

# Plotting the depths of marine surveying with the IIMS India Vice Chairman

The International Institute of Marine Surveying (IIMS) defines marine surveying as “The service provided to maritime and transport organisations in general, and the production of guidance reports for all other bodies connected with maritime operations or maritime trade”.

One of the men whose name is held in the highest regard in the surveying sector is Captain Purnendu Shorey. Not only is he a senior principal surveyor, he also holds the position of Vice Chairman at IIMS, besides being the Co-Founder & Director of Offing Group. Additionally, he is the E-Roster consultant to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for green recycling — promoting best practices in environment-friendly ship recycling.

Recently, in an exclusive feature, Captain Shorey spoke with Nishit Doshi, the Chief Editor of *TradeMaker*, in a first-ever interview for any IIMS India Vice Chairman with a monthly international magazine.

## Overview of a dynamic leader

Capt Shorey, is an experienced master mariner with three decades of maritime industry experience, including over 15 years of shore-based experience in the areas of marine asset management, inspections, surveying, marine insurance, ship building and marine HR. His global expertise of working with P&I clubs, underwriters, correspondents, ship owners, operators, cash buyers, ship building and breaking yards, banks, and the offshore energy sector, has been renowned to infuse his teams with dynamism.

Having started off as a regular member of IIMS in 2013, Capt Shorey soon became actively involved with the Indian chapter of IIMS and its internal committee. He organized conferences and facilitated meetings for IIMS India, celebrated worldwide for promoting professionalism, recognition and the training of marine surveyors. As a testament to his vision, Capt Shorey was elected as the Vice Chairman of IIMS India in 2018.

**Here are some excerpts from his interview.**



## **How did your surveying journey begin and what drew you to this trade? Do you have any role models in marine surveying?**

I have always found marine surveying to be a very interesting business. I was drawn to this profession because the industry challenged my grey cells. I love stepping onboard a ship and feeling the steel. It is also an area of work where one learns, earns a living, and grows with pride. There are quite a few good mentors in the industry. I picked up my surveying lessons with one such mentor — Captain Kapil Dev Bahl. Having said that, I learn even from my junior surveyors.

My journey with Kapil commenced in 2006 when I came ashore and started working as a trainee surveyor with him at Murray Fenton Surveyors. From there, we moved to Bibby, and it was in 2015 that Offing Marine and Offshore Consultants was established with his blessings.

## **What are the career options for a marine surveyor? How does the IIMS programme benefit the next generation of Indian surveyors?**

Marine surveying can be categorized into various segments. My personal experience lies in surveys related to P&I, H&M, marine warranty, cargo, offshore asset, yacht and system audits. It is a niche area that requires a professional approach and a keen eye for details. IIMS has been formally educating and training marine surveyors for over 15 years and is recognised as a leader in the field. It is the only professional body of its kind to offer and award qualifications in marine surveying. IIMS is dedicated to developing the next generation of marine surveyors by offering quality education and qualifications that are recognised throughout the maritime world. In October 2017, it was recognised for its education programme with an international award.

Our predecessors at IIMS have worked and learnt from the cream of marine surveyors globally, and it is they who have mentored the next generation with their world-class skills into this area of work. Indian surveyors who impart education at IIMS have the advantage of superior command of the English language in addition to having spent the last few decades



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at sea as well as ashore. The students at IIMS benefit from their rich exposure. The proper culture of education at the institute followed up by appropriate experience, brings every student of IIMS India at par with any other nationality. In fact, over time, our surveyors have been known to develop the art of superior surveying, including the highest standards in report writing.

## **What measures are being taken to establish India as the 'country-of-choice' for marine surveys? What are the steps that can be taken in the future?**

At IIMS, we have paved the way by creating an excellent database of experienced surveyors. We have also provided ample educational material for the benefit of aspiring as well as young surveyors. Furthermore, to our benefit, India is a cost sensitive country which adds another value for the client to carry out surveys in India. Also, the increasing number of major and minor ports in India adds to more ships' calls. I can proudly state that several clients have already started to undertake a large number of surveys in India.

In order to establish India as the go-to country for marine surveys, we need to ensure that there is a constant flow and access to surveyors. Constant training and regular internships with surveying companies for junior surveyors will enhance the

attrition rate. Since the Tier 2 and 3 port cities in India now have exceptional infrastructure, we encourage companies to utilise their services as it eliminates the need for travel.

Another thing to consider is India's ratification of the Hong Kong Convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships. This is definitely another area of work where marine surveyors have adequate opportunities in the near future.

I have also jointly established Offing Marine & Offshore Consultants, a private marine survey company that collaborates with Indian management and promoters. We have successfully undertaken surveys in seven countries so far — Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, India, Sri Lanka and Singapore. So, to sum things up, the future of marine surveying in India indeed looks quite bright.

### **What is your contribution in coaching and preparing novices in the industry?**

For me, getting gen-next ready is not only a requirement but also a responsibility. The IIMS conferences, along with the online course available, are good global initiatives. In addition, Offing holds continuous training sessions for our team. I am also working on developing a full-time 1-year programme for surveyors in conjunction with a maritime B-school.

### **Can you give us a few examples of challenging and interesting insurance claims in your survey experience? Also, what type of vessel do you like to survey and why?**

That's like asking a father to select his favourite child! I have varied experiences starting from condition surveys for loss prevention departments of P&I clubs, claims related surveys for hull and machinery (H&M) underwriters, marine warranty surveys, cargo, and various other kinds of surveys. At Offing, we have also been involved with loading 66 windmill blades on a bulk carrier — an interesting and challenging exercise at the same time.

Some exciting developments over the last couple of years have been in the area of surveys of leisure crafts as well as some high value offshore assets. The ultrasonic testing of hatch covers and inventory of hazardous material is another area where we at Offing specialize — that is quite unique.

I would like to be involved with the surveying of specialized vessels such as 'walk to work vessels', as well as offshore wind platforms in the near future. It's my vision that such survey opportunities are available to India, and that Indian surveyors become involved for such surveys worldwide. I would also like to see growth in the augmented reality and drone-related surveys.

I am a firm believer in the growth of the renewable energy sector and we have taken a special interest in the field of offshore wind energy over the last 18 months and continue to learn as we speak.

Finally, how can one not mention autonomous vessels? I wonder what surveys will that entail!

### **As India is still seen as a country developing its specialised surveys skills, can you explain the process of establishing a marine surveying business?**

There are some necessary steps. Firstly, one needs to identify which area of surveying to pursue. Next, inducting the right quality of surveyors with adequate knowledge and experience is extremely important. Joining a reputed association of marine surveyors helps immensely, as does planning for continuous professional development of the surveyors at your disposal. The final goal should be to build a brand based on knowledge, professionalism, cost sensitivity and pride in the profession.

### **What is your advice to any budding surveyor looking to improve their trade, and someday attain a commanding position globally as well as nationally, at IIMS?**

I would ask them to always remember the concept of being a constant learner. Every survey is unique and one constantly has to keep learning every minute onboard. Continual development is extremely essential — there are no shortcuts in this profession. If a surveyor wants to stay on top of their game, they must keep improving.

With regard to this, I would like to mention that IIMS promotes the Continual Professional Development (CPD) programme, where all members are urged to collect CPD points on the basis of research, presentation of papers, taking online courses, and other appropriate methods to ensure their knowledge is continuously enhanced.

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