

## From the Editor's Desk



"Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny. — Mahatma Gandhi

"Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly." — Mahatma Gandhi

"We can live without religion and meditation, but we cannot survive without human affection." — Dalai Lama

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness." — Dalai Lama

"Love and charity for the whole human race, which is the test of true religiousness. One must feel the oneness of human- life. All the sects and creeds, so far as they are not exclusive, are helping men towards the real religion. — Swami Vivekananda

*Never before has it been so important to have independent, honest voices and sources of information. We are - as a society - inundated and overwhelmed with a flood of information from a wide array of sources, but these sources of information, by and large, serve the powerful interests and individuals that own them, with vested interests. The main sources of information, for both public and official consumption, include the mainstream media, alternative media, academia and think tanks.*

*Though, eLearning can never be a complete replacement for all maritime training. While considering 'training and competencies' in the maritime world. We need to know of two major components: Knowledge and Skills. We may also have, more importantly to consider components such as attitude, experience, etc. We need to agree that knowledge and skill are the two most vital and primary components that are considered the most important in the issue of the Certificate of Maritime competency, under various grades and branches namely Navigation and Engineering. Disgraceful that COC consideration not made for electrical officers, right from its origin. While certification for harbour crafts were made mandatory in the same two branches speaks of the incompetency of the mariners inducted in the office of the directorate general shipping but for blindly following U.K. methods and procedures having no policy of their own, though induction of ETO's made but for practical purposes electrical officers continue to be employed on main fleet and offshore vessels not keeping abreast to the technological advances. Besides, seafarers, have the mandatory courses/ refresher courses/re-validation courses/ simulation training /post qualifying courses etc. asked to be attended, killing their precious time ashore, earned by active sea-service out at sea, to be with their near and dear one's in one's own life, while they have to spend time on renewal of driving-licence, passport, CDC etc..*

*If e-learning can be implemented to the best possible level, considering seafarers welfare the viability, to the optimised level, the other part can be squeezed considerably in time spent by the seafarers, reasonably to benefit them to be with their dear ones to whom they have been separated while in their profession. This need, in the welfare of the active sea-going seafarers, working out on the deep seas with risks and sacrifices, benefitting their country of origin by foreign-exchange, brought by them into the country of origin, by their hard work with occupational hazards.*

*eLearning is primarily focused on knowledge acquisition. Knowledge, forms the basis for all skills and competencies. There is very little question about this, but just in case there is any at all, note the following from the STCW Manila Amendments, Chapter II, Section B-II/1, Paragraph 14:*

*"Scope of knowledge is implicit in the concept of competence. ... This includes relevant knowledge, theory, principles and cognitive skills which, to varying degrees, underpin all levels of competence. It also encompasses proficiency in what to do, how and when to do it, and why it should be done. Properly applied, this will help to ensure that a candidate can:*

- work competency in different ships and across a range of circumstances;
- anticipate, prepare for and deal with contingencies; and
- Adapting to new and changing requirements."
- "Must use 'TIME' creatively and forever realise that the 'TIME' is always a hope to do great things". - Martin Luther King.
- "An ounce of practice is worth more than tonnes of preaching". - Mahatma Gandhi

