

# Finding new ways

By creating more opportunities for women and providing them tools to earn effectively, their labour participation can be increased manifold

In 2020, female labour force participation in Pakistan was 21 per cent, which is fairly low compared to other countries in similar economic situations. According to the Vision 2025 document, Pakistan ranks amongst the lowest globally, as it falls at 144th in terms of female labour force participation. One of the numerous reasons is that most women are active in agricultural activities and household tasks, and their formal employment participation is relatively low. Furthermore, even if they engage in some form of self-employment or other economic activity, they are largely undocumented and unnoticed due to a variety of reasons, including the middleman's role.

The Vision 2025 focuses on increasing female labour force participation by providing them with opportunities. Women's education, urbanisation and digitisation are all major elements that can contribute to a higher female labour force participation rate. Furthermore, developing opportunities for women and establishing a gender-friendly environment in which women may work comfortably is crucial. It is also necessary to enhance the capacities of women, particularly those who are already involved in economic activity. Governments may offer opportunities for women and strengthen their capacities through public-private partnerships. National and international development organisations can also take initiative and play their role. This can not only assist women in having a decent source of income, but will also help increase female labour force participation rates.

Many women in rural areas are skilled in making embroidered ap-



parel, which is in high demand and well-known across the country. These women, on the other hand, do not get a fair price for their abilities and work since they do not have direct access to the market. The middleman therefore reaps big profits. The middleman is frequently dealt with on behalf of the women by male family members. This makes them more vulnerable, and they are frequently denied the income they deserve. Furthermore, they are generally unrecognised and undocumented as contributors.

Efforts can be made to enable these women to use smart mobile phones to take orders directly and deliver items using courier services that can also be booked through smartphones. There is also a need to provide these women with their own personal bank accounts so that they can receive the funds without the need for a middleman. This access to digital technologies and banking services will spark fresh life into rural women's economic activity.

Information technology and dig-

italisation are opening lots of new opportunities for women. With the government's help, Pakistan may see an increase in female entrepreneurs and leaders in a variety of service industries. This will empower women, reduce poverty and improve their lives and families.

The internet-based food delivery industry is becoming increasingly popular, and this trend is expected to continue in the coming years. Similarly, online cab companies like Careem, Uber, and In-Driver are gaining traction and bringing up

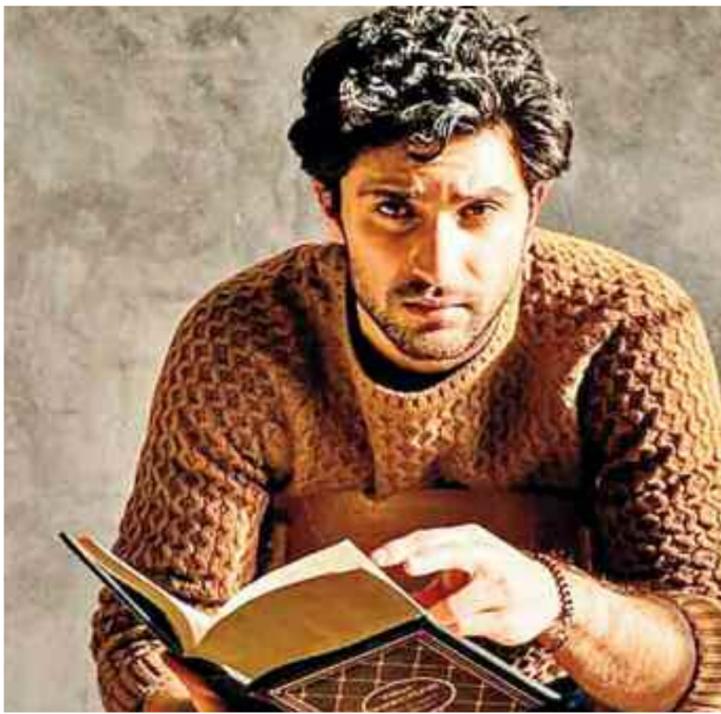
new opportunities. Women in metropolitan regions have many options, yet they are denied them due to various factors. The most significant factor is a lack of driving skills. Even if a woman desires to pursue the career, she may be unable to do so due to many factors including her inability to pay a fee to learn to drive. The government should launch an intervention through a public-private partnership to assist women in learning to drive, obtaining a driver's licence and connecting them with the food de-

livery and cab services.

In cities, the trend of hiring a nanny and babysitters is growing by the day. However, housemaids often serve the purpose due to a lack of professional babysitters. They are frequently scolded by parents and families, causing them to lose their dignity and increasing their vulnerability. They also spend more than eight hours at houses where they work and are frequently paid less than the country's minimum legal wage. Training courses can be provided with the support of a professional organisation to empower maids and other interested women with child-care training. A session on the use of job-hunting websites such as LinkedIn and Rozee should be included in the training so that they can be identified by employers and have a good chance of securing a job. Apart from these, there are several areas where women's capacities can be developed to include them in economic activities. There is also a pressing need to provide a gender-friendly working environment free of abuse, harassment and discrimination so that women can work with dignity.

