



Seminar Paper on Integrity and Ethical Practices in Maritime Industry

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Abstract

The maritime industry, as a critical backbone of international trade and global commerce, demands high standards of integrity and ethical conduct. On 25th February 2025, the Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal, hosted its second seminar titled 'Integrity and Ethical Practices in Maritime Industry.' This event brought together esteemed professionals and cadets to engage in meaningful dialogues on the maritime ethical landscape. Discussions highlighted the multifaceted nature of corruption, regulatory gaps, and ethical violations affecting maritime operations globally. The seminar also presented strategic frameworks for ethical enforcement, including corporate best practices, academic integration, and global networks like Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN). Through keynote addresses, panel speeches, and cadet-led presentations, the event explained the importance of aligning national maritime practices with international standards. This paper presents a comprehensive synthesis of the seminar's themes and examines their relevance to the development of ethically responsible future maritime leaders. The event's lasting impact is expected to resonate within cadet behavior, institutional training, and global maritime collaboration, enhancing the industry's sustainability and the nation's maritime reputation.

Introduction

The maritime industry is a dynamic, globalized system facilitating over 90% of international trade. Within this sector, the role of ethical standards and personal integrity is critical for ensuring safe navigation, secure working conditions, and legal compliance. Yet the sector remains vulnerable to ethical breaches due to its cross-border nature, operational complexities, and varying enforcement capacities across jurisdictions. Recognizing this challenge, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal, organized a seminar on 25th February 2025 to address the theme of 'Integrity and Ethical Practices in Maritime Industry.' The event brought together maritime

professionals, instructors, cadets, and regulatory voices to explore these issues in depth. The goal was not merely to raise awareness but to offer strategic approaches for embedding ethics in everyday maritime operations.

Insights from the Keynote Speech

The keynote speech was delivered by **Commodore Syed Ariful Islam**, M Phil, ndc, psc, BN (Retd), who emphasized that maritime integrity is not just a policy issue, but a cultural necessity. As the Project Lead of MACN Bangladesh, he brought forward firsthand insights into the corruption challenges encountered by seafarers worldwide. Commodore Syed Ariful Islam sir presented alarming statistics: over 70% of seafarers surveyed by Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) and Sustainable Shipping Initiative (SSI) in 2023 reported having paid illegal recruitment fees, while nearly one-fourth encountered bribery during port operations. These figures reflect a deeply entrenched problem where even the newest seafarers face pressure to compromise their values. His speech mapped these issues to global regulatory frameworks such as International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), Maritime Labor Convention (MLC), International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), and International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), arguing that enforcement alone is insufficient without a foundational commitment to ethics at every level of operation.

Panel Presentations and Evaluations

The panel presentations provided a multidimensional view of ethics in action. **Chief Engineer Ziaur Rahman Chowdhury**, GM (SPD), Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, focused on the internal frameworks implemented by the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC). His discussion revolved around crew management ethics, whistleblowing policies, and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles. He elaborated on BSC's strategies for ensuring fair recruitment, transparent complaint handling, and protection of crew welfare. BSC's commitment to confidentiality in grievance redressal and its proactive stance against workplace discrimination reflect a replicable model of ethical governance. He also introduced global affiliations such as the MACN and the World Shipping Council, linking national best practices to international coalitions. Chief Engineer Chowdhury's presentation made it clear that ethics are not merely compliance tools—they are strategic enablers of long-term sustainability, crew safety, and public trust.

Captain Amir Md. Abu Sufian, GM (DPA & CSO), Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, eloquently underscored the fundamental role of integrity and ethics in the maritime profession through his insightful address during the seminar. He highlighted the gap between academic knowledge and moral responsibility, emphasizing that true

leadership onboard extends beyond technical skills to include moral courage and decision-making under pressure. By referencing real-life maritime challenges and institutional values, he stressed the need for officers to embody transparency, fairness, and accountability. The speech also examined the influence of ethical conduct on global reputation, safety, and national image. Sufian Sir called on cadets to develop ethical habits early in their careers and to remain resilient in the face of corruption or wrongdoing. His compelling message not only reinforced the core values of the academy but also inspired cadets to see themselves as future custodians of maritime ethics and international trust.

