaviours by observing various models around them. These models could be in their

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<sup>7</sup> Personality Psychology - 4th Edition. Larsen and Buss. McGraw Hill International Edition.

immediate surroundings, such as their mother, father, siblings, guardians, teachers, neighbours, etc, whose behaviours could anchor their own. For example, a young boy whose father aggressively treats women in the household may learn that it is okay to treat women that way.

Similarly, the social role theory focuses on how differences in the roles of men and women in families and workplaces give rise to sex differences in society. One of the best ways to understand this is the patriarchal family set up that was prevalent for a long time in India, whereby the male patriarch or male members of the family would be responsible for monetary decisions, while women were tasked with raising children and taking care of the household needs. With time, this may have become the norm and children raised in such families may have been conditioned accordingly, generating a sexist outlook and approach.

With equality amongst genders picking up, these social roles are now redundant and emphasis on approaching people beyond their sexes is encouraged. Yet, the past tradition may sometimes meddle in the way of modern outlook, creating hurdles for women to progress.

### **12.3 Occupational Sexism in India**

In the maritime sector, an all-woman crew circumnavigated the entire globe in 2018, in an 8-month long expedition, setting an example for women to join and work along in the naval forces.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, globally, India stood fairly behind at 112<sup>th</sup> rank in the gender equality index in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index. Mukhopadhyay et al. (2021) cites a newspaper report that found as many as 85% of Indian women to be at the receiving end of occupational sexism in terms of pay rise, promotion and job opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

Goel (2018) reported evidence of ‘third generation bias’ against women in India. The third-generation bias, as stated, is a mixture of traditional (or first-generation bias) and subtle (or second-generation bias). The study further found sexism to be prevalent in the organizations studied. In that, workplaces were found to be dominated by masculine norms of behaviour, with decisions being

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.ddnews.gov.in/national/all-woman-vessel-ins-tarini-be-flagged-defence-minister#:~:text=Prime%20Minister%20Narendra%20Modi%20also,mission%20to%20circumnavigate%20the%20globe.>

<sup>9</sup> “The Elephant in the Room” : Neglected Construct of Occupational Sexism. Mukhopadhyay, et al. 2021

made as per the male convenience and availability. Men also perceived women to be encroaching on their territory and had sexist and non-factual assumptions against women. Moreover, the study found that the higher the position a woman occupied, the more hostile and sexist attitude they faced from males. Women commanding authority or higher positions were doubted on their competence and labelled with disrespectful words.<sup>10</sup>

## 12.4 Occupational Sexism in Maritime Industry

Historically, the maritime industry has been dominated by men. One of the reasons for the scanty female population on board was the archaic belief of shipping to be a tough profession, and therefore, not suitable for women going by the social roles.<sup>11</sup> In the modern era, the maritime industry has taken crucial steps in moving away from the traditional mindset of accepting and welcoming women on board ships. However, the industry still represents only a scanty female workforce on merchant ships. In India, the situation is no different.

According to a 2019 survey, as reported by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),<sup>12</sup> Indian women in the maritime industry were found to be concentrated more in supporting than in key, decision-making positions.

The survey also found institutional sexism was found to be at play in the Indian maritime industry, with companies not creating a supportive atmosphere for the hiring and retention of female employees. Indian employers were found to consider women as being the problem for their own hiring and retention than the lack of inclusivity in their organizations. Surprisingly, several companies reportedly had a discrete, unwritten policy against hiring women, especially on board ships, and were often refused sea time. Interestingly, some of the most cited reasons by companies to reject women's applications were them being unable to maintain a balance between work and family (18%) and lacking physical strength (16%). Here are some of how women can face sexism in the maritime industry, preventing them from thriving:

- Asking or directing them to approach cruise ships.