The government of Pakistan has launched Hunarmand Pakistan as part of its Kamyab Jawan Programme, which provides free technical and vocational training. There is a need to raise awareness about this, particularly in rural regions, and for courses tailored specifically for women. There may be some women who are interested in the courses but lack the necessary academic qualifications. The admission criteria should be changed where suitable to ensure that the talented potential participants are not overlooked.

## Ahad Raza heads to Netflix Kanwal Ahmed featured by YouTube CEO



If there is one platform that changed the streaming game and led to the emergence of other American streaming platforms as well as across South Asia with Zee5 becoming home to some terrific Pakistani productions, it is without question Netflix.

Announced earlier that Pakistani actor and producer Humayun Saeed will essay the role of Dr. Hasnat Khan in the Netflix original, The Crown in its upcoming fifth season, another Pakistani is following suit. After Humayun Saeed, joining Netflix in an original - according to Variety - is the young and formidable actor, Ahad Raza Mir.

According to a Variety exclusive, the actor has been roped in for an original Netflix series called Resident Evil. Though Netflix is not willing to reveal more about Mir's character in

as Apple TV + and HBO Max as well as Disney+ will certainly force audiences to choose, Netflix continues to drop original content with actors and stories from around the world, and is likely to stay on top of the game. With plans to come up with approximately 2000 pieces of content, both original and from other production houses, Netflix will give every other OTT platform a run for its money. With Ahad Raza Mir's strong credentials as an actor, it isn't surprising he is cast in a role. In fact, more and more actors are turning to Netflix. From India, the latest actor to join Netflix ranks is Kareena Kapoor. Huzzah to the diversity!

Ms. Kamala trailer arrives from Marvel and Disney+ From ardent superhero film fans to curious film viewers, the idea of Marvel Studios introducing its first Muslim superhero has been long overdue. The fact that the superhero is a 16-year-old Pakistani American called Kamala Khan is refreshing. But it isn't hearsay anymore as the trailer for Ms. Kamala Khan is finally here. Featuring Iman Vellani in the titular role, the trailer shows the young teenager encountering mean girls, high school crushes, obtaining cosmic powers, a love for superheroes, and we even see a shot of Nimra Bucha. It is not exactly true to the original comic book. Ahad Raza Mir heads to Netflix "An avid gamer and a voracious fan-fiction scribe, Kamala is a Super Hero mega fan with an oversized imagination—particularly when it comes to Captain Marvel," the official description for the series reads. "Yet Kamala feels like she doesn't fit in at school and sometimes even at home—that is, until she gets super powers like the heroes she's always looked up to.

Life gets better with super powers, right?" A younger cast than preceding films and slick cinematography also lends the series a refreshing air as far as superhero sagas go. The project also involves two-time Academy Award winner, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy who has been roped in to direct at least one episode and Pakistani actor and heartthrob Fawad Khan who will, according to reports, essay Khan's grandfather. Other Pakistani actors who are reportedly attached to the project include Mehwish Hayat, who brings her own brand of fierce to everything she does. As for Ms. Kamala Khan, it is an original series that will air on Disney+ on June 8 and will be a precursor to the Brie Larson film, The Marvels.

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NEWSFLASH

Kanwal Ahmed, founder of the Facebook group "Soul Sisters Pakistan", is the first Pakistani Facebook creator to be featured on Youtube for her show Conversations with Kanwal. "This is good news for all of us creators from Pakistan. This is brilliant news for our ecosystem. This is just the first step - we are being recognized and applauded! I know in my heart that for all of us trying to make a difference, trying to add value to other people's lives through our content - there is soooooo much more that lies ahead. Thank you to every single person who has watched CWK, applauded our efforts, prayed for me and generously crowdfunded to continue producing the show! Your prayers and love are 110% the reason that I am on that blog today and representing Pakistan on a global stage. And a major shoutout to my wonderful team especially @saroshpirwani who pulls through with remarkable commitment EVERY single time," she wrote in her Instagram post.

Ahsan Ramzan wins World Snooker Champion

Pakistan's 16-year-old Ahsan Ramzan made the country proud by winning the IBSF World Snooker Championship title. He defeated the more experienced and top-

seeded Amir Sarkosh in a nerve-testing final played in Doha, becoming the country's youngest to win this trophy.

Soon after his victory, Ahsan said that words are not enough to express his feelings. He hoped that his victory would help snooker in Pakistan get its due importance. "I want the government to support snooker; I want society to support snooker," he added. —The Business Report

