

THE GULABI CODE



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MS I&E, 2019

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PROJECT ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

It is Certified that final copy of MS I&E Project written by Ms **Rida Rafique** Registration No **00000319010** of **MS I&E** has been vetted by undersigned, found complete in all aspects as per NUST Statutes/Regulations/MS Policy, is free of plagiarism, errors, and mistakes and is accepted as fulfillment for award of MS degree.

It is further certified that necessary amendments as pointed out by GEC members and foreign/local evaluators of the scholar have also been incorporated in the said project.

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DECLARATION

I hereby state that no portion of work presented in this Project is submitted for supporting the application of any other degree or qualification in this University or any other Institution.

Name: Rida Rafique

Signature:

Date: 25 Oct, 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate my project work to my family, teachers and friends who have supported and encouraged me through this process.

I also dedicate this project to numerous empowered women I came across and worked with, during the course of this project, who work hard, support and raise awareness for empowerment of women in the Pakistani community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Working on this project has been a very humbling experience, where every challenge and constraints has contributed to my personal and professional growth by driving me to come up with creative solutions. I would like to acknowledge and express my utmost gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ayesha Abrar for her continuous encouragement, guidance and support throughout the course of this project.

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I would also like to express gratitude for the friends, team and key partners at The Gulabi Code for their countless efforts and hard work to make this project a success.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This business report shows the progress and growth of the social enterprise ‘The Gulabi Code’ from its idea conception stage to a completely self-sustainable business over a short period of time. The Gulabi Code (TGC) solves the issue of availability of hygiene and menstrual products in Pakistan. There’s a strong taboo associated with the reproductive health of women which makes it a challenging industry to cater. Discussion about periods is considered a taboo in not only rural but also urban communities of the country, due to which women lack basic information regarding menstrual hygiene, and seeking help for issues faced during menstruation. TGC aimed to work for countering the taboos by targeting the urban population through social media campaigns and by providing a platform which showcases all products needed for periods management.

TGC is an online business which showcases a vast product line of products that are not easily available in Pakistan; TGC delivers these products to the doorsteps of customers with convenient payment methods like cash on delivery and online bank transfer. With the increasing discussion about taboos and the importance of addressing women reproductive health issues the need for platforms like TGC has increased over the recent years.

Currently, The Gulabi Code is a one of its kind platform which is actively working for providing the female population in Pakistan with all the necessities at their convenience. The broad product range available is one of the core strengths of TGC and is largely appreciated by the customers of TGC. TGC not only showcases products but also comes up with new ways to facilitate women and combat the stigma against menstruation, like installation of a free pads dispenser at the workplace of one of TGC’s partner companies

i.e. Askolay. Despite the market being associated with taboos, TGC is actively contributing to encouraging discussions about periods, menstruation and health issues of women.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sanitary issues and female health

Periods are considered shameful in Pakistan and there are a number of myths and taboos surrounding this topic; a large proportion of the population views menstruation as impure, this impacts women diversely as they're prevented from getting the basic information and education about menstruation and hygiene management. "Period poverty in Pakistan extends beyond just the financial discrepancies that hinder women from having access to proper menstrual products and extends into a "social period poverty" wherein women are deprived of education about menstruation" (Somani, 2021).

This shame and taboo prevents women from seeking help and guidance for their health issues, thus worsening their health conditions. With awareness and providing basic hygiene management education to women a lot of these issues can be prevented and catered. For example, changing the sanitary pad frequently and cleaning vulva properly can prevent rashes and unitary tract infections (Bansal, 2017).

1.2 The proposed solution and business opportunity:

TGC identified the need for a platform that offers products needed for managing periods in a more hygienic way. These products are not readily available and therefore a platform where all these products are available would help females greatly. Not only the products needed to be made available it also had to be ensured that the products were high quality, and were provided with guidance about how to properly use these items and why is it important to use them too. TGC solved these issues with a two-fold solution, by providing all products needed to make periods more hygienic and

comfortable for women and also raising awareness about common issues, myths and encouraging discussions to fight the stigma surrounding menstruation.

1.3 Introducing Sanitary Kits and Products – The Idea

The Gulabi Code (TGC) is a social enterprise that works on addressing women reproductive needs and the stigma associated with the reproductive needs of women in Pakistan which is a long ignored topic in women hygiene overall in general and Pakistan in specific.

TGC is a one-stop-shop for all menstrual management and hygiene products. These products are also provided in bundles to facilitate women who want easy, efficient solution to their needs during periods especially. Women can order a vast range of hygiene products needed during menstruation like sanitary pads, pad holders, stain remover, period underwear, and toilet seat covers etc. Other than basic necessities the platform also caters to menstrual health issues faced by women like PCOS kit, which includes seed cycling kit and PCOS tea which are natural remedies for managing PCOS. Safety devices which include pepper sprays and tasers are also available at TGC, which makes it's a well-rounded platform for all basic necessities of women for efficiently managing periods and taking good care of their hygiene. The product line contains a range of products that are conveniently available like sanitary pads to others which are not available easily like toilet seat covers, disposable paper panties, stain remover and period underwear etc. All these kits and products are delivered to the doorstep of customers through Cash on delivery service.

Following is the list of products available at TGC:

1. Pad Holder
2. Disposable Paper Panties

3. Period Underwear
4. Toilet Seat Covers
5. Heating Pack
6. Monthly/Period Planner
7. Essential Periods Kit
8. Seed Cycling Kit
9. PCOS tea
10. PCOS Kit
11. Stain Remover Pen
12. Taser
13. Pepper Spray
14. Rosewater
15. Sanitizing Spray
16. Turmeric Capsules
17. Gulabi Kit
18. Free Pads Dispenser

TGC also creates awareness through its social media channels and highlights important topics like breast cancer and self-examination, PCOS and general health and period hacks. The primary focus of this platform is to start a healthy conversation around periods and gradually remove the taboo and shame associated with menstruation in particular and women reproductive health in general. The marketing strategy is also focused on conveying a message of empowerment and sisterhood through supporting other women too.

1.4 Market Need - Bridging the Gap

The Literature identifies the gap that exists in the market and points towards the lack of awareness, easy availability of period products and shame linked to menstruation. Chandra-Mouli and Patel (2017) in their research state that adolescent girls from low and middle-income countries often lack knowledge for menarche. Female family members, primarily mothers are the main sources of information, who are not fully equipped with the knowledge of menstrual hygiene. The shame attached with menstruation leads to unhealthy practices. Due to this stigma these young girls miss out on school, self-medicate and often avoid social gatherings as well. Chandra-Mouli and Patel (2017) in their research concluded that low and middle-income countries must work out ways to improve knowledge and share understanding of adolescent girls to deal with their menstrual health related problems.

The literature sheds light on the social taboo associated with women menstrual hygiene which is an important part of the reproductive health of females: Bobel and Winkler (2020) in their comprehensive work highlight that in most communities' women discussing menstruation are considered scandalous. This leads to shame in discussing menstrual health with medical staff, especially male. McLintock and Claire (2018) suggested that "Social taboos related to menstruation...may explain why women have a reluctance to discuss issues relating to menstruation with clinicians, especially male clinicians" Researchers also point out that this reluctance poses a threat to the health of women. An editorial in *The Lancet* (2018) states that "In the UK, nearly 80% of adolescent girls have experienced concerning menstrual symptoms (such as unusually heavy or irregular bleeding) but hadn't consulted a health professional; 27% of those said they were too embarrassed to discuss the topic. The rooted silence surrounding periods is putting lives at risk."

Researchers have also pointed out that while other institutions fail to comprehend the need for change, the Social entrepreneurs play a vital role in the Period Revolution: A Newsweek article declared 2015 as the “The year of period” when social entrepreneurs started addressing sensitive topics like gender equality and feminism through periods. Deep diving into the issue, research points out that not only societal forces, but the companies selling menstrual products have also reinforced the stigma through promoting secrecy in marketing campaigns and also portraying embarrassment upon revealing that a woman is menstruating (Jackson, Theresa and Rachel, 2013) The message communicated through these marketing campaigns further inculcates the need for their products in order to ‘hide’ their condition (Malefyt and Timothy, 2016).

Social Entrepreneurs however, sell similar products but in a different manner that has a responsible social impact and thus creates a two-fold impact i.e. social and economic. Other than products, social enterprises also increase awareness regarding menstrual health through sessions and workshops with the local community. This helps them understand that menstruation is a normal biological process (Boosey and Robyn, 2014) Mansoor and Hafsa (2020) also state in their research that awareness sessions about myths and misconceptions regarding periods need to be conducted with university-going girls in Pakistan, to help them take better care of their reproductive health.

UNICEF, in the mission to increase awareness and counter menstrual taboo, has also conducted various programs; these also include competitions conducted to find out ways to properly manage menstrual health (New youth challenge calls on young innovators to design solutions for improved menstrual hygiene practices, 2018) Case studies of women inspiring others to break the taboo were also published to encourage menstrual hygiene management in women in Pakistan. One such story was of Hajra

Bibi, from KPK, who stood up to break silence about periods in her community (Empowering women to practice safe menstruation, 2018).

Delving deeper into the literature from Pakistani context it was seen that the taboo is rooted into the socio-culture fabric of the country. Local studies conducted concluded that elder women are not accustomed to the discussing the issues faced regarding menstruation and have also accepted many of the unhygienic practices and myths as norms. Not only this, the poor infrastructure does not support hygienic periods management in educational institutions too, where there's a lack of access to basic sanitary products, water and disposal facilities (Mumtaz, Sivananthajothy, Bhatti, and Sommer, 2019).

Due to strong taboo associated with periods the market has been untapped, and therefore TGC bridges the gap by providing a one stop solution to all periods needs. This includes not only period management products but also PCOS and common health issues faced by women. Moreover, it also helps customers who aren't comfortable shopping for hygiene products in physical stores as we ensure confidentiality on packages. Hence, TGC helps women who prefer shopping from an online platform offering a range of items rather than any one specific thing.

1.5 Relevance to National Needs

Michael and Iqbal (2020) in their research discussed that female population in Pakistan have poor access to information on menstrual health therefore measures need to be taken to bridge this gap. The U-Report also confirms that menstruation is considered shameful and females do not feel comfortable talking about it and shy away from talking about it (Rehman, 2017) Due to this, basic information is lacking within the female population; the literature showed that nearly 50% of the participants in the

study did not take bath during menstruation, due to the common myth that exists that women are not supposed to bathe during periods (Ali, and Rizvi, 2010).

According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics population census, the female population of Pakistan is 101.3 Million Women in Pakistan out of which 36.4 Million Women live in urban areas and 66% of these women lie in the age group of 20-30 years which signifies how huge the market is. The offerings are need-based so women who prefer buying from a platform like TGC are the targeted customers. This platform is one way, where all products are available on one website and awareness is created in a responsible way and healthy discussions are started.

UNICEF identifies four themes through which can contribute to a better menstrual health of women: “Social support, Knowledge and skills, facilities and services and access to absorbent materials and supportive supplies” TGC covers the knowledge and access to supplies theme with the awareness campaign on social media and with the vast product line available. TGC will also focus on the remaining two themes in the future.

CHAPTER 2: ABOUT THE COMPANY

2.1 Company Profile

TGC is an online platform working to alleviate the issues faced by women regarding their reproductive health and menstruation in particular. This for women and run by women platform is breaking stereotypes and taboo linked to the discussion and knowledge about periods. The venture aims to empower fellow women through helping them realize that health issues women face can only be resolved through start talking about them rather than being ashamed and also through start using products that help manage periods properly. It is a social enterprise so the main aim is to create a social impact through providing easy access to period products and reliable information. TGC also focuses on providing the urban female population of Pakistan with period products that are not readily available and all in a single platform.

2.2 Core Values of TGC

1. Empathy: in communication and initiatives.
2. Empower fellow women: through fighting shame and taboo around menstruation.
3. Team Work: for social impact and loyalty to cause.
4. Exceptional Customer Service: so women feel comfortable addressing their issues and seeking advice about products.
5. Delight customers: with great value for money.
6. Innovation: to come up with more ways to overcome the challenge of menstrual hygiene.

2.3 Objectives

1. To provide convenient solutions for common issues faced during menstruation in form of thoughtfully compiled product range and grouped into specialized bundles.
2. To provide prompt, vigilant, responsible and empathetic customer service to give the best shopping experience.
3. Keep the delivery time minimum and make speedy deliveries all over Pakistan.
4. Provide a one-stop-shop with all products that women need during periods and to manage hygiene in homes and while on the go.
5. To provide reliable information extracted from health professionals and carefully extracted scientific knowledge.
6. To encourage conversations and shared experiences by creating an online community through social media platforms.

2.4 Personalization: The Key Ingredient

One of the key learnings after launching the first kit at TGC, was the importance of giving customers the option to customize the periods box according to their needs and choice. Therefore, individual products were made available for purchasing along with the option to customize the kit according to customer's needs and preferences. Once the product line was broadened options were also provided within the products like variations in period underwear based on the menstrual flow – the first type of period underwear provides comfortable use for women with lower menstrual flow or who prefer using it as an additional protection against leakage or stains by using with sanitary pads or tampons etc. The second option is best suited for women who have a higher menstrual flow or are more comfortable wearing period underwear only and

without sanitary pads etc. The goal is to provide women with options to choose products based on their preferences and needs.