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.livemint.com/news/india/indian-women-face-most-workplace-bias-11614621424308.html>

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<sup>11</sup> Gender imbalance in the maritime industry: impediments, initiatives and recommendations - MacNeil and Ghosh, 2016

<sup>12</sup><https://unctad.org/news/diversity-indian-maritime-industry-hiring-more-women-profitable-businesses>

- Offering them roles or positions that are way below their qualifications and skillsets.
- Refusing to let them try and learn certain tasks, under the pretext of them being 'tough' and therefore something that only men can do.
- Being controlled by male colleagues in their daily tasks or decisions.
- Asking female seafarers to do menial tasks or those that do not match their appointed role/ designation.
- Refusing to see or treat females as equal to males.
- Overruling or bypassing their say.
- Not following the instructions of female officers because they are females.
- Being subtly or rude with female employees.
- Trying to be verbally or physically violent towards female seafarers when they oppose or try to counter the sexist stand.
- Undermining their abilities or making them feel inferior by making sexist remarks or jokes.
- Talking inappropriately about or objectifying other women in front of female seafarers irk, irritate or discomfort them.
- Refusing to talk or cooperate with female seafarers on board.
- Refusing to treat female seafarers as a part of the team on board.
- Trivializing certain health or wellbeing concerns of women on board.
- Expecting women to make compromises in terms of food, leisure or break time.
- Falsely or unjustifiably blaming challenges, mishaps or shortcomings on the ship on female colleagues.
- Targeting and criticizing women for having a good friendship with another male colleague on board and spreading rumours about them.
- Making women feel less competent.
- Absence of health and sanitary equipment, appropriately designed and sized personal protective equipment onboard.
- On voyages or missions, where seafarers as it is face isolation from their support system on the land and women seafarers find themselves amid most male colleagues, such behaviours and attitudes can prove to be mentally hazardous for women seafarers to go through. Therefore, preventing them at all costs should be important.

## **12.5 What The Industry Can Do**

- Introduce gender-neutral language to prevent any one particular gender to feel superior and another inferior.

- Look at a candidate beyond their gender and purely on their qualification and abilities.
- Encourage egalitarian policies and protocols on the ship.
- Get an understanding of the challenges faced by women before joining and after joining as seafarers and work towards fixing or remedying them.
- Educate employees on gender equality, especially in treating women with respect.
- Have a fixed protocol on dos and don'ts for male employees.
- Have a grievances cell for women employees, where they can feel safe in getting their concerns addressed or can reach out to in times of distress.
- Ensure emotional and psychological support for female seafarers through professional channels.
- Enforce a no-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, prejudicial or sexist behaviour on and offshore.
- Ensure the health and sanitary needs of women on board are met and maintained.
- Have a confidential complaints and redressal mechanism in place.
- Providing legal assistance to women seafarers.
- Educate women about the potential of the maritime industry and encourage their recruitment.
- Train all staff in gender sensitization and inclusiveness.

## **12.6 What Male Seafarers Can Do**

Because male seafarers are more in numbers on ships, they can play a key role in avoiding sexism from becoming an unfortunate practice. Adequate training and implementation of proper practices can help the men at sea to evolve their attitudes and help ensure the safety and soundness of the work environment for everybody. Treat women colleagues with respect, no matter what their designation or role on board is.

- Avoid aggression and adopt assertiveness practices. Aggression is where one comes across as rude or violent. By being assertive, one can put across their point in a polite and receptive manner.
- Avoid objectifying women for their looks or appearance.
- Avoid making jokes or comments that will make women colleagues uncomfortable.
- Make sure you hear what women colleagues have to say. Just like men on board, women deserve to have their say too.
- Biases and prejudices bring in negativity and are not harmonious for a work environment. In case you feel a certain way about women, make

sure you talk to a non-judgemental person, such as a therapist or counsellor, and explore and work on them. It is never too late.

- Do not be a silent spectator to sexism. If someone around you is being sexist, make sure to take a firm stand against it and discourage such practices sternly, or report to your seniors or authorities who can intervene.
- Treat women as a part of your team.
- Maintain professional boundaries in the place of work at all times, and encourage others to do so too.
- Take initiatives to promote gender equality onboard. This could be done by inviting team members to share their ideas, through a poster or slogan-making activities onboard, or screening of powerful films in the area.
- Be an example of equality and inclusiveness.

## **12.7 What Women Seafarers Can Do**

With changing times, the focus of various national and international agencies and forums is on promoting the presence of women at sea. While countering the gender bias and stereotypical mindset entirely may take some time, it is important to equip women with certain tactics and skills to weather the storm of sexism that may sometimes have to face on male-dominated ships till the time a complete change is underway.

