LAHORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
SCOPE AND ACTIVITIES

First ISO Certified Chamber in Pakistan

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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HISTORY:

The complex interwoven structures of global economies, rapidly changing status of world order, and the growing trade and industrial activities all call for an overwhelming dependence on a brisk information flow which sets forth the tune of economic decisions. This necessitates the formation of such "talent pools" whereby a critical approach about the national and international situation simplifies the path towards a rational decision making process. This need was realized, years back, when in 1599, preceded by the rise of the Venetian maritime traders of the Hanseatic League, the term "Chamber of Commerce" appeared on the world scene. Following the royal decrees of 1701/1702, this concept received worldwide recognition and Chambers were established in different regions. Primarily, their role was limited to an advisory nature, as assistance to the state. By now, the range of activities for Chambers have been widely enhanced broadening their horizons to much wider fields, including national & International trade, industrial and economic activities.

With the same concept, Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry was established in 1923, under the name "Northern Indian Chamber of commerce". However, at the inception of a separate homeland, its name was once again altered to "The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry", after reorganization of trade bodies in the decade of 1960s. The Lahore Chamber is registered under Companies Ordinance 1984.

TIERS OF MANAGEMENT:

The management of The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry is vested in a committee comprising of 32 members, which are elected, for a period of two years, duly from amongst the members of two categories. The elected Executive Committee is then responsible for selecting the top most tiers of management, the President, Senior Vice President, and Vice President to hold office for tenure of one year.

The members of the Executive Committee work in an honorary capacity. Half of the committee members retire every year and are replaced through general elections. Although, the overall objectives of the LCCI have been broadly laid down, the Executive Committee precisely chalk out the short ranged policy plans to effectively translate the long term goals into reality.

OBJECTIVES OF LCCI:

The main objective of The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry is to promote and protect the trade, commerce and industry in its area of jurisdiction, in particular, and Pakistan in general.
To achieve its targets LCCI keeps a close watch over the general industrial and commercial interests, along with all aspects related to them. It opposes any legislative and other measures affecting this class. Thus, in order to fulfill this principal objective, LCCI constantly keeps a liaison with the government agencies and assists them in the decisions affecting trade and industrial culture. Another effort, in this regard, is to establish just and equitable principles in trade and commercial activities.

SOURCE OF FINANCE:
The Lahore Chamber operates as an exclusively non-profit oriented organization, whose sole aim is the promotion of trade, industry & commerce in the country. For the realization of its objectives, including research & development activities, and for managing its day-to-day affairs, its members are liable to pay annual subscription. Although the services rendered to the members are equally available to each class, however, there is difference in the subscription fee according to the classification.

The other source of income, besides the annual subscription, includes attestation fee of commercial documents, and fee for issuing certificates of origin and visa recommendatory letters.

MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMET:
The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry has a very well defined membership department which provides outstanding services to its members. The total membership of Lahore Chamber is 18000. There are two types of memberships.

A firm engaged in any trade activity related to imports or exports, is obliged by law to become a member of a trade organization, such as Chamber of Commerce or association of trade and industry.

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce has segmented its membership in two levels, namely Corporate Class and Associate Class.

a) Membership Representation Cards
The Chamber, being an institution of very wide horizon, keeps a constant interaction with sister Chamber's all over the world. The Lahore Chamber provides a sound backing to its members visiting foreign countries on business tours by issuing letters of introduction to the local Chambers in those countries. These introductory letters are greatly honoured by the foreign chambers and they extend all sort of possible help to its members in the conduct of their intended business abroad. This, of course, fosters closer business relations.

Chambers Identity Cards are issued to the individual directors/partners and the proprietors, to help them in their identification as Chamber Members.

b) Certificate of Origin
Lahore Chamber issues special certificates to authenticate the claim of the exporter that its products have been manufactured in Pakistan.

c) Visa Recommendatory & Invitation Letters
After getting proper authentication about the credibility of the business worth and years of operations the Chamber issues recommendatory letters to its members for convenience in the issuance of visas. This service smoothens the way for the members intending to go abroad on a business trip.

The Visa Invitation letters are extended to the businessmen of foreign countries visiting Pakistan for business purpose after receiving the request from the Pakistani company engaged in business with the foreign company.

d) Status Reports
Foreign firms, Chambers and Embassies, frequently seek reference of the Lahore Chamber regarding its member firms with whom a particular firm intends to do business. The report submitted by the

Chamber is given due consideration in establishing the business reputation of a firm. Lahore Chamber's efforts are significant and vital in enhancing the goodwill of its member firms.

e) Profile Letters

The LCCI also issues Profile Letters to its members engaged in business with foreign companies which provides sound footing their credibility.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT:

The Research & Development Department of LCCI, established in 1985 during the tenure of Mr. Shehbaz Sharif, the then President, has over the years built-up a reputation of a prestigious centre of knowledge on all facets of the national & international economy. It has been made a separate department, whose organization & management is vested in the Convener and Director, Research & Development.