*Hence, the need for highly qualified mariners who are only interested to impart knowledge be placed in faculties of maritime colleges and institutions of higher learning and be handpicked from them into the office of the DGS (Directorate General Shipping) and not just the dis-interested lots, merely to fill on the basis of the COC's, as decided by the mariners within the DGS, who had easy walk-through in the formal UPSC without much publicity and competition, forgetting their past hard sea-life though short-lived for domestic reasons or for mis-fits in sea-life, as majority of them look for professional areas of their suitability and not on due merits, unlike other bureaucrats. There again with their wavery minds, look at the seafarers wages as high salary unwontedly getting their minds disturbed get their mindsets diverted, merely thinking of the high-salary drawn by the seafarers ( which is for their risks and sacrifices ) and their ways to compensate themselves, is the result of their lacking in devotion and dedication to duty, as said in my previous issues. They do more harm than good to the seafarers envying them. So knowledge is critical and therefore worthy of our focus. Yet it is not the full story. APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE: is the real requirement for the REAL Competency, it is not just a C O C as sufficient. Hands-on training, experience, attitude, time, etc are all required in consolidation. So while eLearning (as we will see) improves knowledge acquisition in many ways, eg. participation and inter-actions, however, it cannot ever remove the need for hands-on training and experience, were the weight age is less recognised in marine engineering. I have come across many who could not clear their chief ticket but instead have a marvellous acumen of knowledge and zeal of energy to perform efficiently as second engineers, either there is something wrong with the examiner while assessing nor the individual's inability to appear for the said exams. Owing to his domestic problems living away from port cities where exam is conducted. Theory and practice should go together, for things to succeed with sustainability.*

*In pursuit of working strength, in the path of evidence: Having worked in Research and Development of a leading automobile industry in India and in a largest organisation of the government, in Research and Development, on national level selection for over a decade, I became involved in Standardisation of technical know-how data, preparing comparative analysis of product specifications, prior to joining shipping had also been selected to go overseas for a stint period of three years and returned. Joined Shipping in 1982 and upgraded to Chief Engineer by 1988. Sailed for almost two decades, sailed as Chief Engineer and subsequently promoted as Superintendent-Engineer on making significant contributions and been responsible for the implementation of 'ISM' for six cargo vessels, remained as the Designated person ashore reporting to the Managing Director. Because of my early research-background, I became certain (Confident) for the implementation of necessary changes towards quality and product/service value. Higher studies to U.K. for a stint period of three long years has built-in confidence in me as to where we stand when sharing with the multi-Cultural Mix. In due consideration of the advent of modern computers and modern communication systems, added, followed by appearing as a Technical Expert in a Marine Case in Singapore High Court. Our strength is limit the limitations in all spheres of our life, which is to eLearning as well. We now have a lot of evidence as to eLearning's effectiveness. E.g. The best evidence I am aware of is a report published in 2010 by the U.S. Department of Education (US DOE). The report (the full text of which can be found here) is entitled "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning, A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies". The strength of this report comes from the fact that it is a meta-analysis. This means that it is not, in itself, one study or one opinion of the effectiveness of eLearning. Instead, a meta-analysis looks at a large number of independent studies and research projects which all try to answer the same question - does eLearning work? It then draws a conclusion based on the strength of the widest possible breadth of investigations. This is very powerful because any biases or study flaws are quickly filtered out of the collective response. The need for an open mind, to accept the facts and implement the best.*

**Dr. Chandran Peechulli**, Ph.D ; D.Sc., F I E (India), F.I.L.P.E., M.S.E.I., Pg.DTED, Pg.DIMS(UK), MSNAME(US), Fellow - Institution of Engineers (India), Indian Institution of Plant Engineers & Ex. Vice Chairman TN Chapter, Life Member & Ex.Executive Member-Indian Institute of Standards Engineer T N Chapter, Indian Institute of Occupational Health, Managing Editor & Publisher - "Marine Waves" International Maritime Newsletter. Corporate Member, Chennai Press Club. Ex. Chief Engineer (Marine) & General Manager (Tech), Consultant - Cee Cee Industrial & Marine Management Consultants. seafarersman@indiatimes.com Address : M107-5, 29th Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai-600090. +91-44-42018982.

(contd. from previous page)

convergence. But unfortunately that does not happen. This is perhaps because of the polarisation of views, leading to divisive camps, and convergence of views within the divides.

The Global Go To Think Tanks Report 2011 by the University of Pennsylvania brings out a ranking of think tanks globally. From India, only the Centre for Civil Society (CSS) is in the top 50 global think tanks (non-US).

The Institutes that figure in the Top 30 think tanks in Asia are Indian Council for Research and International Economic Relations, CSS, Centre for Policy Research, The Energy Research Institute and Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses.