- Keep in touch with other women officers and team members on board or shore.
- Do not let sexist remarks or comments slide under the carpet. No matter how senior or junior the person passing them, make sure to express your resentment on the record.
- Make sure to report untoward incidents to human resources or authority figures immediately through official channels or mediums.
- Educate male colleagues about gender equality
- Take initiative as per your capabilities.
- Keep in touch with your friends and family through internet modes for moral and emotional support.
- Believe in your abilities and do not let others tell you what you can or cannot do simply because you are a woman.
- Work towards strengthening and maintaining your willpower and confidence. They matter while battling challenges along the way.
- Make sure you are provided with essentials for safety and hygiene. If not, raise your voice and ensure it is provided to you.
- Report bullying and hatred, if you are facing it. Do not try to stop it by getting close or over-friendly with your bullies.

- Always remember – You bring your set of skills to the table. You are not lesser than anybody else and you do not deserve to be made to feel so by anyone.

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# Case Studies

**Disclaimer:** A few of the incidents cited are hypothetical in nature.

## Case 1

A female deck cadet on her second contract. After the initial period of settling in, during which everything was normal, she noticed that the Master actively tried to engage in conversations of a personal nature with her every now and then.

Some of these conversations involved the Master asking questions about her menstrual cycle. He claimed that this was because his daughter of the same age was facing some issues related to menstruation. In one instance he straightaway asked her about the brand of sanitary napkins she used, in front of the Messman.

Other instances involved comments on appearance, complimenting her on the use of make-up. This was followed by stray instances of physical contact like constantly patting her shoulder and back. He also would frequently call her to his cabin on the flimsiest of pretexts.

When she voiced her concerns about feeling uncomfortable, he brushed it off saying she was like his daughter.

### Questions:

- Does this qualify as sexual harassment?
- Did you find the Master's behaviour inappropriate?
- Do you feel the cadet overreacted? Was she right in highlighting her concerns?

### Observations and Inferences:

The case in question outlines the risk women face in schools, colleges and the workplace. It is an example of active sexual harassment under the garb of being genuinely concerned. This is also a case of a person higher up in the hierarchy misusing his position to intimidate a raw recruit.

Sexual harassment, in this case, was verbal in nature with attempts at physical contact being subtle and not brazen. Sexual harassment need not always be physical but verbal harassment of a sexual nature equally damages the psyche.

## Case 2

The lady was working as a Junior Engineer on board the ship. The Chief Engineer started commenting and complimenting her on her looks and appearance at social gatherings on board regularly. He would insist she have alcohol which she was reluctant to consume. He would often ask her to do this in private and in front of other crew members.

Word eventually spread and the CE's wife got to know the story as she had contacts onboard. The CE denied the behaviour and blamed JE after his wife confronted him. The wife then went on to create a ruckus at the office of the shipping line, demanding that it's the JE who is at fault, she is affecting the environment on board and hence should be signed off.

She further managed to get the JE's contact, and started texting her to stay away from her husband. Despite the JE's attempts to explain her situation, the CE's wife wouldn't budge and kept accusing her. The wife further resorted to blackmailing, threatening she would spread rumours about the JE that could affect her character and future career prospects. She also added as her husband is well-reputed in the industry, it is in her best interest to sign off.

All of this became too much for the JE and she was pressured into signing off. Even after having done so, the CE's wife stepped up the slander stating that her husband was not at fault and insinuating that the JE was trying to entice her husband. This left a mark on the JE's physical and mental health. She found herself stressed and worried about her scope in the field as it affected her records.

### Questions:

- Should the JE have reported CE's behaviour to the Captain at the first instance?
- Was the CE's behaviour out of line?
- Could the crew members have been more supportive?

### Observations and Inferences:

This was sexual harassment which was verbal in nature and then aggressive with the CE insisting on plying on alcohol in front of the other crew members. The harassment went a step further when the CE's wife got into the picture and raised a cry resulting in the JE being taken off the assignment.

This was also a case of character assassination with innuendos of flirtation and seduction being blamed on the JE. The continued harassment even after she signed off would have further undermined her sense of confidence. This defies professionalism, ethics and behaviour and basic decorum. This has to be avoided at all costs as it goes against basic principles of equality and fair play.

### Case 3

A female crew member was given charge of her duties. Initially, she went about her daily activities such as eating, washing up and washing one's clothes as normal.

Later on, her superior took her in confidence and requested her not to wash her clothes when the men were running their wash cycle. Furthermore, he insisted that she wash her intimates in the privacy of her cabins. He clarified that this request was made as the site of her clothes created discomfort and would make the staff uncomfortable.