In fact, behind the distinctions & recognitions earned by the Lahore Chamber, there has been relatively an effective support which the Research Department has ably provided so far.

All over the world "Research" is being extensively used in nearly every discipline, in an effort to understand every event totally. With the similar purpose, the R&D department of LCCI has accepted challenges, on several occasions to convince the competence & strength of the staff capability. This department, manned by professionals, with its own continuous and strenuous efforts & sources, collects the relevant facts & figures, analyze the data, prepare the proposals, forward recommendations to the concerned authorities regarding various aspects of the government policies, effecting business, trade and industry. Most of these suggestions have not only been acknowledged and highly appreciated at national level but have also been implemented by the government.

The R & D is also responsible for organizing seminars, workshops, business delegations to various countries important functions and, besides arranging Press interviews, T.V. interviews and Press conferences for presenting the Chamber's view point and comments on burning issues, current policies of the government and other matters of national and international significance.

The R & D Department is handling the working of specialized standing committees, under the advice of expert businessmen of each particular field. The substantial contribution of R & D in the promotion of business activities has been widely recognized by the government & trade circles, at various levels.

R & D DEPARTMENT'S FUNCTIONS:

The main function of the R & D Department is to provide an effective information and guidance to the members of the LCCI in the field of trade and industry. This responsibility essentially covers an in-depth analysis of the government policies relating to taxation, imports, and exports, internal and external investments.

The R & D Department has built up a strong data base and a continuous search and follow up capability to collect material from national and international sources.

The R & D Department is providing professional and skillfully designed material to the President and other members of the LCCI for discussion with the dignitaries, missions and professionals bodies. In fact, this support is primarily related to presentations in the form of discussion papers, country profiles, position papers and address of welcome. The R & D Department is keeping a continuous liaison with the members of the LCCI for the dissemination of information through "Fortnightly Chamber News".

STAFF CAPABILITY:

To ensure a high quality and wider coverage of the activities of R&D Department, special cadre staff has been recruited to work as professionals.

Presently, the R & D Department is manned with a team of experts, in which highly experienced & educated people are inducted at the top level, while at the lower positions, mostly young & energetic but top class post graduates are employed.

The system of work and reward in R & D Department is organized on a very effective incentive system, so that genuine contribution and skill can be promoted in the shortest possible time. Basically, under this programme an innovative internship system has been introduced, by which fresh postgraduates work for a period of three months or less at LCCI to get acquainted with the working of Lahore Chamber of Commerce especially research department.

PERFORMANCE OF THE R&D DEPARTMENT:

The R & D Department has performed a number of tasks to assist members of the LCCI. To spell out the nature and scope of performance of R&D Department, the following broad areas cover most of its activities.

a. Analysis and Data Support

The R & D Department has assisted LCCI members with the desired information and data analysis to participate in official committee deliberations. This particularly refers to such committees as National Taxation Reforms Commission, De-regulation Commission and the like.

b. Policy Reviews

The policies announced by the government from time to time are recorded and analyzed by the R & D Department with a view to convey its implications to the members of the LCCI. This is very much true incase of Rural Industrialization policy, Taxation and Foreign Exchange facilities and Import and export policies announced by the government.

c. In-depth Study of Issues

The R & D Department, while examining the implications of the impact of various government policies, has been able to identify key issues for an in-depth study for the formulation of problem solving recommendations.

d. Seminars & Workshops

The R & D department organizes seminars and workshops on the recommendations of the conveners of various standing committees on important topics of national and international importance.

e. Trade Disputes and Arbitration

Foreign trade transactions sometimes involve disputes such as breach of contract, short supply of goods including complaints on agreed quality, delay in release of consignments by the importers, delay in shipment of goods, nonpayment of goods released on acceptance basis etc. when such disputes are reported to the Chamber, it immediately contacts its counterparts, Embassies and Government departments and strives for amicable and early settlement of disputes.

The Chamber also helps the members in settling their trade disputes with their foreign buyers through the foreign Chambers of Commerce, Pakistani Commercial Secretaries abroad and the diplomatic missions of those countries in Pakistan.

The LCCI Standing Committee on Arbitration and Trade disputes is very useful in solving the problems of its member companies.

LIAISON WITH GOVERNMENT:

Lahore Chamber plays the role of a bridge between the businessmen and the government. In this effort, it invites government officials and dignitaries to discuss the matters of national interest, problems of its members, and current government policies. In a dialogue between the government officials & representatives of business community, the issues are resolved and this helps in creating a more cooperative & conducive atmosphere.

SIGNING of MEMORANDAM of UNDERSTANDING (MOU):

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce has also signed MOUs with various chambers local and international, as well as with various Government and private sector organizations of National and International level.

The Chamber is also represented on all important advisory bodies of the government, both central and provincial, which are responsible for framing various policy decisions. This liaison actually helps the Chamber to play a significant role in the policy formulation process. Suggestions and comments received from the members, or prepared by the R&D on any particular government policy are placed before the government, with a view to seek requisite modifications or revision of the policies and safeguard the interests of the business sector.

