

Women in Tech and Women in Water.

Women in E-Commerce

Muscat, Oman, September 18th, 2022

By

Ms. Aasia Saail Khan,
Executive Board Member

&

Convener Standing Committee on “Women Business Development”,
The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry

I have followed multiple careers in life simultaneously in spite of being a Woman and a single parent in a patriarchal society.



- Advisor for gender at the policy level in Pakistan, specifically for women in business
- . Mentor at women-led institutes, international conferences and gender-based projects in Pakistan and South Asia
- . Over 25 years of hands-on experience as a woman entrepreneur and founder of fashion retail brand
- . Chevening scholar and MA in Gender Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London
- . Serving on board of directors at Quaid-e-Azam Thermal Power since 2019
- . Serving on the board of Punjab Vocational Training Council since 2018
- . Trained as a pharmacist, since 1992 and currently serving as director for supply chain at Schazoo Zaka/ Schazoo Laboratories

In a patriarchal society of Pakistan it was very difficult for a young widow to start business in 1992. The past thirty years in business and the problems that I faced made me passionate for Women Development and Women Empowerment which lead me to find opportunities for women to help them personally and professionally.

My journey from Lahore to Milan Fashion Week was the result of Product Development, Product Evolution and Product Adaptation by adding Pakistani cultural value to an Italian product. In this case traditional Pakistani hand embroidery



UNIDO sponsored a group of women designers to study the Italian market for value addition from Pakistan in collaboration with Italian designers which brought Pakistan to Milan Fashion week. Most of this collaboration was done digitally via WhatsApp and Zoom

Impact on the world

Little known virus, high fatality, impacted every country of the World leading to;

- Lockdown.
- Travel restrictions.
- Lack of treatment.
- Rapid spread.
- Shutdown of all Economic Activity to curtail the virus.
- Most impacted were SMEs and Women Owned Businesses.
- The World had no choice but to go digital.
- E-Commerce was a necessity not a choice.

Impact on Pakistan and its solutions

- It became a matter of survival even for the most well established brands.
- All big brands developed E-Commerce websites to start selling online.
- Pakistan had no established Payment gateways causing a major hurdle for online sales.
- Pakistan leading brands developed a unique system of payment Cash on Delivery (COD) where goods were ordered online, delivered via courier and cash was received on delivery.

Impact on SMEs/Women Owned Businesses

Most SMEs and Women Owned businesses sold either in small shops, trade fairs and exhibitions. All three suffered due to the lockdown.

Women owned businesses were rapidly closing down in 2020 due to lockdown, lack of finances to build independent E-commerce websites, lack of training to utilize social media platforms for sales. As head of Women Business Development, we had to diversify women entrepreneurs towards E-commerce initially by training on how to sell on social media platforms. This is when I realized that I needed to uplift, motivate, encourage LCCL women entrepreneurs by organizing the training sessions on the following;

- Social media marketing, Facebook, Instagram are popular in Pakistan.
- Amazon Pakistan was brought to Pakistan and LCCL arranged a training for all members.
- Digital media training for sales online



Thank You

