



PRESENTATION
ON
DHOWS

Dhows – regulation from the maritime security perspective.
Presentation by Mr. Deepak Shetty, Director General of Shipping & Secretary to the Govt. of India, Mumbai, India.

1. Preface:

- Dhows, popularly known as Arab dhows, are mechanized sailing vessels (MSVs).
- Dhows represent the traditional face of the merchant shipping industry.
- They are typically constructed from wood, bear sails and are very basic in their structural features.
- Plying dhows / MSVs is a traditional means of livelihood; often run as a family business, over generations, by communities which trade in commodities in bulk through this pristine mode of seaborne transportation.
- Dhows / MSVs trade generates subsistence livelihood basis employment.

- They predominate, geographically, in Asia, Middle East and Africa regions.
- Illustratively, there are about 500 Dhows / MSVs in India.
- Dhows lack, generally, in associated aspects of maritime safety & security and their seafarers training & welfare.
- International maritime legal instruments such as Conventions / Treaties / Agreements & their protocols of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) are not applicable to dhows / MSVs as they are for regular merchant ships.
- Thus, maritime safety & security, marine environmental pollution control, maritime education & training and seafarers competencies & welfare, inter-alia, are comparatively at a discount in this typology of vessels.

2. International dimension:

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has, through its Resolution 2036 (2012), banned the export of charcoal from Somalia.
- Charcoal is a critical natural resource of Somalia; the production, distribution and consumption of which if carried out legitimately can contribute to its sustained economic development and growth.
- This UNSC ban stands applied given that illicit charcoal export from Somalia is a predicate offence for generating illegal proceeds therefrom for terrorist financing, apart from being a conduit for money laundering.
- Al-Shabab, linked to the Al-Qaida, is operating this organized racket of illegal export of charcoal from Somalia.
- Al-Shabab is leveraging this modus-operandi to generate illicit finance for funding its terrorist activities.

- Bulk of the said illegal export of charcoal from Somalia is carried out through its ports of Bossaso & Kismayo and reportedly takes place through dhows/ MSVs.
- However, these dhows / MSVs which carry legitimate cargoes into Somalia are, under duress, constrained by the Al-Shabab to carry / export charcoal illicitly out of Somalia.
- The UN has set up its UN Monitoring Group for Somalia and Eritrea (SEMG), mandated by the UNSC, to investigate violations of the said UNSC Resolution on Somalia.

- It was held, in 2014, by the SEMG that in 2013 – 14, a sizeable portion of the seaborne transportation of charcoal out of Somalia, by way of exports, is laden on dhows / MSVs.
- It was also reported therein that a salient proportion of such dhows / MSVs are Indian owned and registered.
- This report also stated that the bulk of such illicit trafficking of charcoal out of Somalia was destined for the Middle East region.

3. Actions taken by the Govt. of India:

- Multiple meetings of representatives of the Associations/ Federations of the owners of Indian flag and registered dhows / MSVs were convened in 2013 – 14.
- In these meetings, these stakeholders were categorically advised to communicate to their member-constituents that India shall comply with the said UNSC mandate. To that end, they were told that they should categorically desist from the off-take of charcoal from Somalia, at all costs and at all times, on board their vessels.
- In these interactions, a representative of the UN-SEMG too had participated in Mumbai, as also an officer of the Ministry of External Affairs (Foreign Office) of the Govt. of India.
- The owners & operators of these Indian dhows / MSVs were duly sensitized accordingly.

- These advisories / directives were followed up closely and monitored by the Directorate General of Shipping, Govt. of India, Mumbai, in its capacity as the designated National Maritime Administration of India.
- Incrementally, under the Indian national maritime legislation i.e., the Merchant Shipping Act, instructions were issued to the Indian flag dhows / MSVs for their trading areas. In terms of these provisions, restrictions have been placed for their movement beyond the line drawn between Salalah and Male. This pre-empts them from proceeding to Somalia.
- They are being encouraged to comply with these directives in their own and national interests from the maritime security & counter-piracy perspectives. This also ensures compliance of the UNSC 2036 (2012).
- The Govt. of India has reported to the UNSC, through diplomatic channels, of the compliance of the UNSC 2036 (2012) in 2015, through the foregoing measures undertaken.

4. Conclusion:

- The dhow / MSV industry in India is being encouraged to explore and find alternate geographies and commodities for their sustenance; beyond Somalia and charcoal.
- Neither the UN-SEMG (which has a chapter 7 mandate to investigate violations of UN Security Council Resolutions on Somalia and submit statements of cases to the Security Council Sanctions Committee on individuals and entities who may merit targeted sanctions) nor the UNSC has reported anything adverse, since then and as yet, against Indian flag, registered and owned dhows / MSVs on this front.
- Thus, the Indian National Maritime Administration and industry have, in synergistic partnership, been able to ensure compliance of the UNSC Resolutions.