2.5 Consumer Demand and Product line expansion

The product line and offerings have been modified according to the consumer needs: a special focus has been laid on the customer feedback and incorporating it to better serve the customers. Based on the consumer needs the individuals products were introduced soon after the kits and since then a number of products have been added on their demand. Some of the most demanded items are stain remover in pen form since it was offered initially in a travel-size spray bottle.

Period underwear, heating pack, pepper spray and Tasers are some of the products which were added later on in the product line to accommodate customer needs. The safety collection i.e. pepper sprays and Tasers were launched after national events which indicated the worsened security conditions for women in even the urban cities of Pakistan, so safety devices became a mandatory item to carry at all times.

The sale trends also signify that customers prefer ordering the items that are not available easily in stores like period underwear, disposable paper panties, toilet seat covers, heating packs, pepper sprays, Tasers and pad holders. Toilet seat covers and disposable paper panties are the most popular items at TGC as they're most useful while traveling.

2.6 Digital Identity

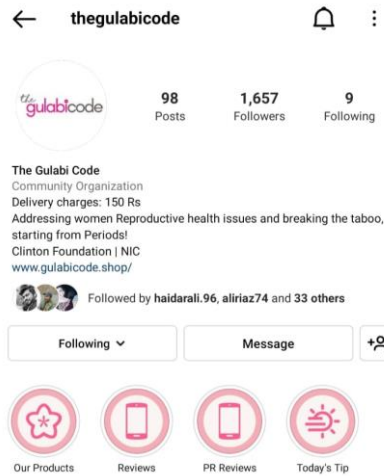


Figure 1: TGC Instagram Account

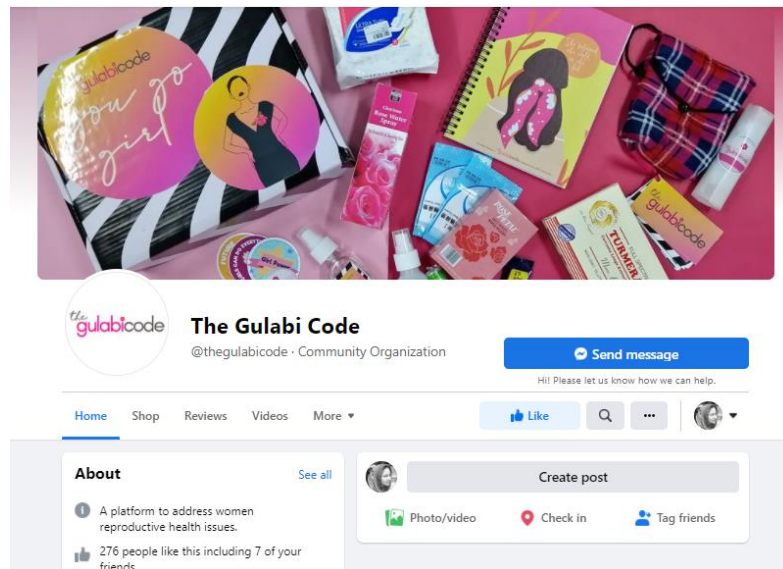


Figure 2: TGC Facebook Page

Since TGC is an online brand therefore the utmost importance was given to the digital footprint right from the beginning including branding. The primary social media channel for the digital presence of the startup is Instagram. The reason being that the age group and demographics of our target market are most active on Instagram. Instagram also has a number of added benefits for marketing as it provides marketing courses and help especially for small businesses. Influencer marketing is also much more established as an industry on this social media channel. There are a number of

influencers you can collaborate with in form of unpaid PR gift packages or in form of video collaborations; influencers who are passionate about the same causes and share the same values are prioritized. Facebook is a great platform for broadcasting but due to the recent decrease in reach it is not as great as Instagram for conversions. Twitter, Snapchat and other social media channels also have a social presence.

The branding for the digital presence has been designed by giving special attention to the target market i.e. women: the brand image also depicts the name of the by keeping the color palette all the different shades of pink as ‘*Gulabi*’ is pink color in Urdu. The fonts and color palette is designed to attract women with floral elements also used in the design.



Figure 3: TGC logo

The message conveyed through the brand image is of empowerment and confidence for women to start talking about important issues while creating a safe space so trust is another message communicated through the branding. The digital presence for TGC holds great importance also because it is the primary channel from where all awareness campaign are also run.

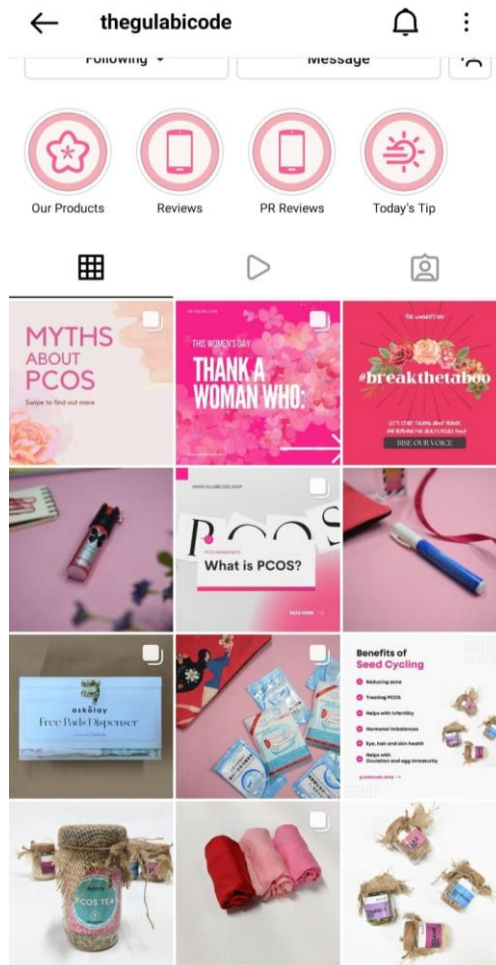


Figure 4: Instagram Feed layout

A part from the social media channels, TGC also has a website to facilitate a smoother shopping experience for customers. The website interface is use friendly and also resonates with the brand image and also has pink and white color palette.

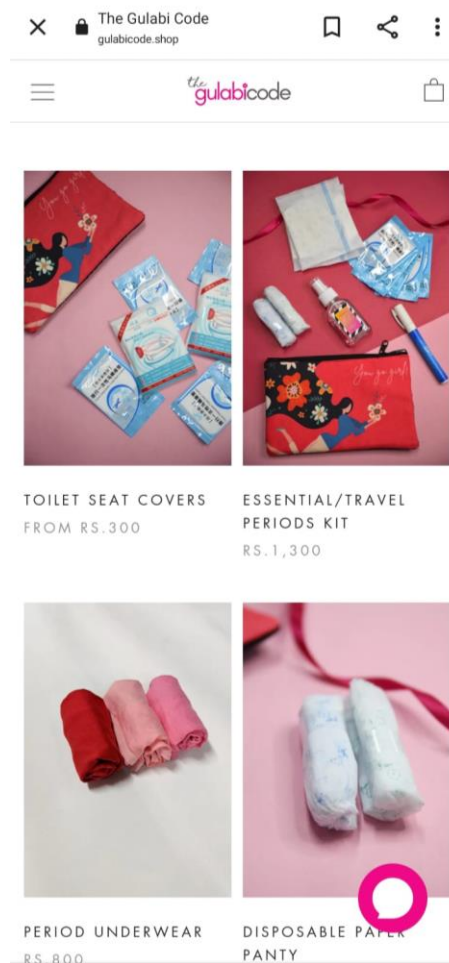


Figure 5: TGC website layout

The website has been developed using Shopify and since a larger number of websites are developed using this technology so most customers are already accustomed and comfortable with the checkout interface so it's less likely that they'll face any usability issues. Customer experience is further enhanced with complete details about products, features, benefits and guidelines on how to use in the product descriptions. The variations for each product like sizes, quantity etc. also ensure a smoother shopping experience. All frequently asked questions are also added in the FAQs tab along with the blog posts about more detailed questions on seed cycling and PCOS tea.

2.7 Value Proposition

TGC is an online platform that provides you the convenience of ordering all the products that are needed to manage menstruation and are not available readily or

associated with taboos, by delivering it to your doorstep. This platform helps you cope with your period in a more effective way by providing you all things that help you feel more at ease.

2.8 Mendelow's Matrix

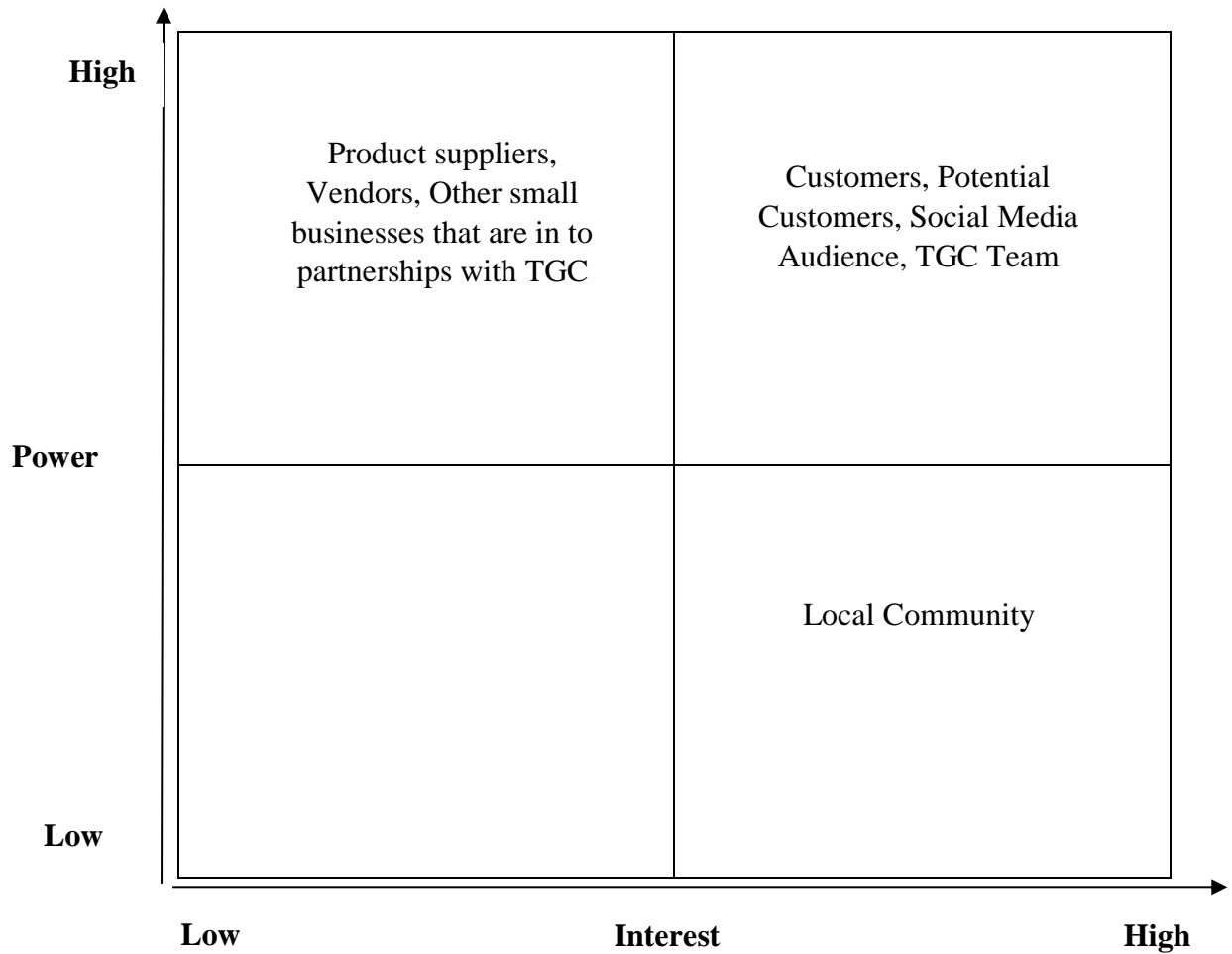


Table 1: Mandelow's Matrix, Stakeholder analysis

Stake holders play an important role in the success of any business; in order to ensure smooth business operations it's imperative that all stake holders believe in the business' goals and share the same values.

2.8.1 High Power, High Interest

The key stake holders which shape the business direction and accomplishments are the customers and potential target market. The existing customers shape the word of mouth and their feedback helps build the trust of other potential customers as well. So these customers included in the High Power, High Interest section and special efforts must be taken to keep them pleased with the business. The target market and potential customers of TGC also lie in the same section as special efforts need to be ensured to convert them make purchases. The social media followers are also categorized as potential customers so it's vital to keep them engaged too. TGC team with their efforts and passion are important contributors to the business growth so efforts should be made to keep them focused on the goals and vision of the company.

2.8.2 High Power, Low Interest

Product Suppliers and vendors influence the costs of the products so they hold high power but are not interested in the business operations. Other businesses which collaborate with TGC for specific products like The Nutrify Official collaborates for the PCOS tea and seed cycling kit are primarily interested in the sales that are carried out from the platform. Other partnerships like RR Stationery, Glorious Laboratories, and Protective Brothers etc. also lie in the same section of the Mendelow's Matrix.

