

## **Panel: Entrepreneurial Business Survival during COVID-19: Challenges and Way Forward**

Entrepreneurs face numerous challenges and risks, especially during times of crises whether economic, ecological or man-made. The advent of COVID-19 and its spread across the globe in just a few months had serious consequences for countries, especially developing economies.

To mitigate the effects and spread of COVID-19, countries adopted unprecedented and desperate measures including lockdowns, social distancing, travelling restrictions, etc. During these restrictions, businesses, particularly small businesses, found themselves closing their operations and shutting down for indefinite periods. Some entrepreneurs went out of business, while others having capabilities turned to online modes of work. No matter what strategy these small businesses adopted, employees found themselves out of work due to reduced business operations.

The pandemic has changed the way we look at traditional small businesses and their operations, affecting Sustainable Development Goal 8 directly. However, despite the crisis, the pandemic has resulted in increased innovation in terms of how businesses adapted to the crisis by not only employing people, but also changing the traditional way of doing business. It has also resulted in new found business opportunities for some entrepreneurs, whereby they directed their skills, knowledge, and networking to more productive use of repurposing themselves along with innovation. This has been instrumental for some to not only survive but also to thrive during the on-going crisis. This panel will address the following key issues:

- Effect of the pandemic on entrepreneurial activity at different levels (international/national/regional/local)
- Resilience of entrepreneurs during pandemics and their crisis management strategies
- Innovative industries during COVID-19 crisis
- Human resource management practices adopted by entrepreneurs during COVID-19
- Managing supply chains for small business survival
- Sustainability efforts of micro, small and medium enterprises
- Women entrepreneurs and their response to COVID-19.

### **Panel Organisers**

Dr Ch. Shoaib Akhtar, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration & Director ORIC, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Email: [shoaib.akhtar@fjwu.edu.pk](mailto:shoaib.akhtar@fjwu.edu.pk)

Mr Ahmed Khaver, Research Assistant, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: [ahmedkhaver@sdpi.org](mailto:ahmedkhaver@sdpi.org)