STANDING COMMITTEES:
In the present era of specialization, LCCI has formed different Standing Committee(s) on various subjects to tackle the ticklish problems of narrow specialized spectrums of industry and commerce. These Standing Committees besides keeping the members well informed of the deliberations of the Committee and the activities of Lahore Chamber are meant to identify the current difficulties on their related subjects and impacts of national and international proceedings on it.

Each Standing Committee consists of a maximum of 10-members including the Convener, who is a member of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and an expert of the related field. The members communicate the deliberations of their meetings to the Executive Committee and after approval take up their cases with the concerned authorities with a sound and strong backing.

HELP DESKS:
To provide assistance to its members the Lahore Chamber of Commerce has established help desks of TEVTA and SMEDA. The officials of both the organizations provide all sort of assistance regarding industry and commerce, on one floor to the LCCI members.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS:
To protect our economic edifice, export orientation can playa pivotal role by ameliorating our infavourable trends in trade. And for broadening our export base as well as its destination, there is no other mean so powerful & all embracing, than participation in & organization of international fairs & exhibitions.

Lahore Chamber keeps its members well informed about all the International fairs & Exhibitions taking place all over the world and also arranges country's participation in the important ones.

INCOMING FOREIGN DELEGATIONS:
The pride of hosting a number of trade delegations/trade missions from all over the world, International organizations and foreign chambers, has become a ritual for Lahore Chamber. These meetings open avenues for a host of opportunities by allowing a face to face contact between the foreign trade representatives & the members of Lahore Chamber. Such meetings have proven to be fruitful in developing trade on mutually agreed principles & evolving measures to weed out the bottlenecks hampering the smooth conduct of all facets of trade & commercial activities.

OUTGOING DELEGATIONS:
In an effort to provide maximum projection to export potential, to enhance the image of our manufacturing capabilities, and to expand the trade activities, delegations comprising members of the chamber representing different trades & industries frequently visit abroad. Various international agencies & foreign government departments also extend invitations to Chamber to represent in various seminars & workshops.

The members of Lahore Chamber are also given due representation in the outgoing official trade delegations. The government, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and Pakistani Embassies abroad extend their full cooperation to these delegations in arranging meetings with prominent businessmen/industrialists etc. of the countries of their accreditation.

Fortnightly Chamber Circular
The fortnightly Chamber Circular is a regular feature of the Chamber. It is published with an aim to disseminate current up-to-date national and global information, regarding trade & industry, to its members. It gives maximum projection to export and import opportunities, trade inquiries and circulars of State Bank, Income Tax, Customs & other Government Departments. Another purpose behind its circulation is to keep the members informed of the important day-to-day activities of the Chamber.

Recently, a section of the Chamber circular has been allocated for the publication of Research material, to provide an access to the latest developments on the national & international scene.

It is circulated to all the Chamber members, foreign missions in Pakistan, other Chambers of Commerce & Industry of the country, various government departments, ministries and trade associations. In view of its wide circulation, members are also extended an opportunity to advertise their products in it, at nominal rates.

Annual Report
To apprise the performance of the Chamber in a particular year, annual report is published at the end of the term. It summarizes all the activities and achievements of the Chamber during the period. This report is forwarded to not only all the Chambers of Commerce & Industry in the country, but also the foreign Chambers of Commerce, Foreign Embassies in Pakistan and Pakistan Embassies abroad.

Another purpose which this report serves is a worldwide publicity of Pakistani products by way of advertisements.

Trade Directory
After an extensive research effort, the Chamber has been able to compile a computerized version of a Trade Directory which meets the international standards. It has been compiled with an aim of facilitating local business men and foreign traders. The directory is also available in soft form.

Classified Directories of Members
To keep an up-to-date record of the members, the Lahore Chamber publishes two directories i.e. Chamber Class Directory and Associate Class Directory. To update the information contained in them, these are revised every year. It provides a brief resume of the type and line of business and their area-vise location is also specified.

Adhoc Publications
The extensive research work and critical analysis undertaken by R&D Department on various socio-economic aspects of the country, are also published. STUDY REPORTS on business, industry & other related topics are also prepared and forwarded to the related government departments for consideration. The interested members also get maximum benefit out of these reports.

INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:
The Information Department is meant for giving projection to the view point of the Chamber. To materialize this goal, this department keeps a close contact with mass media and various government departments and agencies. All formal views of the Chamber, on behalf of the business community, are related to the national press and various media channels through this department.

Library
To provide the members of LCCI a ready access to national and international information, Lahore Chamber has maintained a well equipped Library. The Library maintains an extensive range of trade and commercial periodicals from all over the world. Trade directories of foreign countries and file records of various trade associations, foreign embassies, Chambers of Commerce and Country Profiles

etc. Besides this, customs tariff and procedures, statutory rules and orders of Government of Pakistan and its Gazette Notifications have also been made available.