2.8.3 Low Power, High Interest

Since there's taboo and shame associated with women reproductive health so the local community falls in the section of Low Power and High interest. The social media channels are a public platform so discouraging and abusive comments are expected on these channels, as they like to dictate the experiences and beliefs to women.

2.8.4 Low Power, Low Interest

Right now there are not any stake holders which can be included in this section of the Mendelow's Matrix.

2.9 Quality Assurance

TGC prioritizes safety and quality above all so the following standard operating procedures have been developed to ensure that the products delivered to the customers are of the same high quality that the business promises:

- All products/stock is carefully quality-checked by TGC team upon receiving it from suppliers. Random products are picked out of the lot and tested for workability.
- All products available at TGC are approved by Drug Regulatory Authority Pakistan and are carefully tested to prevent side effects or reactions.
- While packaging the sanitization and cleanliness of the products is ensured by careful handling of products. All personnel handling packaging are wearing safety gloves and hair net.
- The parcels are packed and sealed in flyers provided by Trax to prevent any damage during transportation. The package seal can only be opened by customers.
- In case of any complaints from customer's side, TGC has a 3-day return and refund policy. The team replaces or refunds the items based on customers' wishes. This also helps establish TGC as a trusted brand for clientele and encourages conversions.

CHAPTER 3: SITUATIONAL & INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

It is key to the success of any business to identify the target market which will be most willing to buy the products showcased as these products solve their key problems and addresses their needs. The following analysis covers some of the key aspects to understand the target market. This helps analyze the scope of the problem that's being solved and this is also key to check for the opportunity for growth as the business matures.

3.1 Initial Feasibility Analysis

Size of the Market according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics population census 2017:

- Total Addressable Market: 101.3 Million Women in Pakistan
- Serviceable Available Market: 36.4 Million Women living in Urban areas
- Serviceable Obtainable Market: 66% of Women lie in Age group: 20-30 years

Market Segmentation

Our potential customers for product and service model are categorized as follows;

- Educated, Informed women
- Working women
- House wives
- Students: School, college and university
- Anyone in need themselves or anyone they know

The following table elaborates the characteristics and preferences of the target audience of TGC:

		Educated, Informed Women	Working Women	House Wives	Students
Demographics	Income	25,000 PKR – 100,000 PKR	25,000 PKR and above	Mostly none – Get from husband/ guardian 20,000 PKR – 100,000 PKR	None to 30,000 PKR
	Social Class	Middle and Upper Class	Middle and Upper Class	Middle and Upper Class	Middle and Upper Class
	Age	20 years onwards	20 years onwards	18 years onwards	13 years onwards
Behavioral	Buyer readiness	Get to know the product and then begin to acquire knowledge about what are the company's offerings	They "Prefer" your product on the benefits provided.	Liking; This segment will feel quite positive about the company as the ideas are creative	Liking; This segment will feel quite positive about the company as the ideas are creative and they follow trends
	Usage status	High	High	High	High
Psychographic	Lifestyle	Hungry for information related to the latest trends, best and quality services	Socially active, Time Constraint, busy, enthusiastic supporters of women empowerment	Ease of buying, spontaneous spenders	Spontaneous spenders and follow trends
Geographic	Location	All over Pakistan – Mostly Urban Areas	All over Pakistan – Mostly Urban Areas	All over Pakistan – Mostly Urban Areas	All over Pakistan – Mostly Urban Areas

Table 2: Target Audience analysis

The above table highlighted is an in-depth analysis of the behavioral, geographic, psychographic, demographic and behavioral preferences which helped especially in

designing products that caters to the needs of the targeted audience. This also helped in devising the marketing campaign which is most attractive to this audience like a large proportion of the potential market spends their time on social media channels, Instagram to be more precise thus most marketing efforts were focused on Instagram. Educative and awareness content about common issues women faced in the target audience also helped spread the word and reach out to the other women facing the same problems.

An online survey was conducted to analyze of a platform like TGC; the survey conducted with 150 respondents is as follows:

- 97% respondents confirmed that they feel there is a strong taboo associated with women menstrual and reproductive health in Pakistan
- 70% of the respondents shared that they are not comfortable talking about periods, reproductive health issues openly
- 83% of the respondents confirmed that due to the shame they are reluctant in seeking help and advice for menstrual hygiene management
- 92% of the respondents expressed the need for an online platform that showcases all essential products needed for managing periods and hygiene
- 93% respondents expressed the willingness to buy products from an online platform that showcases all these products

The results from the survey confirm the need for a platform that showcases products needed for managing better menstrual hygiene. The results and analysis from the survey have been further discussed in the Lean Startup Methodology in the following chapters.

3.2 PESTEL Analysis

3.2.1 Political

Government policies gave a dire effect on small businesses like TGC. The political policies which direct the inflation rates have influenced all product prices and due to increase in fuel charges the suppliers have increased their delivery charges. Other than that, fuel charges are also added on each delivery on the courier company charges so the delivery charges also had to be increased to 150 Rs for delivery charges which was initially 100 Rs only. The unstable political conditions of Pakistan and protests often cause delays in delivery which effect the customer experience. Some of the products like toilet seat covers are imported from China, so government relationships with China have a direct impact on our business. So far no issues have been faced due to this, the packages also reach on the standard delivery time.

3.2.2 Economical

The Economic conditions of the country have a direct impact on the small businesses and the day to day operation. TGC mostly sources products from other manufacturers and works extensively with vendors for its products so the inflation rates directly and direly effect the enterprise. The material, manufacturing, delivery and services charges are all effected by the increasing the inflation rate of the country. As a result the product prices are also increased which effects the sales since the affordability of customers is effected due to increased prices of all basic necessities. The increasing devaluation of rupee has also resulted in the increased Shopify charges which is the platform used for developing the website, as the subscription charges are deducted based on the exchange rate.

3.2.3 Social

The social enterprise is trying to challenge the status quo by encouraging discussions about women health awareness so social impact is the key goal of TGC. In fighting the cultural taboos there's also a resistance that is faced from the local community's side who are against the idea of awareness being created on public platforms like social media channels. So initially the primary target market is urban population of Pakistan, women who are educated and well aware of the importance of addressing health issues as creating social impact is a trickle-down effect, so once educated, informed women start addressing the shame associated with periods only then the rural population will start getting the awareness needed. The goal is not only to encourage women to purchase products from TGC's platform but also get more comfortable buying the basic hygiene products from the physical stores as a lot of women in Pakistan are not comfortable doing that too. As the lifestyle and social preferences of women change the need for the products at TGC may be effected as well. For example the demand for sustainable products like period underwear is relatively less because of popularity of sanitary pads is higher, but with increase in awareness about using environment friendly items the trends and liking of women may change.

3.2.4 Technological

The website is the primary technology tool used for facilitating purchases and managing back end inventory too. The website statistics are key indicators of the customer behavior, their likings and their preferences. Technological improvements in Shopify features would help the business in improving their offerings. Other than this, enhancement in social media features also helps with supporting small businesses. Instagram shop for example is one feature which will help increase conversion rate but unfortunately it is not available in Pakistan right now. Reels also greatly increase the

social media engagement but it is also not available in Pakistan, once all these features are introduced it will help TGC exploit these resources too to reach out to a larger audience.

3.2.5 Legal

TGC abides by all safety standards and ensures all health standard while packaging and delivering the packages. Safety devices like Tasers and pepper sprays are legal to carry in all spaces except in flights as indicated by the official website of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority.

Including Taser and pepper spray in advertisements of social media also against the advertising policies of Facebook so these products are not promoted in Ads however posting and creating awareness about these safety devices is encouraged and permitted by Facebook's guidelines.

3.2.6 Environmental

Although TGC's primary value proposition is to provide convenience to women but being more aware of the environmental impact of period products is also encouraged at the platform. Several products options are available and encouraged for women that are environment friendly like period underwear is a reusable item and prevents landfills in comparison to sanitary pads. The toilet seat covers available at TGC are also biodegradable which is also applauded by the customers. Therefore, TGC is also working towards providing all available options for women who are careful with their choices and prefer environment friendly products for period management as well.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Convenience.	Strong taboo associated with the topic, so communicating offerings is a huge challenge and making women comfortable with buying online.
One-stop shop.	Requires rigorous marketing needed and high budget needed for running Ads online.
Things that women are reluctant talking about and can't purchase easily, can buy on one platform.	Cost coverage issues as not offering in huge quantities.
Carefully curated bundle deals like essential period kit and PCOS kit that contains all that's needed.	
Women oriented startup so understand customer needs well.	
A part from basic necessities, one platform offers products like period tracker, pepper sprays etc. too.	Small scale business so limited resources to exploit.
All period problems covered like PCOS, safety devices, periods, hygiene.	Profit-margin needs to be kept minimal to accommodate maximum customers so business sustainability needs to be managed very carefully.
Multiple options available to select what's best suited for e.g. period underwear for low and high flow.	Maintaining customer needs and supplies. Some products get out of stock, or have a longer delivery time.
Excellent customer service so all questions and queries answered before ordering. And if there are any issues with orders they're accommodated immediately.	
Less competition and a relatively untapped market.	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Expand offerings by introducing health consultation services.	The present economy may result in increased economic players; the competition may arise from variety of sources.
A lot of room to expand product line.	Easily imitable platform.
Increased awareness about sustainability.	
Offer products at lower prices through manufacturing.	Trust and acceptance issues for online and local community.

Table 3: Swot Analysis to establish business strategy

The SWOT analysis helped get an insight of the core strengths which can be used as an advantage for business growth. Some of the biggest strengths of TGC are the convenience and accessibility it provides to a lot of products that are not easy to

purchase. TGC also provides a one-stop-shop solution for all the Periods essential products. It also provides women the option to purchase products from an online platform in case they are not comfortable purchasing these items in the market where most of the sales force includes males. Moreover, the carefully curated bundles are the perfect solution for women who prefer easy solutions to their everyday problems. These bundles contains all the essential items grouped together along with the guides about how to use these products. While TGC is a small scale business with limited resources, it still covers all the main issues of women regarding menstrual hygiene; like heating pouches are a solution for the menstrual cramps, unscented sanitary pads provide protection against rashes, toilet seat covers prevent infections while using public toilets, period underwear provides extra protection against stains and stain remover pen removes the stain if you get it etc. PCOS also being a very common issue face is catered to in the product line of TGC. Since TGC is a women run platform the empathetic communication not only helps provide excellent customer service but it is also a key asset to develop products.

Some of the weaknesses of TGC include the taboo associated with menstrual health due to which penetrating this market has been a challenge. Secondly, due to limited resources bulk quantities of most products cannot be purchased which reduces the profit margin at this stage. Since the vast range of products is sourced through a number of different suppliers, some products have a longer delivery time so maintaining the demand and supply is a challenge.

TGC has a lot of opportunities which can be explored as the business grows: there is a huge potential for introducing more products which women prefer like menstrual cups etc. TGC can also introduce health consultation services down the lane to help women get the direct consultation with health specialists to resolve their health problems. The

prices of the products can also be reduced to cater a larger group of women by manufacturing these item in-house.

Threats faced by TGC include that more platforms might come up due to the easily imitable model, but right now TGC is one of its kind platform in Pakistan active. The stigma about this topic in Pakistan is a constant threat as it hinders the acceptability of the platform in the online and the local community.

CHAPTER 4: COMPETITORS ANALYSIS

4.1 Competitors

Following are the competitors identified for TGC:

Company	About	Audience (Instagram)
Lady in Red	A Pakistan based startup, founded a year ago working on menstrual products	250 Followers
Girly things	A Pakistani startup founded in 2018-2019 working for menstrual hygiene	3100 Followers
Re-circle cup	A Pakistan based startup that was founded in 2017 promoting the use of menstrual cups	7300 followers
The red code	A Pakistani start up established in 2019 working on eco-friendly menstrual pads	2500 followers

Table 4: Competitor analysis of TGC's competitors

4.1.1 Product Attribute Map & Strategic Mapping

The product attribute map helps analyze the various attributes that influence the purchase behavior of customers. The success of any business is determined by never compromising on the non-negotiable attributes, providing differentiating attributes and going the extra mile and incorporating elements which will excite the customers too. TGC covers all aspects by providing a broad range of unique products that are efficient and safe to use. However, the only negative aspect that exists is that customers have to pay for delivery charges but since the delivery charges are less than market norm so it is not a worrisome issue for the business.

