



From Womb to Tomb – and sometimes beyond

NATIONAL UNION OF SEAFARERS OF INDIA

Affiliated to International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)

NUSI Bhavan, 4, Goa Street, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400 001.

Tel : +91-22-2261 8368 / 2261 8369, Fax : +91-22-2261 5929

E-mail : nusi@nusi.org.in • Website : www.nusi.org.in



Circular No 08 of 2022

09th May, 2022



NUSI Founder Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sub : Brief note on NUSI Founder Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang – “Father of Indian Seafarers Movement”

Seafaring is a very challenging profession. Merchant Navy Seafarers discharge their professional duties with dedication, passion, commitment facing bad weather, storms and other challenging situations.

Like in any other profession, seafarers had also been an exploited lot with no proper wages, terms and conditions of employment, security etc. It was Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang, who gave the seafarers a strong voice and a strong platform. While welfare activities for seafarers are traced since 1896, it was given a proper structure of a trade union by Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang when he founded the National Union of Seamen of India in 1926. **“He started all alone towards his goal, more and more people joined in and the tribe increased”**.

Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang was born in Cannanore in Kerala in a middle class family on 9th May, 1879. He became an orphan at a tender age of 13 and came down to Bombay to seek employment. He got an opening in the merchant navy as a seaman and rose to the rank of a Serang. He also served in the merchant navy in the First World War 1914-1918.

In the year 1918-1919, Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang spearheaded an agitation on board the ship **“Kaiser-e-Hind”**. Under his leadership, the seafarers onboard the ship went on strike and the ship was in berth in Bombay for four days. The only demand was increase in wages and a life with dignity. **This was the first ever strike by the Indian seafarers** resulting in a good wage increase.

Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang strongly fought and for and secured **War Compensation** for 17000 seafarers who suffered in the First World War.



From Womb to Tomb – and sometimes beyond

NATIONAL UNION OF SEAFARERS OF INDIA

Affiliated to International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)

NUSI Bhavan, 4, Goa Street, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400 001.

Tel : +91-22-2261 8368 / 2261 8369, Fax : +91-22-2261 5929

E-mail : nusi@nusi.org.in • Website : www.nusi.org.in



It was the persistence of Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang in demanding a transit facility from the British Government on 24th August, 1927 which finally established the Indian Sailors Home in 1931.

Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang was also nominated by the British Government on Clow Committee and represented Indian seafarers at International Labour Organisation (ILO) Geneva in 1936.

In 1942, Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang was conferred the title of **“KHAN SAHEB”** by the British Government. **But later in the spirit of nationalism, Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang returned the title of “KHAN SAHEB” back to the British Government.**

Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang was elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1929 to 1934 and again and continued to be its member upto 1948.

Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang laid the strong foundation of the National Maritime Board – India (NMB-(I)) in 1957, the highest level of collective bargaining mechanism for service on Indian flag ships. The NMB(I) has stood the test of time and is still in practice for the last nearly 70 years. The NMB(I) has also been appreciated in the Honourable Houses of the Indian Parliament.

Shri Mohamed Ebrahim Serang died on 2nd September, 1963 at the age of 85 years leaving behind a rich legacy for which he is rightly called the **“Father of the Indian Seafarers Movement”**

On 23rd August, 1975 a street in Bombay 400 009 was named as **“Mohamed Ebrahim Serang Marg”**

All agreements negotiated for Indian and foreign flag ships by National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) have a paid holiday in memory of “NUSI Founder Mohamed Ebrahim Serang” day.

Long Live Seafarers Unity

Long Live NUSI

With warm regards,

(Abdulgani Y. Serang)

General Secretary-cum-Treasurer

Executive Board Member – ITF

Vice Chair, ITF Seafarers Section – Asia Pacific Region

Vice Chair, ITF Asia Pacific Region