The other Institutes that figure in various specialisations are: Institute of Economic Growth, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, and Development Alternatives. This shows the paucity of think tanks in India for its size and complexity, and is also indicative of the concentration in Delhi.

### ROLE OF THINK TANKS

In other countries, think tanks have legitimate role to play in legislating and policymaking. Influential thinkers and researchers from these think tanks can, for instance, be invited by the US Congress in Congressional hearings to give their considered opinions.

The legislatures commission studies on specific policy issues, or can seek 'independent' opinions. These think tanks through their commissioned as well as sponsored research, provide policy inputs to decision making. These can be engaged by lobbyists as well. Think tanks may be known for adherence to a particular school of thought, but their reports are well received and respected.

They can also call for meetings and seminars to engage in opinion-making. Everybody at the end of the day is interested in influencing policy making, and these think tanks help reach a consensus. They do it in a sophisticated way, rather than through 'my opinion' vs 'your opinion', where analysis and evidence are given a go-by.

### DELHI CENTRICISM

The most contentious aspect is that most major think-tanks are in Delhi. It is to be expected that formulation of policies and laws is concentrated in Delhi, given the location of the Union Government.

But it is not necessary that the think-tanks have to be concentrated there. By virtue of being there, they feed on each other, and it is a story of action and reaction.

Today, given a policy, we know who will say what. The TV channels resemble each other. They depend on same set of specialists, and lack genuine research output or data and ground work.

There is such an euphoria around being in a 'happening' scenario that the analysts have to furnish quotes impromptu. So, someone from Delhi would comment on State government failure on management of the cyclone in Andhra Pradesh and move on to why FDI in retail can be a tsunami. The differentiation is lost and everybody looks alike - the policy makers, specialists, think-tanks, reporters, and general observers.

### DECONGEST THINK-TANKS

It may be worthwhile to encourage think-tanks around the country. Earlier, there were schools of economics in various States - such as Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Pune, Madras Institute of Development Studies in Chennai, Centre for Development Studies in Thiruvananthapuram, Institute of Social and Economic Change in Bangalore. These institutes have helped in strengthening regional focus in research and studies.

They suffer from not being able to communicate their research findings and actively engaging in policy debates. Being away from Delhi and closer to the field, they have conducted field-based studies than relying on secondary data.

They also tend to focus more on policy implementation and not just planning and legislating.

The Economic and Political Weekly has been walking a lone path for decades, contributing to prolific generation of papers on public policy.

The Central government itself made an attempt once. It encouraged IIM Bangalore to establish its Centre for Public Policy a decade back with support from UNDP. It has evolved as an alternate think-tank on public policy through research in select areas like health, urban governance and infrastructure. It is now about more than a decade old.

For a country of our size and given its democratic system, think tanks can play a larger and effective role. These should be encouraged at each State as independent entities. There is a paucity of independent policy professionals, unlike in the US and the UK.

Like all long-married couples, think-tanks in Delhi tend to resemble each other in ways and thoughts.

*(The author is Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.)*

Views and opinions expressed by various writers on individual capacity or of institution and organisations are not of "Marine Waves". Every care is taken to publish the references to notifications & circulars of government / classification societies etc. Hence Marine Waves Management will not be responsible for any error in the publication. "No responsibility will be borne for undelivered issue, owing to circumstances beyond the control of the Publisher. Subscriber may however notify, to enable us to send substitute copy." Readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before entering into dealings with advertisers in this publication. The Editor and Publisher does not vouch any claims made by advertisers and hence shall not be held liable for any adverse consequences. - Editor: "Marine Waves".

### READERS' KIND ATTENTION

Back issues of "MARINE WAVES" from 2005 to 2008 in 2 volumes are available for sale until stocks last. Please rush your bookings to avoid disappointment. E-mail : [seafarersman@indiatimes.com](mailto:seafarersman@indiatimes.com)  
[chandranpeechulli@gmail.com](mailto:chandranpeechulli@gmail.com)