	Basic/Non negotiable	Discriminator/Differentiating	Energizer/Exciting
Positive	Products are safe to use and work well.	Broad range of products available in one place. Provide advice and usage guidelines when needed.	Unique/less common products available also on TGC
Negative		Separate delivery charges	
Neutral			

Table 5: Product Attribute Map

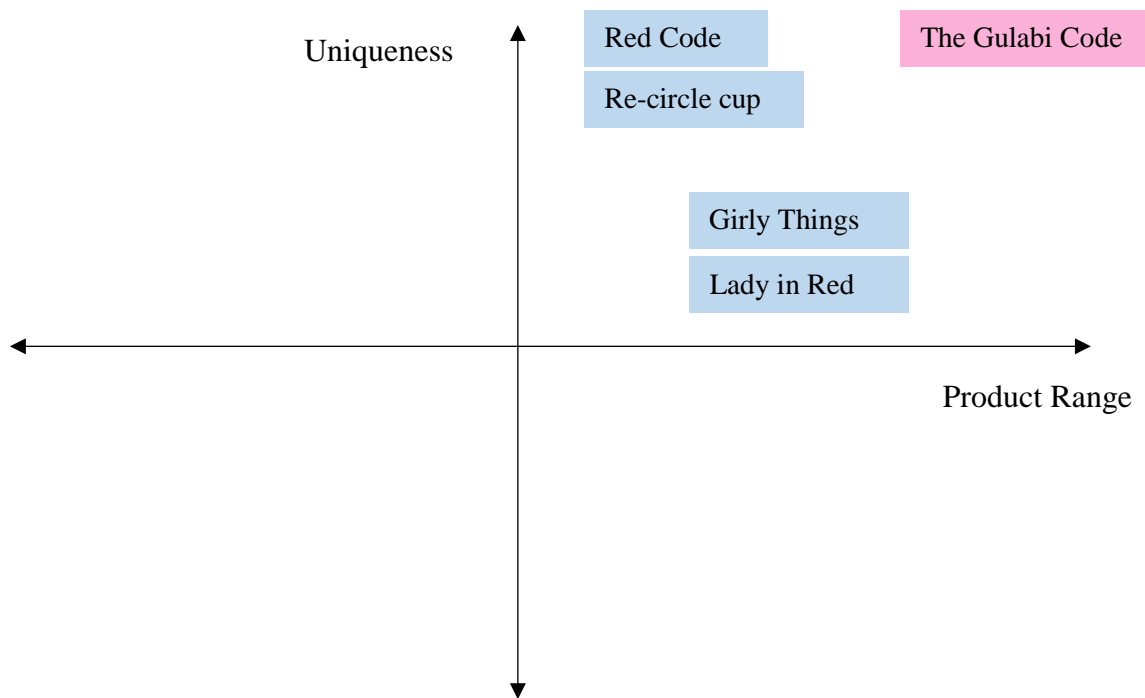


Figure 6: Strategic Positioning Map, to determine the position of business in comparison to competitors

Detailed analysis of the above charts is discussed in the following section.

4.2 Competitive Advantage

All the mentioned companies in Table 4 are start-ups trying to make their mark in a stigmatized industry. The unique selling proposition of all enterprises differs from TGC's offerings for e.g. Re-circle cup and The Red Code are focused on eco-friendly feminine hygiene products. Re-circle cup is increasing awareness and advantages of menstrual cup that helps protect the environment by minimizing waste. The Red code is focused on making reusable, cloth pads that are also eco-friendly. While it's amazing that they're minimizing waste through reusable pads, but these pads are not very use

friendly which a lot of issues like difficult managing and have to wash repeatedly and do not have great leakage protection. Period underwear offered by TGC is a much more effective alternative. The Girly things invests on delivering menstrual products on emergency notice to workplaces etc. Lady in Red and The Girly things are no longer active on social media so pose little to no threat. Lady in Red, however was the only direct competitor of TGC in some products. It also made period kits but do not provide products to be bought separately. Secondly, their product range is not extensive and offerings only include the basic necessities. TGC still remains one of its type platform with a one-stop-shop that offers such an extensive range of products. Period underwear, toilet seat covers, disposable paper panties, heating pouches are still some products that are not available on any other platform in one place till date. Moreover, none of the competitors provide solutions to multiple issues faced by women; TGC not only solves the menstrual hygiene issues but also covers PCOS as well.

Therefore this platform has a strong competitive advantage and can create a huge impact for the menstrual hygiene and reproductive health industry for women in Pakistan. From uniqueness and product range perspective too TGC has a strong competitive advantage over other available options in the market.

4.3 Porter's Five Forces

4.3.1 Threat of entry

As far as the business idea and business model is concerned, TGC is a relatively easily replicable business, but the real challenge lies in the operations and market research for products that work best from customer's perspective. Since all products are sourced from different sellers it becomes a much difficult task to manage costs and sustain the business. So there remains a threat of new competitors entering the market because seemingly it's an easily replicable business but the real struggle is managing

the operations while ensuring a good customer experience. The existing competitors as discussed previously, are also startups with limited resources and are not direct threats. So unless a bit company gets into this business, there is little threat to TGC.

4.3.2 Threat of substitutes

Potential substitutes for products include menstrual cups and reusable pads. The more effective, alternate for reusable pads is also added in the product line in the form of period underwear. Menstrual cups will also be introduced at the website once the customer demand increases. The threat for substitutes for TGC is not significant because the real strength lies in the offerings of the platform, all new products demanded by the customers will be added in the product line so there's no threat for substitutes. Instead, they're considered as a business opportunity.

4.3.3 Bargaining power of buyers

The buyers do not have a significant bargaining power as the products offered at TGC are not easily available for online purchases or in the market. Since there are no alternatives where one platform offers all period products. However, products are available separately on very few online platforms for e.g. Daraz, so some customers might prefer buying from them; but finding a trustworthy seller which sends high quality product is a challenge. TGC is a trustworthy, professional platform that provides high quality products with excellent customer service which enhances the customer experience.

4.3.4 Bargaining power of suppliers

Suppliers have bargaining power as all items are sourced through supplier. But the upside is that multiple suppliers are available for same kind of products so alternatives are there.

All products offered at TGC are sourced through different vendors so the suppliers hold a certain degree of bargaining power and can strongly influence the cost of the products. The upside of this is that multiple suppliers are available for most of the products, so in case a supplier's relationship is effected, products can be sourced through an alternate supplier.

4.4. Competitive rivalry

As discussed previously, TGC is one of its kind platform which has offerings unique to the market. Secondly, since TGC is a social enterprise, so the focus is on creating a social impact primarily so instead of working against competitors the goal is to work together towards creating awareness and convenience for women in Pakistan. One example is that Nutrify Official, the company that collaborates for the PCOS and seed cycling kit would have been a competitor but instead TGC collaborated with them and introduced their products on the online platform of TGC so both can benefit.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY AND THE BUSINESS MODEL

5.1 Lean Startup Methodology

TGC is one of its kind startup, in a stigmatized industry therefore Lean startup methodology was the best suited methodology to follow for developing the business since the essence of Lean start up is a learning-driven process. The business is built gradually by testing the unpredictable market conditions and to learn from customer feedback and incorporate the feedback instead of spending months perfecting the products and then launching the product.

The first stage of Lean methodology focuses on collecting data from the market and building the products on it. The initial market research from the survey and also through directly communicating with females for TGC, lead to the following key learnings:

- There is a strong taboo associated with period products and information related to women reproductive health issues so women were reluctant buying these products in markets.
- What products women wanted to manage periods more efficiently, but were not available in the market.
- Due to stigma associated with menstrual hygiene women do not have any trusted platform where they can get basic information.
- Majority of the women did not have any information on periods before having their first period so were not prepared for menarche.

Based on the key learnings the Minimum Viable Product was started designing: The MVP i.e. the Periods Kit consisted of all the necessary items for managing periods more efficiently, along with other components that attract the audience and enhance their product purchase and unboxing experience. Packaging was a key element during product design as it enhances the complete experience and was a prominent defining

element for female customers as shown in our initial market research and focus groups. The design not only strongly focused on the attractiveness of the packaging box but also the vibe and the message it should be conveying to the customers. The phrase ‘you go girl’ was included in the design along with the silhouette of a woman standing in a power pose to convey the message of empowerment and confidence. The woman silhouette also dons a pink flower that’s symbolic for the company name i.e. The Gulabi Code.

The MVP Periods kit contained the following set of products:

1. Sanitary Pads
2. Pad Holder
3. Disposable Paper Panty
4. Stain Remover
5. Sanitizer Spray
6. Journal with Period Tracker and Monthly Planner
7. Adult Coloring pages
8. Toilet seat covers
9. Rosewater
10. Turmeric capsules
11. Chocolates
12. Mints
13. Stickers
14. Period guide

The Periods kit was compiled with a thank you card and information card giving an introduction about the company. The initial testing was conducted on a focus group of 15 participants:

Gender	Female
Age	18- 35 years
Marital Status	10 unmarried, 5 married
Response to the Usability of the Periods Kit	All in agreement of it being a well-rounded box with all necessary items.
Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of suggestions on adding more products like period underwear, heating pack etc. - Observations on enhancing the pad holder design and also include a different variant for women who prefer a makeup pouch type design. - The option to customize the products should be available. - The option to buy products individually as well.

Table 6: Focus group results

After the successful initial testing the next stage was to finalize the kit and start planning the marketing campaign to launch the products. The lean startup methodology was key to the success to the TGC platform as it helped get the actual customer's feedback. This methodology is a continuous and till date TGC's team is learning and incorporating the customer feedback and learnings back into the business

5.2 The Business Model

Business Model Canvas		Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
<p>Key Partners Vendors and suppliers for sourcing products. Courier Company i.e. Trax Courier for making deliveries. Partnerships with: Glorious Laboratories, RR Stationery, Askolay, The Nutrify Official. Suppliers: Flourish undergarments, Protective Brothers Doctors and health specialists helping with awareness content. Influencers for testing, sharing feedback and promoting products</p>	<p>Key Activities Marketing and running Ad campaigns to encourage sales. Order processing and delivery. Awareness campaigns on social media.</p> <p>Key Resources Digital Presence in form of Social Media Channels and Website. Skilled team with entrepreneurial and social media experience. Trusted product suppliers and vendors. Incubation at NIC and Clinton Foundation.</p>	<p>One-stop-solution for all period products. Trusted platform for all menstruation products that are not readily available.</p>	<p>Direct Communication through social media listening in direct messages. Indirect customer feedback in form of audience engagement on social media. Customers are updated on order status through emails and Whatsapp.</p> <p>Channels Social Media Channels Website</p>	<p>Educated, Informed women Working women House wives Students: School, college and university Age: 18 – 40 years</p>
<p>Cost Structure Fixed Costs: Shopify’s subscription fee, website domain charges (yearly)</p>		<p>Revenue Streams Revenue Model: Transactional</p>		

Variable Costs: Inventory restocking, Facebook Promotions, PR packages, Courier company charges, Packaging items cost

Revenue Streams: Orders are through Social Media Channels and website

Table 7: Business Model Canvas

5.2.1 Key Partners

The most important partners for TGC, which are important contributors to the success and smooth of operations the business are the suppliers for the various products showcased at TGC. Suppliers ensure the availability and costing of these products so they can be sold at the platform. Trax Courier, is the courier partner of TGC; this company ensures timely delivery of customer orders. Trax Courier also provides the facility of making deliveries on cash on delivery which is the preferred mode of payment for most customers of TGC. The payment received from customers, after deducting the delivery charges are transferred into the bank account for TGC.

Other key partners, which helped TGC include: Glorious Laboratories; this pharmaceutical company provided the turmeric supplements and rosewater spray bottles for TGC at reduced prices.

RR Stationery; this small business designed and printed the periods/monthly planner journal at cost price in support of the vision of TGC.

TGC needed an office and inventory space to stock all inventory and packaging along with a facility where all packaging, pickups and deliveries could be made, Askolay provided this space to TGC in their office space in Faisalabad. Askolay also generously provided the studio space and equipment, rent free for doing the product shoot for TGC's products.

The Nutrify Official is a renowned company for its famous PCOS tea and Seed cycling bundle; TGC partnered with Nutrify Official for a collaboration for the PCOS kit which includes these products. This partnership helps TGC establish itself as a trusted platform for the audience and also provides the added convenience of ordering the products to cater PCOS along with the other essentials offered at TGC.

Suppliers who provide the products available at TGC include: Flourish undergarments for disposable paper panties and period underwear, ERSONO a Chinese supplier for toilet seat covers, Nafees Gadgets Lahore for the stain remover pens, Protective brothers for pepper sprays and Tasers, Butterfly for the unscented pads used for kits and Urban Vendors for the heating pouch.

TGC also have doctors and health specialists helping the team with any health-related queries that come this way. The team does not entertain any health issues and after consultation with the health specialists the queries are only redirected. The doctors who volunteer with TGC do not advice the queries received on social media, however only guide them towards a doctor that might help them resolve their issues after getting the complete case history.

Influencers play a very important role in the success and growth of TGC; influencers who accept the PR gift packages review the products sent their way and share their honest feedback. These reviews are viewed by their followers hence it helps market the products by also creating a good word of mouth. Influencer feedback helps increase the frequency of orders as well.

5.2.2 Key Activities

The primary activity at TGC include running the marketing campaigns to encourage sales. Social Media content is created after defining a customer-fit strategy and then designing it using designing tools like Inshot and Tiktok for videos and Canva and Adobe Photoshop for images. The pictures are also shot for using on social media and website and edited using various features of Canva and Adobe Photoshop. The next stage after designing all content is posting it on the social media platforms and analyzing the insights for thorough feedback. Stories are also posted to get engage audience through question and poll stickers. Awareness campaigns are also run on various topics of the audience's interests – some of these included: PCOS, Breast cancer and self-

examination, Period and Menstruation Management. Social Listening i.e. responding to all queries received in messages and comments is also another key activity that takes regular management. Once the order is received, processing and packaging it another key activity at TGC. The orders are first processed at the online portal of Trax courier and the Trax team is informed about picking up the parcels. The orders are then carefully packaged in the Trax courier's flyers keeping in check all safety standards against COVID. Once packaged these parcels are handed over to the Trax team for delivery. The customers are kept in the loop on the status of the packages. Website management is another important activity that's carried out at TGC: all inventory management and product updates are carried out. Blog posts are also posted on the website's blog section to answer all detailed queries of the audience and customers.

