

# SHOHOZ: A VIBRANT MODEL OF CONTEMPORARY SERVICE INNOVATION IN BANGLADESH

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## ABSTRACT

*Shohoz is a vibrant model of contemporary service innovation in Bangladesh. The company started its journey to make people's life easier in the second half of 2014 with a collaboration of Bangladeshi and European investors as a subsidiary of Draycott Technology Partners- a Singapore based entity <sup>[7]</sup>. From e-ticketing, it has successfully diversified its electronic service mix and become popular in Bangladesh to make people's life easier as its name pronounces 'Shohoz' (Bengli word) -making life easier, convenient, and smarter.*

**Keywords:** Case Study, Shohoz, Bangladesh, Contemporary Service Innovation.

## INTRODUCTION

Converting social problems into business opportunities has become very popular nowadays and brought a new dimension in the meaning of corporate social responsibility (Drucker, 1984). How does business can solve social problems? It is the perspicuous entrepreneurs who take responsibility to transmute the social problems into creatively profitable solutions (Porter, 2020). Like other visionary entrepreneurs, Maliha M. Quader considering social and economic aspects took a bold and sound decision to start the first-ever e-ticketing services, Shohoz, in Bangladesh and successfully managed it into a diversified e-service provider.

### Societal Problem Drives the Outset of Shohoz.com

Longline in front of the ticket counters during different occasions is a very common scenario in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Having a massive population (14,97,72,364 people within its 1,44,570 sq. km which directs 1015 people per sq.) (Bbs.gov.bd. 2020), the country is increasingly facing serious difficulty to provide proper transportation and accommodation facilities to its nationals. The transport problem touches its height during rush hours especially in different religious and cultural festivals (Eid, Puja, Baishakh). To celebrate the festivals with loved ones, general people who make endless struggles in managing a single ticket first impelled the idea of introducing an e-ticket service in Bangladesh (The Daily Star, 2020). Like other entrepreneurs, to solve a major problem, Maliha M. Quader who has an MBA at Harvard Business School with her graduation in Economics and Computer Science from the famous university of Smith college in the USA started first ever e-ticketing services in Bangladesh (Shohoz.com. 2020). Certainly, the expertise in economics and computer science allows her to take such bold and sound decisions and successfully managing the venture, Shohoz limited. Additionally, she has also lots of experience in her previous professional years in Nokia where she was responsible for crafting strategies and business development in the developing markets profoundly concentrating on digital content of numerous geographies (Mahmud, 2020).

## **Shohoz: First-ever Ticket Home Delivery in Bangladesh**

Shohoz pronounces its existence

*'To make life easy for the people of Bangladesh by offering multiple digital services fulfilling their daily needs'* (Jalil, 2016).

With this mission keeping in mind, the company started its journey in the second half of 2014 with a collaboration of Bangladeshi and European investors as a subsidiary of Draycott Technology Partners- a Singapore based entity. People can book bus tickets and hotels with a single call of 16374. It is the first-ever e-ticketing and hotel booking service provider in Bangladesh (Jalil, 2016).

### **A Diversified Mix of E-Service Provider**

From e-ticketing, it has successfully diversified its electronic service mix. It is obvious that having an e-commerce company, its electronic service is always subject to improvement and ongoing expansion. Besides providing convenient and comfortable access to booking tickets of bus, launches, various events, movie tickets, it provides another prevalent electronic service that is Shohoz Rides which started in 2018 (Jalil, 2016). It allows an individual to travel with ease from one place to other destinations without the hassle of public transport service. Shohoz established a new height in rides services considering the safety issue and distributed 7,000 helmets among riders in Dhaka. Deaths from road accidents have been on the rise and we are working towards the solution. We are expecting that this campaign will raise awareness about road safety the reason has been well-explained by its founder (The Daily Star, 2019). Currently, Shohoz Food brings further diversification in its service basket. Besides, Shohoz Truck, Shohoz Bus, Shohoz Launch, Shohoz Event, and Shohoz Movie further diversified its service portfolio (Shohoz.com. 2020). By diversifying, the company is intending to plant its roots profoundly in Bangladesh's digital business landscape (Sarker, 2019). It has also a plan on its horizon to the introduction of fintech (Markets Insider, 2018).

### **Continual Fund Rising to Broaden the Horizon**

Shohoz has succeeded to attract a whopping 15 million dollars pre-series B investments led by Singapore's Golden Gate Ventures. Other investors contributing to the fund round are Linear VC, and Singaporean angel investor, Koh Boon Hwee. This is the largest investment ever received for tech companies in the country of Bangladesh (Markets Insider, 2018).

Howbeit, its current online outfit knows that it can't cover the whole of Bangladesh during its initial stage. At present, its targeted customers are only the residence of Dhaka city. Although Shohoz offers return tickets, it doesn't provide its services outside the capital on a larger scale. Shohoz can cover limited places where the route is predefined with a handful of transport companies are involved (Mahmud, 2020). The Bangla word '*Shohoz*' means easy, making life easier, convenient, and smarter. Their current slogan is '*Jibon Take Shohoz Korun*' which is an ingeniously written which means '*Make Life Easy*' that blooms the sound of '*Jibon Take Shohoz Korun*' with Shohoz.com (Mahmud, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

E-ticketing has revolutionized the entire communication & transportation industry throughout the world. Entrepreneurs continuously find an untapped opportunity in the market where they can tuck it. Like Shohoz in Bangladesh is the best example which lucidly converting a social problem into profitable solutions. And thus, Shohoz creates a new way of moving around in the cities and successfully diversified its e-service portfolio (Shohoz, 2018).

### Case Discussion Questions

1. How a major problem could be a dominant idea of business? Would an entrepreneur critically heed on the problems to make a vibrant business?
2. How do venture capital and angel investors play a prominent role to expand a start-up business?
3. Would it be feasible to diversify Shohoz in the entire country on a massive scale within a short? If you think so, make a strategic blueprint for executing the same.

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