#### Questions:

- Was she treated fairly?
- Does asking her to wash her clothes separately amount to discriminatory behaviour?

#### Observations and Inferences:

This is discrimination based on gender and goes against one's understanding of teamwork and team spirit. This kind of segregation fosters a sense of alienation. Although this may have not been direct, it nevertheless achieved in making her feel alienated.

The whole purpose of opening up the shipping industry to women is to foster a sense of inclusivity. However, such behaviour though passive in nature actively excludes womenfolk from being integrated into a largely male-dominated profession. Should this continue, this could lead to an exit of women from the profession which would be counter-productive to the purpose in mind?

The Company can have a policy for female officers/crew to be allowed to keep the laundry key once a week. There have been cases when the inner garments of the females are stolen and found distorted by scissors and hung off publicly with vulgar remarks.

## Case 4

The cadet noticed that the Captain would call her on the flimsiest of pretexts. He had assumed that something was going on between the cadet and another officer and started placing restrictions on her movements and activities. So much so that he installed a CCTV camera in the passage where her cabin is.

This had been ongoing since she joined the ship. He made advances towards her but she had stopped all non-work interactions with him after that. It was reported that he kept track of when she left and enters her cabin. As he was the Captain, he had a master key. He would open the door whenever he wanted on the pretext of doing a routine inspection. There were occasions when he did it when she was taking a bath or was changing clothes. This would make her extremely uncomfortable.

She reported feeling exhausted and worried all the time because of all this. She did not know whom to speak with and was worried all this will affect her career and prospects. Her sleep, work performance and appetite had been affected as a result.

### Questions:

- What intervention could have been initiated?
- What measures need to be taken to help women feel secure in such situations?

### Observations and Inferences:

This was a case where the senior in question was misusing his official position to harass and intimidate a junior. It is also a clear transgression or violation of boundaries and shows total contempt to issues like personal space and consensus.

This has crossed over to the area of stalking with the intent to intimidate, harass misusing one's official position. Installing CCTVs selectively to monitor the comings and goings of the junior was a clear misuse of technology on a select basis and a violation of privacy. He was not following company guidelines of inspection when one more officer needs to be present at the time of inspection. It was also wrong on his part to only inspect her cabin.

## Case 5

A lady seafarer was on board as a Second Engineer. She noticed that the crew wouldn't follow her instructions and delegations and instead would take orders and instructions from her junior Third Engineer who was a male seafarer.

While there was no outright refusal to follow instructions issued by her, there was a clear pattern and regularity in which this was occurring when the instructions issued by the 3E were carried out.

She felt that her position was being undermined through passive insubordination. When she consulted with her mentor, he advised her to lie low and not escalate this further saying that things will eventually fall in place. He also expressed that men on board the ship would take a while to accept a female senior due to existing mindset issues.

### Questions:

- Was the mentor right in his advice or should some action have been taken?
- In the absence of any concrete action, would this type of conduct perpetuate some kind of attitude/behaviour against future female staff?
- How can such mindsets be resolved?

### Observations and Inferences:

The following case shows how rigid mindsets and stereotypes could lead to conflict in the workplace. There was a clear attempt at insubordination and not taking orders from a senior of the opposite sex. This undermined her position and authority on board the vessel.

This would have shown her in a poor light. The attempts by her senior to brush over the incident is an instance of furthering and perpetuating stereotypical notions of men having to take commands and instructions from women.

## Case 6

The deck cadet had finished her duties and returned to her cabin and unzipped her boiler suit after a long day of work. There was an event happening on board the ship around the same time.

A close male friend of hers noticed her absence and decided to go to her cabin after she didn't pick up his calls. He reached her cabin and walked straight in while she was in the process of changing.

The lady was taken aback and alarmed and asked him to leave the room. He promptly left. This led to some awkwardness between them. The lady cadet told him that he would need to knock on the door and ask before barging into her room which he agreed to and acknowledged.

#### Questions:

- Did the female cadet overreact?
- What should the male crew member have done?

#### Observations and Inferences:

This is about boundaries, the need for privacy and consent. Seeking permission, asking the right questions can help in avoiding confusion and potentially embarrassing situations.

All of us enjoy 'me' time and value personal space. Any attempt - deliberate or inadvertent to overstep is unacceptable. One must never presuppose situations irrespective of the equations one may share.