5.2.3 Key Resources

The most important resources at TGC are the social media channels and website. All sales and awareness campaigns are conducted through these platforms so they hold great importance in the success of TGC.

The success of any business is greatly determined by the passion and skill of the team; one of the greatest asset of TGC is its skilled team with ample entrepreneurial experience of running online business and social media experience as well. Since the platform is run by female founders therefore their firsthand experience of the products, market and taboo associated with periods is key knowledge as it helps market and showcase products in a more empathetic manner.

The network of trusted suppliers and vendors that TGC is a valuable resource of TGC. This network has been established after a lot of trial, error and testing, only then the network of suppliers with the best products and the most professional work ethic were selected for long-term business.

TGC was also incubated with the National Incubation Center in Islamabad and Clinton Foundation's Global Initiative which helped get the mentorship and guidance in product development. The learning programs at NIC helped focus on the important key factors and launching the startup instead on spending extensive time on perfecting the products i.e. the key learning of lean methodology too. A network of mentors in the Clinton foundation paired TGC with women working on similar issues in other countries. Not only did the exchange of ideas help product development but also marketing campaigns.

5.2.4 Value Propositions

TGC is the one-stop-shop for all menstruation products that are not readily available in Pakistan. This platform provide convenient delivery to your doorstep on cash on delivery to provide a comfortable shopping experience, free of any stares or stigma.

5.2.5 Customer Relationships

Customer feedback and communication is key to the growth of TGC therefore there is direct communication with the customers in direct messages on Facebook and Instagram. Before the development of the website, initially all order details were also shared by customers in the messages therefore that helped TGC team get insight into the customer's purchase behavior, likes, dislikes and preferences. The customers also shared reviews, feedback and appreciation through their messages with the team. This helped develop a fruitful communication channel with the team which is key to the providing the best services to the customers.

The digital platform i.e. social media channels and website are very useful tools for indirectly understanding the customer's responses through social media engagement and website analytics. Customers are also updated on their order status with updates on Whatsapp and through email shared as well.

5.2.6 Customer Segments

The target market for TGC is the sector of informed, educated women that includes working women, house-wives and students as well. These women lay in the age-group of 18-40 years and are mostly based in urban areas of Pakistan, however the Ad campaigns are targeted to women from to the whole country. This students included in this segment are in schools, colleges and universities etc. This segment of women include women who travel often and prefer easy and convenient solutions to common issues like period stains and poor hygiene conditions while traveling in washrooms so prefer buying toilet seat covers etc. This segment of women prefer easy access to period products that are not readily available in Pakistan.

5.2.7 Channels

TGC is an online platform only so orders are placed via website and social media channels. The order is then processed for dispatching by wrapping it properly in brown, branded envelopes of TGC and then in flyers provided by Trax i.e. the courier company used for distributing and delivering the packages to customer's location. Trax is the distribution channel used for making all deliveries. Once the rider takes the package to the customer, if the package is on cash on delivery the rider receives payment and hands over the package. The payment is then transferred to TGC's bank account.

5.2.8 Cost Structure

The cost details are also explained in detail in the later chapter. The cost structure consists of fixed and variable costs; the fixed costs consist of Shopify's basic plan's subscription fee which is charged monthly. The website domain charges are paid yearly to keep on using the website domain from GoDaddy, the domain and hosting provider.

All other costs are variable costs that include maintaining and restocking the inventory of all products showcased at TGC, the monthly spending on paid Facebook ad campaigns to reach out to more customers and attract audience to TGC social media accounts. The courier company's delivery charges for making customer deliveries and PR packages is another cost that varies. The cost for packaging items like packaging boxes and envelopes, flyers, stickers and thank you cards etc. also varies according to the usage.

5.2.9 Revenue Streams

TGC has a transactional revenue model where customers pay for the products they purchase. Orders are placed by customers through the website or through sharing their delivery details through social media channels. Right now there are no other revenue streams for TGC, however in the long-run other revenue streams can also be adopted.

CHAPTER 6: PRODUCTS DEVELOPED

TGC is an online platform that sells a range of products:

6.1 Cloth Pad Holder



Figure 7: Cloth Pad Holder

After thorough market research, both online and in the local market, the only options available for pad holders were online i.e. Ali Express. The delivery time and price including the delivery charges were quite high so it was decided to design this product in-house at TGC. After continuous research for design online and sharing ideas with friends and family, the mock-up was designed. The dimensions, cloth type and design was finalized with help and input from women around. The mock-up was stitched by a friend's mother so it would help the tailor understand the design. The pad holders were made by a female tailor as the vision of TGC is to empower and support other women. The cloth pad holders were then designed by these tailors. The traditional pad holders that only few women had were made of tin which was dented and deformed after keeping the handbags for some time; the cloth pad holders had many additional benefits: they are reusable, washable and a pouch-like shape so women who are not comfortable with carrying pads

in public, can easily conceal them. The cloth pad holder can easily fit 2-3 sanitary pads, stain remover and sanitizing spray at a time.

6.2 Toilet Seat Covers



Figure 8: Toilet seat covers

Toilet seat covers are another product that have a very high demand, especially after COVID'19 but are not easily available in the local market. A suitable seller i.e. ERSONO was found online from China through the e-commerce platform daraz.pk. The toilet seat covers are ordered in bulk quantity and sold in smaller packages for personal use on TGC. The delivery time for toilet seat covers is a little longer but since no local supplier provides these right now, so the only option left is Chinese suppliers. These toilet seat covers are also biodegradable, which was also appreciated by the customers.

6.3 You go girl Pad Holder



Figure 9: Pad Holder

After launching the cloth pad holder, the customer feedback shared by a lot of audience also shared that they preferred an all-rounder pouch that could also carry the pads, stain remover etc. along with a few makeup or other items like phone charger or power bank etc. So another option of pad holder was added into the product line at TGC. This pad holder was also designed to attract women with the bold color and design and an empowering statement on the pouch. The design was shared with a local business, Traverse, that customized pouch designs to manufacture these pouches in a bulk quantity.

6.4 Stain Remover



Figure 10: Stain Remover Pen

Finding a suitable stain remover for blood stains was one of the most challenging products to find/make. Since there were no suitable options available in Pakistan, and no special stain remover for blood stains was available that could work on-the-go, so the TGC team started working with a AR chemical lab, that prepared around 12 batches of stain removers which were tested on fresh and older blood stains. A workable stain remover was formulated which worked best on fresh stains and a few hours old stains. This stain remover was introduced in a spray bottle that was easy to carry and convenient to use. The team however kept on researching for a more effective solution, that's when the stain remover pen was found through Nafees Gadgets Lahore. This was available in a pen form with a brush, bristle tip that works best for removing stains by scrubbing the cloth lightly. So these stain removers were sourced through the online vendor and introduced on the TGC platform.

6.5 Disposable Paper Panties



Figure 11: Disposable Paper Panties

The disposable paper panties are thin, paper-like cotton panties that are very convenient to carry in handbags/school bags while traveling and emergency situations. This is especially useful for school-going girls and is one of the best sellers at TGC. These panties are disposable or can also be washed carefully for using it two to three times. These are also available in 4 sizes TGC for women to select from. The disposable paper panties are sourced through Flourish undergarments.

6.6 Period/Monthly Journal



Figure 12: Period Journal

The journal designed by RR Stationery for TGC was kept multipurpose to maximize usability: the period tracker at the beginning of the journal helps track periods for a whole year. Flow key, Symptom tracker and mood tracker was also incorporated into the design to help women track their symptoms and flow as well. Since the periods journey varies for each woman so the users are given more control over how to use the keys in the best way; hence the flow and symptom key are not prefilled or color-coded so woman can use it in a more personalized way.

The journal also included monthly planner grids and blank pages so it can be used for making notes, writing reminder or doodling etc. The cover design was kept very attractive with cold colors and an empowering statement, which was in line with the brand image of TGC and vision. The journal was also printed by RR Stationery and provided at a minimal cost in support of the cause.

6.7 Sanitizer Spray



Figure 13: Sanitizer spray

The sanitizing spray was purchased from AR Chemicals Company, which is registered with the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan. A spray packaging was selected so it can be used to sanitize hands and surfaces too while traveling or whenever needed.

6.8 Rose Water Spray



Figure 14: Rose water spray

Rose water was added to the product line as it is a staple product for skincare for Pakistani women, it help moisturize the skin and prevent breakouts which are a nuisance during periods. Glorious Laboratories provided their rosewater spray bottles to TGC at discounted rates in support of the cause.

6.9 Turmeric Capsules



Figure 15: Turmeric capsules

Turmeric supplements have many health benefits like they have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, chemo-protective, anticancer, and gastro-protective properties (Nutritional and Health Benefits of Curcumin, 2017)

Due to rising popularity of turmeric supplements they were added in to the product line at TGC. These supplements were also provided by Glorious Laboratories on discounted rates in support of the vision of the platform.

6.10 Pepper Spray



Figure 16: Pepper Spary

There have been a number of harrowing events of violence and abuse against women in Pakistan in 2021: Noor Muqaddam and Minar-e-Pakistan Incident against Ayesha Ikram to name a few (Dr Nida Kirmani, Aljazeera 2021) - so there's been an increased sense of insecurity among women hence the demand for pepper sprays and other safety devices has increased. After a number of requests from the audience, pepper sprays were added into the product line at TGC. Pepper sprays are imported from China in bulk quantities by most businesses, since TGC did not have the resources to import bulk quantities so another small business were found online i.e. Protective Brothers which could help source these pepper sprays, as a result pepper sprays were also made available at TGC to facilitate women.

6.11 Taser



Figure 17: Taser

Due to increasing demands after pepper sprays, tasers were also launched at TGC. A small, handy sized model of key chain taser was selected, these tasers came with the usage guidelines and charging cable too. Tasers were also sourced through Protective Brothers which was selling tasers and other safety devices on Instagram.

6.12 Period Underwear



Figure 18: Period Underwear

This was another highly demanded product from audience at TGC, so after a lot of research and trials with suppliers both based in Pakistan and China, suitable options were found to launch. The quality offered by the Chinese supplier was also the same as the Pakistani supplier i.e. Flourish Undergarments so the local supplier was finalized, and they also provided the products readily. There are currently two options available for period underwear, normal leakage control and extra absorbent ones. These period underwears have extra anti-leakage layers that provide extra protection and prevent stains. Period underwear can be worn with or without sanitary pads, according to personal preference.

6.13 Heating Pouch



Figure 19: Heating Pouch

Period cramps are the primary issue women face while menstruating. The traditional method to get rid of cramps was using a hot water bottle, which posed a safety concern while handling the hot water, so hot and cold pack was a great alternative. This could be popped in the microwave for a few seconds and was good to use. This is a multipurpose pouch where the same pouch could be used as a cold pack too when needed. This hot/cold pack was sourced through an online vendor: Urban Vendors.

6.14 Seed Cycling Kit



Figure 20: Seed Cycling Kit

Nutrify Official is a renowned name for its high quality products for women so TGC collaborated with this company for sourcing all seeds for the seed cycling kit. All seeds are packaged separately in jars, clean and peeled for ready to use. Seed cycling is a very popular, completely natural and very effective for regulating hormones and managing PCOS. Nutrify offers TGC a discount on its complete product range so other products can also be added later on in the product line.

6.15 PCOS Tea



Figure 21: PCOS Tea

The PCOS tea is also sourced from Nutrify Official and is one of its most popular products with amazing customer reviews. This tea is a natural, herbal solution for all PCOS related issues like irregular periods and low menstrual flow etc.

6.16 Essential Period Kit



Figure 22: Essential Period Kit

It's a common practice among women to carry sanitary pads with them in handbags or travel bags – the essential period kit is a thoughtful extension of the same with some added products that covers all necessary aspects like disposable paper panties, travel size pouch to carry other things too, sanitizing spray, pads, toilet seat covers and stain remover pen. This bundle is retailed at a cheaper price to accommodate a large number of customers.

6.17 The Gulabi Kit



Figure 23: Gulabi Kit

The Gulabi Kit is an all-rounder periods box that caters all needs of women for managing periods. From pads to periods journal all products are included in this box. The Butterfly breathable sanitary pads were added into the kit to promote the use of breathable, unscented and cotton top pads; these pads are much more comfortable and effective to use as do not cause rashes and an unpleasant stench by ensuring air flow. Butterfly was also the company selected for purchasing pads from because of its increasing popularity and the campaign against Always pads, where a lot of women shared their experiences over social media about how it was damaging their health

(Marylou McCormack, Profit 2021) Since a lot of women were switching brands from Always to Butterfly as shown by recent statistics of a research conducted by Profit magazine, so was selected for the Gulabi Kit.

6.18 PCOS Kit



Figure 24: PCOS Kit

The PCOS kit is an all in one bundle that contains all PCOS essentials like seeds for seed cycling and Nutrifly's popular PCOS tea. This kit helps buy the necessary items to manage PCOS conveniently at a discounted price from one platform.

