

Shape: A startup that's breaking stereotypes

TAHSEEN NOWER PRACHI

Shape, an intimate clothing line for women in Bangladesh, provides lingerie and innerwear that caters to the distinct body featurettes of South Asian women. Since 2019, Shape has developed a clientele among Bangladeshi women not only through their unique sales but also through the creation of essential conversation that is considered taboo in our society. Founded by Monoshita Ayruani in September 2019. Shape is now a brand with 5 different stores across Dhaka and Chittagong with 12 members in its core team. Toggle recently talked with Monoshita Ayruani to learn more about this unique brand's journey.

The beginning of an inclusive brand

If there's one thing lacking in South Asia, let alone Bangladesh, that is the lack of inclusivity in the sizes and shapes of undergarments. Most products available in local markets are of the few sizes that are excerpts of UK and US sizes. However, such fits are not compatible with the body sizes and structures of women in our subcontinent.

"I noticed the huge waste of investment every time when women buy their innerwear without any proper knowledge of their sizes and shapes. I decided to start a brand that will cater to women by not only selling products but also helping them understand their right fit," says Monoshita, "Hence, I started Shape. Currently, Shape has 11 different sizes of innerwear and loungewear one can find the perfect fit of."

The launching of Shape

Shape initially launched its line on Instagram. Monoshita adds, "As we wanted to establish a communication



with customers to understand their needs and feedback, we designed our feed into a channel to reach out to them. This feed caters to topics not only limited to innerwear but on reproductive health, menstrual hygiene and mental health as well." This interactive feed is what helped Shape develop a sustainable bond with its clients, eventually leading to an official website and Facebook page.

Bootstrapping the business

Monoshita started the company with her own capital without external funding, expanding it with her partner after a while. Till today, the brand is self-funded and runs on its own revenue. Right now it is working on establishing a stronger base in the local market, with future plans on going international, especially to other South Asian countries.

Becoming a customer-friendly local brand

"Shape has worked hard to gain this trust over the two and half years from its clientele. It offers an open space for conversation for women who have a difficult time finding the right fit for their regular use. We offer size consultation with expert consultants," claims Monoshita.

According to her, the problem that customers often face is a lack of proper knowledge about choosing the right fit. The wrong fitted inner might harm the original body shape of the user and is usually uncomfortable. "But here in Shape, there is a right fit for everyone," adds Monoshita.

Their interactive and informative page and feed also answer FAQs about body

shapes and sizes, debunks taboos and eradicates misconception about less-talked but important issues. "Comfort should not come second to beauty, rather, it should come before the existing stereotypical norms of beauty. In Shape, we provide services that will serve both comfort and elegance to our customers," ensures Monoshita.

In the face of adversities

Monoshita highlights two prime adversities in her journey. Firstly, being a young female entrepreneur in Bangladesh with a unique product idea was nothing short of a challenge itself. Secondly, the lack of open conversation about women's innerwear and loungewear.

Creating a productive conversation about one of the most frequently-bought products seemed to be an absurd taboo. "I wanted to establish a safe space of informative shopping for women. While it was difficult to promote my brand's message initially, we steadily learned how to embrace the uniqueness of our brand with confidence," she says.

Breaking the taboos

Monoshita believes that creating conversation and building awareness are the two most important factors to break the stereotypes and taboos regarding women's intimate wear.

"Women have been taught to look beautiful first, and put comfort later. But it doesn't have to be that way; comfort and beauty can both come hand in hand," states Monoshita, "Shape is working towards a size-inclusive movement - whether you're lean or plus-sized, we have something for everybody."

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