### Case 7

Engine cadet was a typical bright-eyed newcomer wanting to make a career in the shipping line. At the very outset, the Chief Engineer told her that he would not let her last on board the ship and would be uncooperative to the extent that was required to ensure that she didn't deliver her duties well.

Early on, she realized she was being given menial paperwork/administrative duties and nothing to do with the curriculum and job profile that she had trained for. The CE started re-assigning her responsibilities to the male staff on the line who were already under pressure with their tasks and responsibilities. This additional workload put extra pressure on the engine crew and comments and rumours about incompetency started doing the rounds. The crew started ganging up against her and they were assisted and actively encouraged by the CE to do so.

The rank onboard the ship told her this was a man's job and she was not cut out for the hurly-burly of life on board. Frequent remarks stating that womenfolk were suited only for household duties were often made.

Some other crew members who were more sympathetic told her not to get her hands dirty and actively avoid physical work/ manual labour as she was a girl and as such needed to take up lighter duties. She was also told that she was being given certain jobs and not the others as they felt protective about her and didn't want her to get hurt doing heavy-duty jobs that her male colleagues on the ship were engaged in. She experienced tremendous isolation and had no one to turn to for support.

The only experience the cadet gathered during her tenure on board the ship involved administrative work. She did not get to apply all her learned theories into practice and hence was unable to add to her skill sets. This left her wondering about how she would cope with real responsibilities during her next assignment.

#### Questions:

- Is this a case of harassment or a case of perpetuating gender stereotypes?
- What could the girl and the crew members have done differently?
- What can be done to foster a healthy workplace atmosphere?
- Do you think this will affect her future prospects?

#### Observations and Inferences:

One must be given the opportunity to put theory into practice through adequate training and hands-on experience so as to build up one's skillsets which are so required to deliver on the job. Not being given such opportunities could negatively impact career prospects and foster a sense of stereotyping.

Not being allowed to do your job simply because they were being withheld and re-assigned to male crew stems from and perpetuates negative gender stereotypes. Seniors are responsible for maintaining a pleasant and open work atmosphere that is conducive and fair to all. This was exactly (and deliberately) the opposite and the superiors' actions showed exclusionary practice with the active intent to set the ground for poor appraisals and termination.

Generalizing and stereotyping is subtle aggression against women so as to keep them out of the so-called macho domain/ jobs. It is discriminatory and violates the rules of fair play and a level playing field.

Denying anyone the opportunity to apply the learnings to pick up much-needed skills in the job stems from stereotypical notions and generalizations about women being cut out for light duties.

Overprotection prevents an individual from picking up the required skills to sustain oneself for the long haul while on board and furthering their career prospects. The inability to do so only leads to stagnation and impairs one's future within the industry.

Although subtle/inadvertent, it works against women.

### Case 8

Dissatisfied with the lack of progress and actual learning, the deck cadet took a fresh sign-up with a new vessel. She was given duties as defined in the job description for deck cadets.

Not having had any hands-on experience whatsoever, she fumbled through the tasks assigned and needed a lot of hand-holding to get through simple duties. Since she was unable to cope with the job and deadlines, she realized her duties were being reassigned to others. Soon, backchats started about her lack of skills, training and rumours started circulating about her incompetence. She was also blamed for a lot of mistakes she didn't commit. She would often be made a scapegoat for all the bullying that happened on board.

She was not oblivious to what was happening around her and started feeling alienated and isolated while on board. This soon took the form of active discrimination with her being told that she lacked these skills as she was a girl. The appraisals as a result were poor and these further would negatively impact her career prospects.

#### Questions:

- Could the girl have done something differently since she lacked the necessary training?
- Could others around have been more supportive?

#### Observations and Inferences:

Stereotyping and generalizing based on a skewed sense of women folk in needing protection at all levels worked against her career prospects. This led to judgmental thinking about her lack of skills and inability to deliver on the job.

If women are not challenged to put their theory into practice through on-the-job training, then it only serves to render them ineffective and unsuitable. If unchecked, and should these instances increase, then fewer women are likely to take up shipping as a vocation and career option.

## Case 9

The engine cadet in question needed a hard disk for some data work and approached the AB for the same. The AB gave her the hard disk. Unknown to her, the hard disk contained explicit pornography and which was inactive circulation among the rank and file onboard the ship.