6.19 Pads Dispenser for Workplaces



Figure 25: Pads Dispenser

The Pads Dispenser is another product designed by TGC for workplaces that are offering free sanitary pads for women employees. It's a wonderful initiative to promote period positivity in workplaces and fight the taboo against menstruation. The first Periods dispenser has been installed at TGC's partner, Askolay's office in Faisalabad with a female employee ratio of 70 percent. The Pads dispenser is made to order and the size can also be modified to accommodate a larger number of women in workplace.

CHAPTER 7: MARKETING CAMPAIGN

7.1 Content Strategy

Since TGC is an online platform therefore the primary medium for marketing is social media, with special emphasis on Instagram (reasons already elaborated in previous chapters). Content Strategy is another key element to the success of any business' social media activity; the content strategy for TGC is focused on a balance between the various themes of content:

- Promotional: Focuses on promoting the products and their prices, features etc.
- Educational: Content that provides information about common issues, how to use products properly etc.
- Initiatives: this included the updates about new initiatives happening at TGC like installation of free pads dispenser at Askolay.

The content for social media focuses on creating awareness about menstruation and covers the following information:

- Myths and Facts about period management.
- Awareness about menstruation and how to take care of hygiene.
- Consciousness of why it's important to talk about menstruation in a healthy way.
- Encourage conversations around issues women face due to shame associated to periods and women reproductive health.
- The issues that are aggravated due to women shying away from important health issues.
- Empowering fellow women and building a community that promotes girl power and sisterhood. A space where women share hacks and experiences about managing periods better.
- Familiarizing women with latest terms like period poverty, period positivity etc.

- Promoting products by educating the audience about the uses and benefits of various products offered at TGC.
- Sharing memes and content designed on a lighter note to help women get comfortable with the platform.
- Dissipate important information through helpful videos about about how to use stain remover and Taser. And how to make the best use of products like period tracker in the journal offered at TGC.
- Information regarding how to take care of your body, mental health and wellbeing during periods and also before during PMS.
- Raise awareness about common health issues faced by women of Pakistan, like PCOS and breast cancer. Encourage and emphasize women about self-examination and symptoms so precautionary measures can be taken.
- Engaging and interactive Instagram stories which helps build a community. Polls and question stickers help women share experiences while keeping the confidentiality.

7.2 Content Design

Once the content strategy is devised the next stage is designing the content; Canva, Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator are used to design the social media designs. Following are some social media posters designed for TGC:

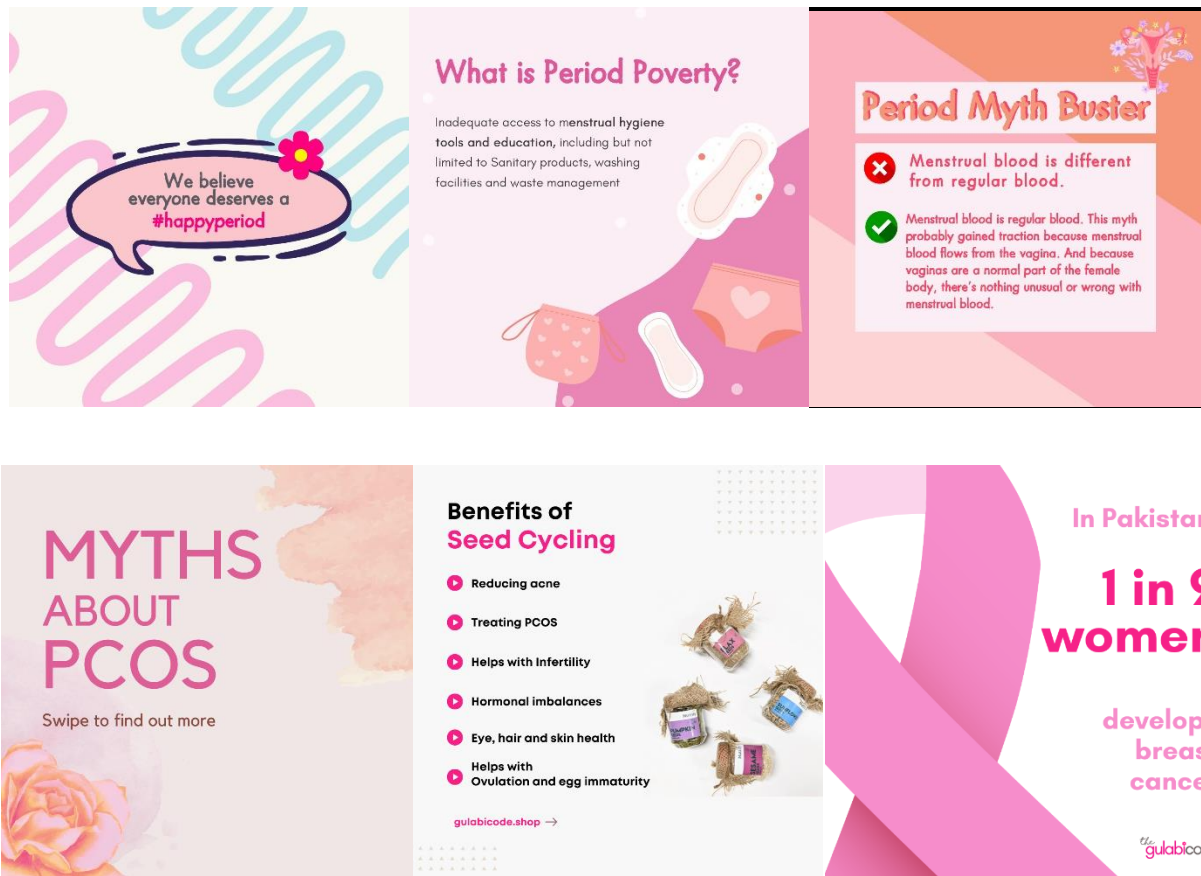


Figure 26: Social Media Posters, Aesthetic Design

The branding guidelines were followed throughout the design to develop a brand image in the mind of the audience. The pink color palette was followed not only for social media design but also the photoshoot of the products.

7.3 Sponsored Campaigns

Paid promotion campaigns have raised great importance over the years and is now considered a key element for all marketing campaigns. Promotion campaigns are run to reach out to new clientele on social media and to encourage potential customers to visit the brand's website, social media channels, send messages and interact with the content posted. Campaigns are run for different objectives like website traffic, website purchases, encourage messages and profile visits. These campaigns are run using carousel, image and video advertisements. While image and video

advertisements were great for brand awareness and driving traffic website and social media handles, carousel ads proved to be the most significant in driving conversions. Facebook and Instagram both social media platforms were targeted in the initial stage; once the Ad sets had collected enough data the ads were then focused on Instagram due to a high conversion rate. Setting the Ad sets and Ad creatives is a continuous process which took a lot of insights analysis and experimentation to come up with the best performing campaigns. The campaigns were tweaked frequently to optimize the campaigns in case the performance was lower than desired.

Since there is no direct way to increase the followers on Instagram, sponsored campaigns also helped increase the number of followers by driving new audience to the social media channels some on which also ended up following the Instagram page.

7.4 Social Media Reach

As discussed earlier the target market for TGC are educated, informed women living in urban areas of Pakistan and the social media statistics signify that clearly:

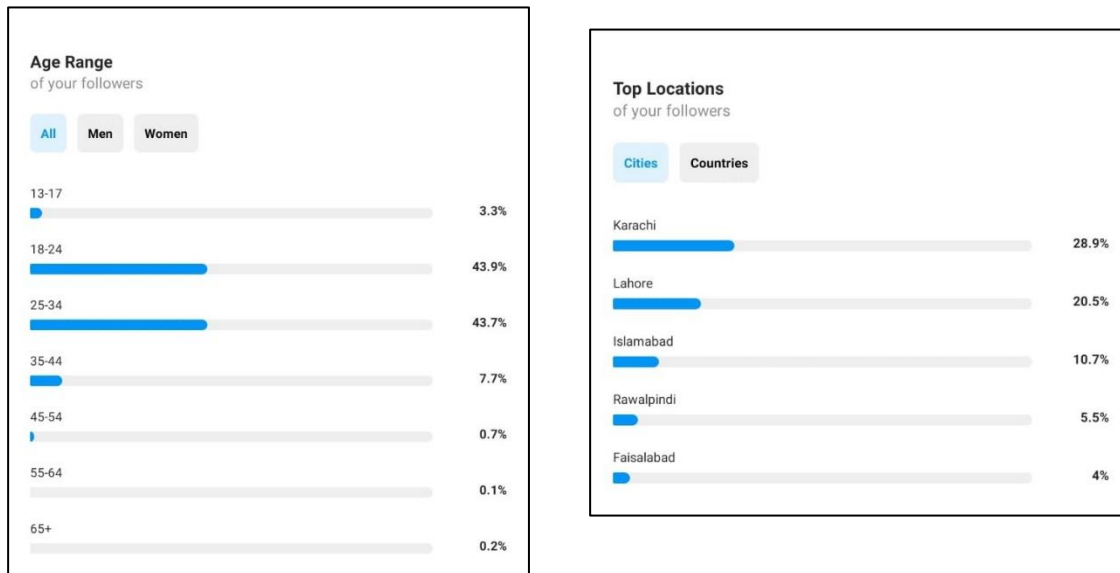


Figure 27: Social media reach on Instagram, Demographical Analysis of audience

However, for Facebook sponsored ad campaigns, women all across Pakistan are targeted to help increase the awareness. The top locations for orders received also reflect these results with majority

of orders from Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. While orders were also received from other cities like Sukkur, Sahiwal, Peshawar, Hyderabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Taxila, Sialkot etc.

CHAPTER 8: DETAILS OF MILESTONES ACHIEVED

Following is a detailed description of the major activities conducted at TGC – TGC started working in January 2021. The time period from Jan’21 till date has been divided into four quarters, where each quarter is comprised of four months. The last quarter i.e. Jan’22 till April’22 is the ongoing time.

8.1 Quarter 1 (January 2021 – April 2021)

TGC started its journey – the initial couple of months were spent doing extensive market research, for both understanding the products and market dynamics and also for researching for suppliers for the products. The products that needed to be designed were also made during this time like the design and production of the period journals and packaging. The first product launched by TGC was the Periods Kit so all products which were added into this all-in-one box were sourced after working continuously with suppliers, vendors and partner businesses. Once all products were collected from numerous sources, the MVP was tested with potential customers and after the successful initial testing the Gulabi Kit was all set to be launched. The MVP was tested against the following lines to ensure product success:

- Willingness to buy the products
- Did the product address all the basic requirements of the users?
- Did the product provide a good value for money?

The marketing campaign for pre-hype was planned. These included teasers about girl power, the taboo and stigma associated with menstruation and the need for a Periods box. The pre-hype marketing campaign was kicked off while the team started preparing for the launch. The Gulabi Kit’s shoot was done where all products inside the Gulabi Kit and also the attractive packaging were flaunted. The pricing was finalized and the marketing content to launch the first product. On

women's day i.e. 8th March the Gulabi Kit was launched and available for purchase on our social media channels. The extensive marketing campaign was run which highlighted on the features and benefits of The Gulabi Kit. The product and idea was appreciated by women in direct messages which was very encouraging. However, a lot of women expressed their desire for purchasing the kit but with a few changes or to purchase the individual items which TGC was not able to manage at the moment due to limit resources. Upon a lot of insistence of the customers and the lower sales than expected, the TGC team reevaluated the business dynamics to provide customers the facility to purchase items separately. So a smaller packaging was designed i.e. brown, kraft paper envelopes with TGC's logo printed on them for branding. Cute stickers were also added to seal the envelopes along with thank you cards for customers. All the costing was also revised and for some products the quantity was also finalized for e.g. toilet seat covers of 5 and 10 pieces were designed as it was easier to manage. The marketing material for launching the products individually was designed and the products were launched towards the end of the first quarter.

8.2 Quarter 2 (May 2021 – August 2021)

The second quarter started with a focused marketing campaign for promoting the products available at TGC. The benefits, features and awareness about the need of the products were highlighted in the marketing content posted on Facebook and Instagram. Responding to queries and answering all questions on social media along with taking orders, processing, packaging and dispatching all orders were some of the major activities at TGC. Along with this, due to the increased incidents of violence and abuse against women there was a significant increase in queries about the availability of pepper spray and taser, so the research for safety devices vendors was started to source these products at TGC too. After reaching out and negotiating with a number of suppliers and small businesses focused on selling safety devices the best suited ones were finalized

and ordered. After the products arrived they were tested for workability and efficiency; once tested, the products were all ready for introducing at TGC social media platforms. The increased number of order was encouraging during the second quarter at TGC. The existing products like stain remover and pad holder were also improved by redesigning and launching more effective versions of these products. The essential period kit was also launched during this time to facilitate women while traveling, office-going and female students. The customer reviews about the essential period kit and safety devices helped spread the word and also gain trust of potential customers.