Captain Tapas Kumar Roy, Nautical Instructor, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal, offered a practical analysis grounded in operational case studies. He highlighted the infamous MV Ever Given incident in the Suez Canal, linking the grounding of the vessel to compromised ethical practices, such as a pilot requesting cartons of Marlboro cigarettes. Captain Roy explained that the refusal of the request was a direct outcome of a shipboard zero-corruption policy, thereby reinforcing the importance of institutional integrity. His presentation dissected Bridge Resource Management (BRM) protocols under STCW 2010, stressing that responsibility cannot be outsourced to pilots-the master remains in command regardless of the circumstances. Furthermore, he illustrated how unethical requests, even minor ones, can disrupt global logistics and tarnish reputation.

Cadet Workshop Highlights

The afternoon workshop allowed four groups of cadets to present their reflections on maritime ethics under the guidance of academy instructors.

- Team A, supervised by Capt. Abdullah Al Mamun, defined the core dimensions of integrity, including transparency, honesty, and legal compliance.
- Team B, mentored by Chief Engr. Mohammad Saiful Hossain, addressed implementation challenges, such as ambiguous regulatory guidance and the fear of retaliation.
- Team C, led by Engr. Md. Shamiul Basar Himel, proposed practical strategies including ethics training modules, reporting protocols, and onboard role modeling.
- Finally, Team D, under Capt. Tapas Kumar Roy, highlighted the role of marine academies in embedding ethical values through curriculum design, institutional culture, and alumni engagement.

These cadet-led discussions demonstrated maturity, critical thinking, and a sincere commitment to elevating ethical standards in their future careers.

Seminar Impact and Broader Implications

The seminar's impact was evident in both its immediate engagement and long-term potential. Cadets gained valuable exposure to real-world ethical dilemmas, sharpening their moral reasoning and professional responsibility. By creating this culture early in their training, the academy is shaping officers who will serve not just as navigators of vessels but as ethical leaders of the maritime domain. At a national level, this initiative aligns Bangladesh's maritime strategy with international norms and supports the country's ambition of becoming a maritime hub. Events like these strengthen Bangladesh's image as a country committed to compliance, professionalism, and transparent governance in shipping. Globally, the seminar echoes calls for ESG integration, anti-corruption reform, and sustainable maritime logistics, ensuring Bangladesh plays its part in a fairer and greener maritime future.

Conclusion and Reflection

i. **Comprehensive Learning Experience:**

The seminar on *"Integrity and Ethical Practices in the Maritime Industry"* successfully integrated academic rigor, practical insights, and strategic foresight to provide a holistic learning experience for cadets.

ii. **Promotion of Ethical Leadership:**

It empowered cadets to engage thoughtfully with real-world maritime challenges, emphasizing the cultivation of ethical leadership and moral accountability.

iii. **Interactive and Impactful Sessions:**

Through keynote addresses, expert panel discussions, and interactive student workshops, the event demonstrated how maritime education can shape both professional competence and personal integrity.

iv. **Institutional Commitment to Ethics:**

Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal, reaffirmed its commitment to upholding ethical standards in maritime education, serving as a model institution amidst global challenges such as corruption, inequality, and environmental concerns.

v. **Long-term Influence on Cadets:**

The reflections and feedback from cadets indicated that the seminar's lessons will have a lasting impact, guiding their future decisions and professional conduct beyond academy life.

vi. **Fostering Responsible Global Citizens:**

Ultimately, the initiative anchored the next generation of marine officers in the core values of integrity, responsibility, and global citizenship—essential traits for sustainable and ethical maritime leadership.