A while later, the AB was approached by a senior asking for the hard disk. The AB told him that it was being used by the lady cadet. Given the nature of the hard disk content, word started flying around that something was on between the AB and the engine cadet. She was subsequently approached by a senior who made an indecent proposition asking her if she was 'available'. On being told off by the lady cadet, he argued that if she was available to the AB, why not to him.

She escalated this matter to the Captain of the ship. He told her that this was bound to happen as she was spending too much time with the AB. He indirectly implied that she was responsible, thus laying the blame squarely on her.

When she tried to get to the bottom of the source of the rumours, through follow up and conversations, she realized that the crew was becoming uncooperative and hostile. Matters reached ahead and she was asked to handover charge of her duties and sign off.

### Questions:

- Assess the behaviour of the Captain. Comment on his handling of the situation.
- Was the AB complicit or was he innocent?
- Could the crew have been more supportive?
- Is this kind of character assassination acceptable?
- The girl was made to resign, what does this say about equal opportunities, level playing field and gender stereotypes?

### Observations and Inferences:

While the circulation of pornography is common practice among groups of men, there was a dire need to be cautious considering a woman was onboard. Negative stereotypes about women in general and the fact that she was outnumbered was a catalyst behind vicious rumours. The senior was out of line and abused his rank and position in making an indecent proposition. The complete lack of leadership shown by Captain shows a deliberate lack of judgement and fair play. As a leader, he is expected to take up the cause of his

juniors and investigate the incident. This incident involved inappropriate behaviour, unacceptable language and deliberate isolation and rumours.

### **Case 10**

Ms A loved the seas and always dreamt of sailing since her school days. Her ambition and dedication towards her career only helped her in rising through the ranks. On most of her voyages, she would be the only woman onboard, but that never deterred her. After all, she was a role model for many women aspiring to be at the sea.

On one of her voyages, the captain of her ship started getting too friendly with her. What began as a casual appreciation, soon took shape of flirting and intimate advances. Following the protocol to the core, Ms A refused to give into any of his advances and continued maintaining a professional stance with the captain. However, the captain left no stone unturned in trying against her obvious refusal. As the voyage progressed, the other male sailors also started noticing this.

One day, Ms A was summoned by the captain to his room to discuss an urgent matter. While she was in, one of the team members purposefully put on the fire alarm. Alerted by it, sailors started leaving their rooms and cabins. While only one sailor emerged from each room, from the captain's room came the captain and Ms A. Notoriously, one of the sailors took a video of the two leaving the room together in his mobile phone and shared it on social media, making it look like the two were engaged in a private affair. On a male-dominated ship, this put Ms A in a tough spot. Further, as the video went viral, other team sailors perceived Ms A as being available and began making quick passes at her. Tormented by the experience, she had to be taken off the ship for her safety. However, by now, the word about the incident had spread like a wildfire. When Ms A returned on another voyage with a different team, she was targeted again and made advances by her male team members.

### **Case 11**

An officer circulated a story of an affair between a female third officer and the captain. This story was malicious with a detailed description of the affair. This story was made viral in Whatsapp groups within the maritime community. This viral message also contained the photograph of the female third officer.

### Questions:

- Why did the officer circulate such a malicious story and photograph of the female officer?
- What is the punishment for creating such a message and for forwarding it?

### Observation and Inference:

This is a deliberate attempt to malign one's image. The officer only included the female officer's photograph and not the captain's. This was not an action to call out unprofessional behaviour.

The message was circulated further which damaged the image of the female officer. Such an incident could affect her future in the industry, future job prospects, and mainly her mental health.

Such incidents of cyberbullying deter women from taking jobs onboard. They may always live with a sense of fear and may never truly relax on board. This can negatively impact their health and productivity.

### Case 12

Ms B had recently qualified as Deck Officer from a reputed college and looked forward to bagging a position on a merchant ship. She applied for the position at an international company, where she was perhaps the only woman candidate alongside 10 other male candidates.

However, to her shock, she was not only denied the interview but was also told that she was better off on a cruise ship. Taken aback, she filed a discrimination complaint. As the matter hit the Press, the company apologized to Ms B, clarified that they did not have any such discriminatory policy and assured her to look into the matter for her.

The officer expressed disappointment nonetheless, that her qualifications and skills were ignored vehemently and the decision was taken solely based on her sex.

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