8.3 Quarter 3 (September 2021 – December 2021)

October is the international breast cancer awareness month so it was an important awareness goal for TGC. The marketing strategy for the month focused on spreading awareness about breast cancer, its symptoms and prevention measures. The strategy emphasized on carrying out self-examination and getting the screening done if recommended by the doctor. The website development was also started during the second quarter as it is a strong determinant for the authenticity of the business in the customers' perception. Shopify was a new tool for website development for the team so after learning it from scratch the basic layout was finalized. The content for the complete website was written in order to add complete product details for the customers. The frequently asked questions tab and blog posts were written and complied with all customer queries that required more detailed answers. On the product line end after several trial and errors the period underwear was being finalized. After testing the products initially the first batch that was delivered was poor in quality in comparison to the initial one so this batch was returned and after several discussions the supplier, the new batch was sent over, which had the promised high quality. The period underwear was then launched at TGC. The heating pouch was also introduced in this quarter to help women with period cramps. The next thing on TGC's agenda

was the PCOS kit as the prevalence of PCOS is higher among Pakistani women (52%) than among Western Caucasian women (Sidra, Tariq, Farrukh, and Mohsin, 2019).

Seed cycling is a natural method used for managing PCOS and managing its symptoms which is becoming very popular with its amazing reviews, so it was added in to the PCOS kit. (Dr Jolen Brighten, 2021) Nutrify Official's products have been one of the most popular in Pakistan which also includes its PCOS tea which has amazing reviews on social media. So this business was reached out for a collaboration. Their team was open to communication and agreed to include them into the marketing campaign too and gave TGC a good percentage of discount on all products to sustain the social enterprise as well. This partnership was then formalized through email communication.

8.4 Quarter 4 (January 2022 – April 2022)

The fourth quarter was kicked off with launching the official website of TGC. (www.gulabicode.shop) the website provided convenience to customers as all information and products were available on one user-friendly platform so orders could be placed more efficiently. The products launched during this time were the seed cycling kit, PCOS tea and PCOS kit to help women manage PCOS and its associated symptoms. Another variant of period underwear was also launched which has greater absorption capacity with its 4-layer protection. This was introduced to help women who have an increased menstrual flow or prefer wearing the underwear without sanitary pads. PR packages were also sent to influencers who helped us spread the word with their positive, encouraging video reviews on their Instagram stories. This also helped us increase the followers at a faster pace and secure more orders too. During this quarter a free pads dispenser was also installed at Askolay's office space in Faisalabad. This pads dispenser was an amazing initiative taken by Askolay's management to facilitate women working at the marketing agency

by providing them free pads and disposable paper panties. The pads dispenser was designed and installed by TGC.

TGC also counters the taboos by encouraging discussions and also organized a session with the students of GC University Women Faisalabad in collaboration with Kamal Mills. The session covered the common myths and misconceptions about menstruation, the importance for opening conversations regarding the topic and also included a guest lecture by Dr. Sadia Mansha about menstrual hygiene. The essential period kits of TGC were also gifted to the participants of the session; these kits were sponsored by Kamal Mills as part of their CSR program.

The following are the graphical representation of the overtime growth of TGC and the milestones achieved during the time:

Product Line:

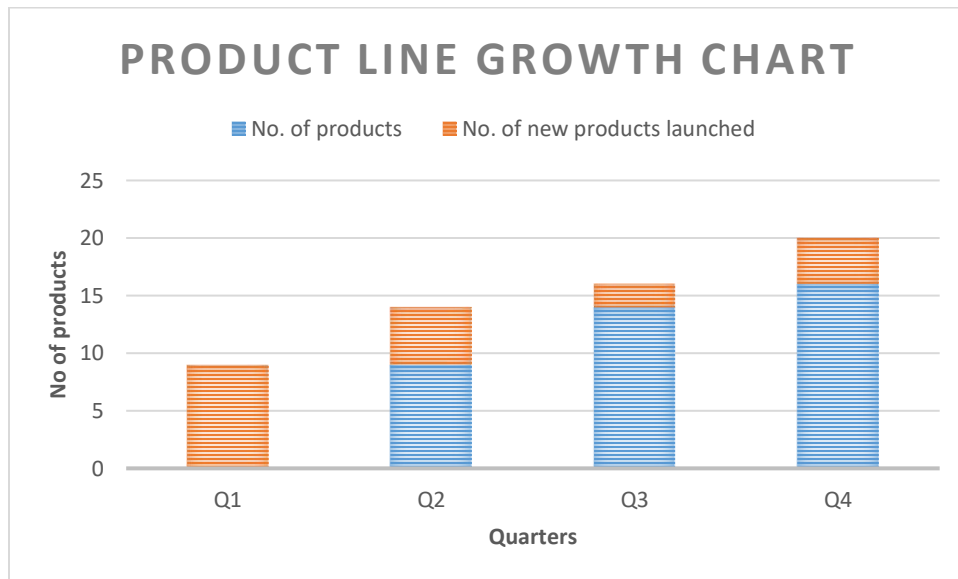


Figure 28: Product line growth overtime

Quarter	Products Launched
Q1	Gulabi Kit, Toilet Seat Covers, Disposable Paper Panties, Rose water, Sanitizing spray, Turmeric capsules, Stain Remover, Cloth Pad holder, Periods Journal.
Q2	Pepper Spray, Taser, You go girl Pad Holder, Essential Periods Kit, Stain Remover pen.
Q3	Heating pouch, Period underwear.
Q4	Seed cycling kit, PCOS tea, PCOS kit.

Table 8: Products launched details

TGC started off with one product in 2021 and currently has a broad product line of 20 products. The focus has not only been introducing more products that the customer base demands, but also improving quality and efficiency of the products already added into the product catalogue.

Online Presence:

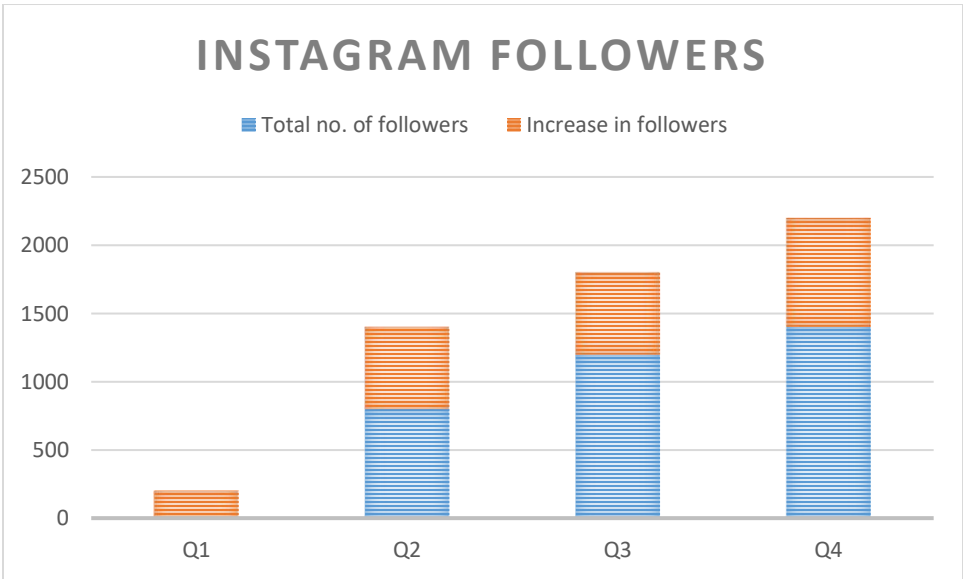


Table 9: Increase in Instagram Followers

Online presence is a key asset of TGC as it is the primary channel through which all marketing and awareness campaigns are run. The current number of followers on TGC’s Instagram handles are: 1407 – this number is increasing continuously.

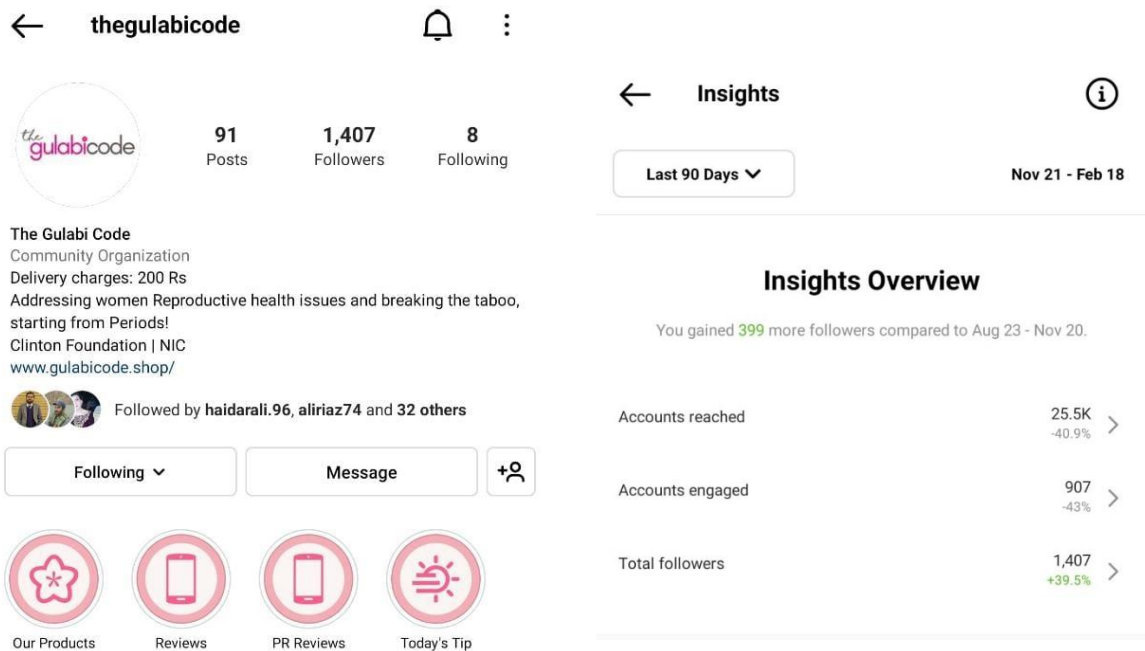


Figure 29: Insights, Instagram Account

Some of the top posts are shared below by the measure of saves, reach and likes:

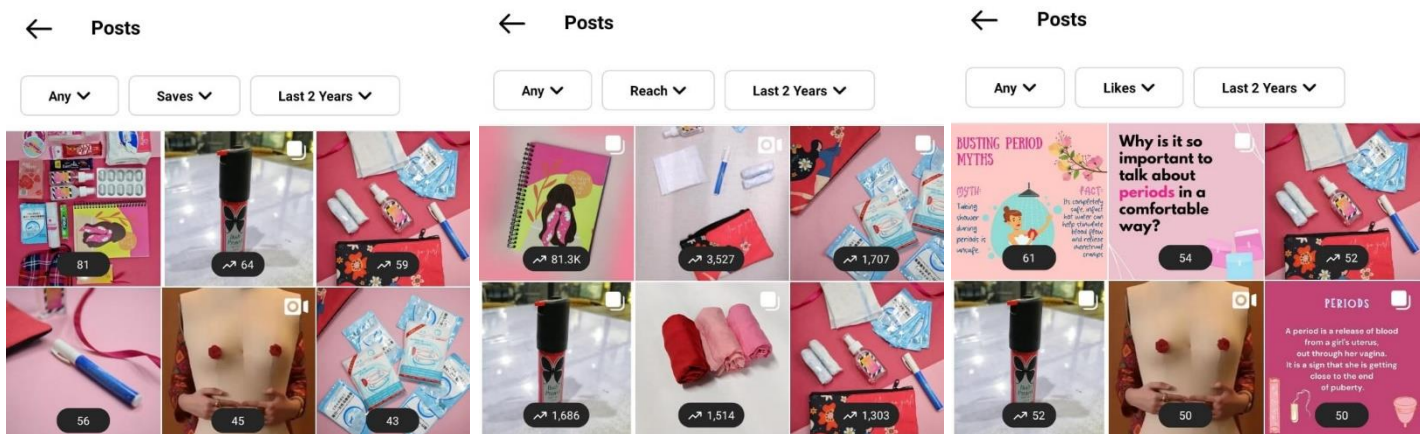


Figure 30: Top Instagram posts

Customer appreciation, positive feedbacks and shout outs from influencers help create a positive image so TGC on social media – some of these are shared below:

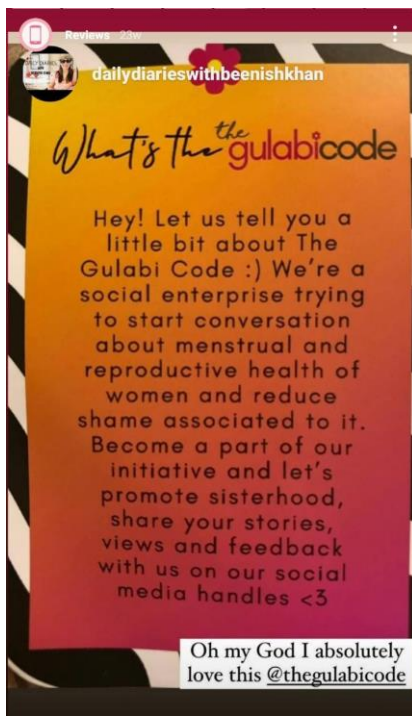
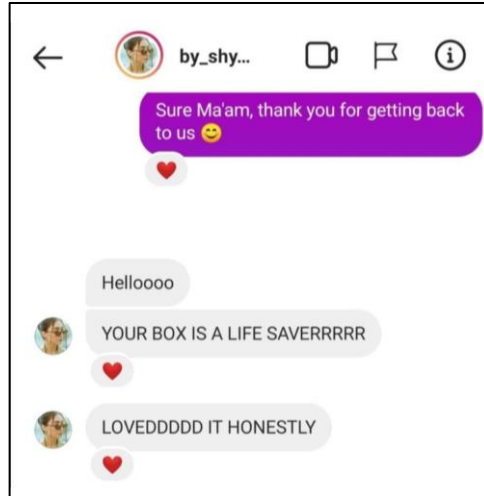


Figure 31: Customer reviews on social media

Orders Placed:

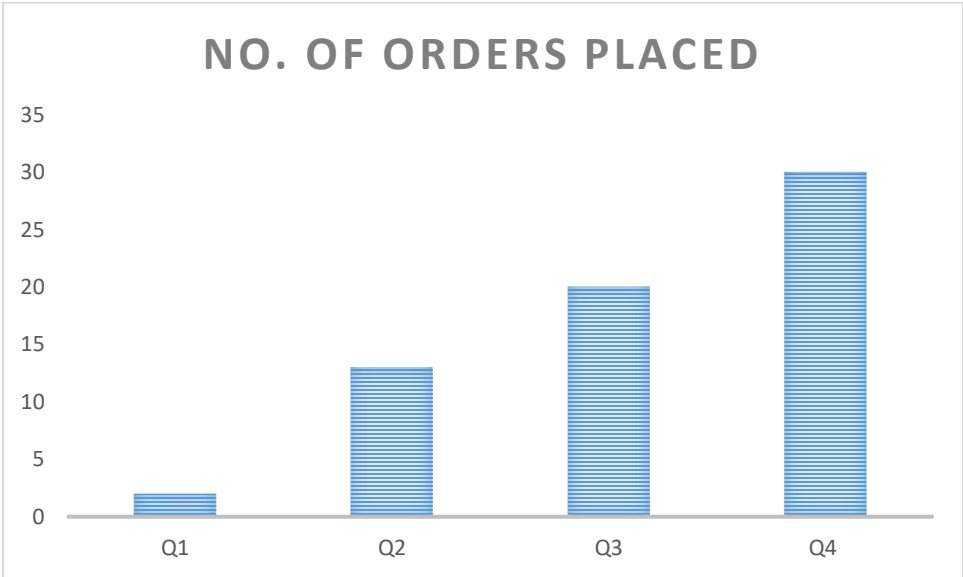


Table 10: Number of orders placed overtime

There has been a gradual increase in the trend for orders placed at TGC: till date 65 orders have been placed at TGC which is an encouraging number. The trend for also shows an encouraging increase.

CHAPTER 9: FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE GULABI CODE

9.1 Pricing Strategy

Since TGC is a social enterprise therefore the primary focus is always to create an impact by facilitating the maximum number of women so this heavily influences the pricing strategy used for each product. However, sustainability is also a key factor for running the business so an optimum strategy needed to be finalized. For most products the cost plus pricing strategy is used i.e. adding a suitable markup to the cost price of each product. The markup can be increased but the affordability of maximum number of customers is kept in mind, because the target market also includes students who do not ample amounts of money to spend. For some products like sanitary pads etc. the competitive pricing strategy is used because customers expect it to be same as that of other platforms. Nutrify's products are also available at the same price as its available on Nutrify's official social media handles and website in order to facilitate potential customers. The pricing strategy however, varies for some products where the perceived value of the product is contributes to an increased markup; for example turmeric capsules are provided at a cheaper price by the partner but due to the higher perceived value of the product the markup is high. These products help in managing the sustainability of the business when other products have very less margin for markup. This creates a balance between the sustainability of business and affordability of the products.

9.2 Cost Structure

The expenditures made are divided in to two types, variable and fixed costs. The challenge is to keep a balance between the costs and revenue so the business can sustain itself:

Fixed Costs:	
The Shopify subscription charges	29\$ per month (5800 PKR approximately)
Domain Charges	1000 Rs per year

Variable Costs:	
Inventory Management (Restocking inventory and launching new products)	3000-10000 Rs
Packaging Material	0-500 Rs
Courier Company Charges	700-4000 Rs
Facebook Sponsored Ad Campaigns	1000 – 5000 Rs

Table 11: Cost Structure

Above mentioned are the average costs, these may vary according to business requirements.

9.3 Pricing Formula

Following are some of the basic formulas used for pricing the products and deciding the markup of products:

$$\text{Retail Price} = \text{Cost of Goods} + \text{Markup}$$

$$\text{Markup} = \text{Retail Price} - \text{Cost of Goods}$$

Cost of Goods: The cost at which the products are purchased from the suppliers

Perceived value of each product: This is the expected price that customers are willing to pay for each product. The final price finalized are also verified against this price so the customers can be facilitated.

9.4 Financial Summary

TGC started off with an investment of 50,000 PKR which was raised through bootstrapping by both co-founders. The initial costs and inventory were all covered with this amount; later on the business has sustained itself with the revenue earned.

	Quarterly Revenue	Quarterly Expenses
Q1	4000	29905
Q2	13300	20550
Q3	28100	20000
Q4	40905	12000

Table 12: Financial Summary, Revenue vs Expenses

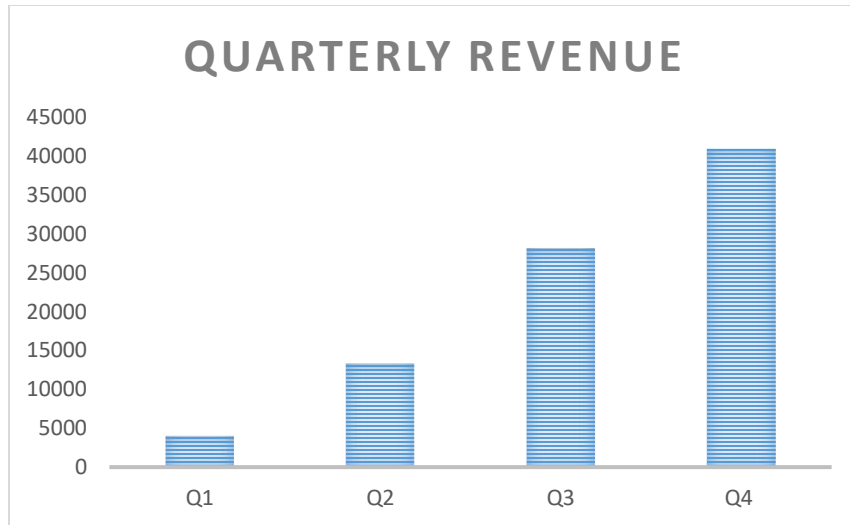


Figure 32: Quarterly Revenue

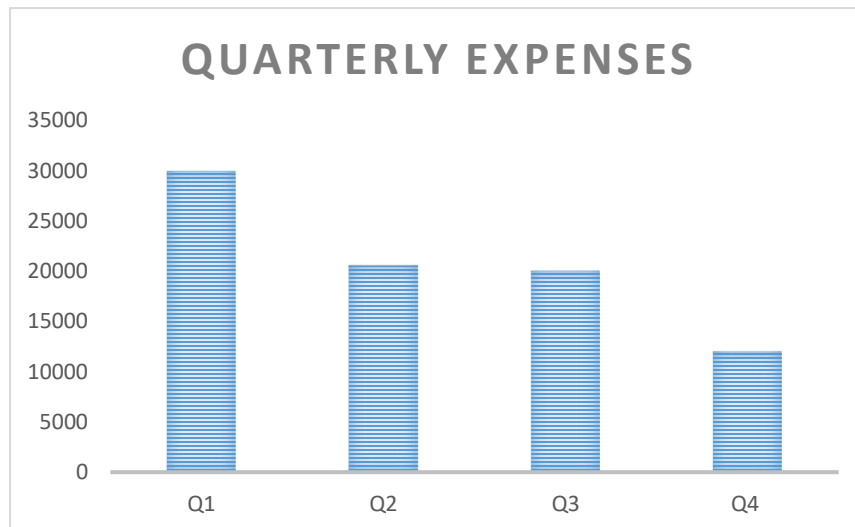


Figure 33: Quarterly Expenses

The above graphs represent the quarterly revenue and expenses of TGC – Till date TGC has raised a total revenue of 126,305 PKR. TGC also successfully reached its break-even point in the recent quarter when total revenue earned reached 50,000 PKR:

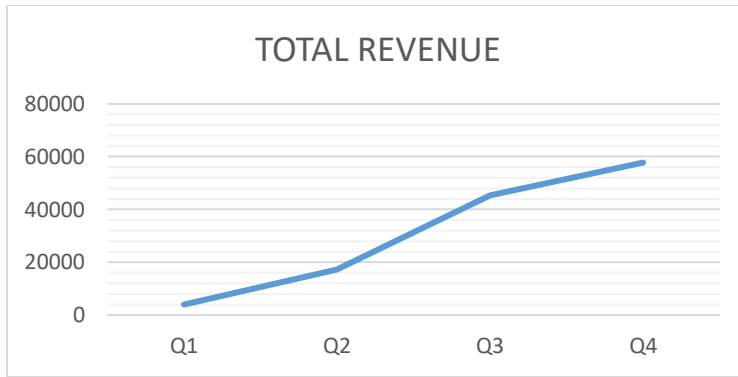


Figure 34: Total Revenue overtime

CHAPTER 10: LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

TGC has been greater challenge than anticipated in the beginning, where a lot of unforeseen issues were faced:

- Sourcing and managing a long list of products has been a challenge from the beginning at TGC. The Gulabi Kit, which was the very first product at TGC was an all-in-one box with 12+ items in it, excluding the packaging so managing inventory and ensuring availability while maintaining a good relationship with the suppliers has been a challenging task. Various times the suppliers had to be changed because of the lack of availability with a particular supplier.
- Finding the desired quality of products was another very difficult task – A lot of the products that are needed for managing periods efficiently are not available in Pakistan so finding these products was a difficult task to manage. Some of the products took months of research and reaching out to multiple sources for finding the desired products. A lot of effort was put into finding good, professional suppliers which delivered the products on time and the promised quality as well.
- One major limitation of TGC has been less financial resources which as a result caused many other issues. Since TGC started with bootstrapping from a minimal amount of investment so sourcing products was an enormous challenge: most suppliers give discounts only when the items are purchased in bulk quantities. TGC being a startup could not afford that at the moment. Printing items i.e. packaging boxes and period journals cost less per piece only if made in a huge quantity, so TGC had to bear with the increased costs for manufacturing these items.

- Negotiations for partnerships with other businesses, which included a number of difficult discussions was another difficult task: some were successful like partnership with Nutrify and other partners while others proved not to be big wins like pepper sprays had to be sourced through other small businesses but due to less quantity the discount percentage was very low.
- Sustaining the business with minimal financial resources and managing the inventory while not draining the business of all its resources has been a great learning experience. The most creative ways were thought-of to minimize the costs. Like packaging boxes costed high with four-color printing so stickers were added on the boxes which reduced the cost of production without compromising on the attractiveness of the box.
- Due to strong taboo associated with menstruation, making sales has been a greater challenge than anticipated, especially kits. However, the PR reviews of influencers and ad campaigns are helping in this regard.
- Due to the stigma attached to women reproductive health, engaging the audience and gaining their trust has also taken its time, but persistence has helped gain a good followership that support the cause and is starting to trust the platform.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

TGC being a social enterprise prioritizes ethical integrity and social responsibility. Ethical responsibility is a key part of the business operations and is closely related to professionalism; TGC realizing the importance carried out the following measures to taken to ensure the ethical responsibility of the startup towards the community, team and customers:

- All financial records and transactions were fair and not tampered with. This includes all financial dealings with suppliers, partner businesses, team and customers etc. TGC also ensured accurate bookkeeping for payment of taxes in future.
- To ensure the health and safety of customers the safety guidelines were communicated with the customers through website, safety guidelines and instructions cards were sent in each package and also communicated separately through direct chats.
- Social media awareness campaigns are an important part of TGC so all content posted on the social media channels was carefully composed keeping in mind the social norms of the society while being effective in fighting the taboo around women reproductive health and raising awareness. Social integrity is also ensured while communicating with the customers i.e. responding to queries and order management.
- The security of all personal data of the customers is ensured through using secure platforms like Shopify. The anonymity and confidentiality of data is of the utmost priority.
- TGC works with various community members which includes members from various social backgrounds; TGC does not discriminate against any age, race, gender, national origin etc.

FUTURE PLANS

Despite the limitations and minimal resources the team at TGC has persevered and worked hard to ensure the success of this platform. The statistics show an encouraging trend in the performance of the platform. The goal is to fight taboo associated with the health issues women face and create a social impact, which TGC is creating gradually. The future plans are categorized into the different time periods: The yearly goals for TGC include introducing the menstrual cups, and focus on creating awareness about PCOS and encouraging more workplaces to adopt the free pads dispenser to make workplaces more comfortable for women. The long term goals of TGC include developing an extensive health unit where health professionals can provide consultation for menstrual and reproductive health issues. Secondly, TGC also aims to reach out to the rural population with initiatives to end period poverty and create awareness through sessions and providing menstrual kits to women from low-income groups.

Being a social enterprise the primary goal of TGC is to create social impact through the online platform, awareness campaigns and through the initiatives taken. While this is a particularly challenging market due to the stigma surrounding it, but TGC's team is passionate to create social impact so the future generation women can address their issues and seek help more comfortably.

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