

Ms. Sulajja Firodia Motwani
Vice Chairperson, Kinetic Engineering
Founder & CEO, Kinetic Green Energy & Power Solutions Limited



Profile and Summary of Contribution to Industry

Ms. Sulajja Firodia Motwani is the Founder & CEO of Kinetic Green Energy and Power Solutions Limited, a pioneer in Electric Vehicles in India. Under her leadership and with a vision to bring green mobility to the masses, Kinetic Green has risen to be the leading manufacturer of Electric Three Wheelers in the country. The company aims to be a global leader in light electric mobility, specializing in electric 3-wheelers, 2-wheelers and golf carts with a focus to bring “green mobility for the masses”.

She is also the Vice Chairperson of Kinetic Engineering Ltd. She is responsible for Kinetic group’s overall business strategy and development. Kinetic Group’s business interests include Automobile Manufacturing, auto components including Powertrain Systems, Green Energy, Multilevel parking solutions, Elevators & Escalators. Kinetic’s partners include companies like Hyundai, Lamborghini, Taigene Electrical, Magna etc. Sulajja plays a key role in steering the Group’s business strategy and in its implementation across group companies.

Her Journey

Sulajja joined Kinetic Group in 1995 and has 25 years experience in the Automobile industry. She has been at the helm of Kinetic's two-wheeler business and subsequent restructuring of the group that paved way for a focus on automotive systems and new areas like e-mobility. She has experience in marketing and sales, finance, and in setting up and managing joint ventures and technology collaborations. She is a passionate, hardworking, and aggressive professional who never saw her gender as a weakness but took on many challenges successfully in the male dominated automobile industry.

Sulajja set up Kinetic Green in 2014, with a conviction that electric vehicles will be the future of automobile technology owing to increasing pollution, tighter emission norms, and fuel security concerns. At that time, this was a nascent industry and hardly any player had been successful in mass marketing electric vehicles. Government policy was not formulated and owing to higher cost, customers were not coming forward to adopt this technology.

Sulajja, armed with her conviction and experience, set up a totally new venture to build a focused business in this area and began the project with a team of 2! She struck a relationship with CSIR and their two labs, CMERI and CECRI to develop electric vehicle technology. She set up a DSIR Certified advanced R and D center for Electric vehicles, and built a team of professionals who shared the passion and conviction about e mobility. She took active part in Government's policy formulation to get Government support for favorable policies for electric vehicles in India.

A challenging target was taken to develop an electric auto at a customer price of Rs. 1 lakh (plus battery) with a vision that Kinetic's vehicles should be cheaper than regular autos and thus, attract customers without any subsidy. This vehicle was successfully developed along with focus on technology and supply chain development, team building, setting up of dealership network and a low cost manufacturing base.

In order to popularize electric vehicle technology, Sulajja thought of an innovative marketing platform- to position e-autos as socially desirable, not only as they are green but also attractive means for self-employment. She collaborated with various State Governments, Government welfare schemes and NGOs to promote e-auto as means for poverty alleviation and self-employment for the unemployed poor. The company won a large contract from UP Government where over 8,000 e autos were provided to poor cycle-rickshaw pullers as means of a dignified livelihood and social upliftment. Kinetic Green implemented the project successfully by delivering vehicles across 65 districts of UP and setting up a vast servicing and charging network. The cycle rickshaw

puller, who earned a meager Rs. 200/day with manual labor now earns over Rs. 800/day as a proud owner of an e-auto!

Similarly, company delivered vehicles to hundreds of women for self-empowerment in collaboration with various NGOs and Banks. This was done in UP, Delhi, and in adivasi belts of Chhattisgarh. Sulajja forged an alliance with “Chaupal”, a leading NGO to deliver 100 e-autos to poor youth and women from slums across North India. She also joined hands with the SC/ST Corporation to provide vehicles to unemployed backward class youth.

Sulajja has worked tirelessly to forge these alliances, implement them successfully, and get support from various banks for loans to beneficiaries from poor strata of society. This has also made a big difference to the society where thousands of poor and women are now gainfully self-employed as owners of e-autos. She has also established a network of 150 exclusive dealers to promote e-mobility across the country.

With all these efforts, Kinetic Green crossed a turnover of Rs. 110 cr during 2016-17 and has established itself as the largest seller of electric three-wheelers. Company is now eyeing a top line of Rs. 400 crores in the coming year. Company’s future plans include wide range of electric two, three and four wheelers and with strong focus on bringing electric mobility to the masses.

Along the way, Kinetic Green has created mass employment directly to hundreds and indirectly to thousands through its supply chain and at its dealerships and service stations across the country. Further, for its 25,000 e-auto drivers the company has created dignified employment, while contributing towards reduction of pollution. This has saved millions of trees and the passengers of e-autos have enjoyed billions of affordable green rides.

With an emphasis on the development of indigenous technology and “Make in India”. she recently tied up with Tonino Lamborghini, SpA, to bring global design and technology for electric and solar golf carts and tourism vehicles, which she now plans to manufacture in India and market globally.

Going a step further, he now has entered into partnership with leading players like BPCL and Ola Electric, to set up Battery Swapping Stations in order to make EV battery infrastructure at every 2 km in Indian cities. Her goal is to bring 10,00,000 EVs to Indian roads in next few years.

Sulajja has shown exemplary vision to enter a new field with nascent technology, conviction in her idea and worked very hard to turn that dream successfully into a reality to establish her company as a leading player in the electric vehicle industry.

Beyond Bread: Contribution to the Society through Leadership

Sulajja has been invited to steer many important industry forums and associations, plays a key role in policy formation and advocacy. The leadership positions held by her include:

- Chairperson of Electric Vehicle Task Force at FICCI,
- Head of the Electric Three-Wheeler mobility of SMEV (Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles).
- Member of the National Executive Committee of CII
- National Chairperson of FICCI Young Leaders Forum
- Member of National Steering Committee of FICCI
- Selected to lead as Chairperson for FICCI - Maharashtra
- Member of the prestigious Governing Body of CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India)
- Member of CSIR Society, highest Science and Research Development Body chaired by Prime Minister of India
- Industry nominee on the Development Council for Electrical Mobility of India from the Ministry of Heavy Industries
- Board of Advisors of iCreate – International Centre for Entrepreneurship & Technology, an initiative of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- Director on the Board of Invest India, apex Investment Promotion Agency for Government of India
- Chairperson of the Advisory Board of AIESEC
- Member of the Impact Task Force- national Apex body for skill building and promotion of collaboration between Science, Education and Industry
- Sulajja is also the Brand Ambassador for Plan International, for their "Save the Girl child" initiative
- Founding Member of the Pune International Centre, an independent 'Think Tank' which deliberates on issues of national importance and contributes to policy-making in India.

Honours & Awards

Sulajja Firodia has received several Honours and Awards for her accomplishments that benefitted the community and industry:

- World Economic Forum recognized her as a "Young Global Leader" and as a Global Leader for Tomorrow
- Featured as a business "Face of the Millennium" by leading magazine India Today

- Voted among the top 25 business leaders of the next century in a poll of industrialists conducted by Fortune India
- Received the Society Young Achiever's Award for Business
- Won the Young Super Achiever Award by Business Today
- Received the unique and coveted "MTV Style-icon" Award
- Awarded as "India's Most Powerful Women" by Business Today
- Received Top Management Consortium's Award of Excellence
- Won Outlook Business' Women of Worth (WOW) 2019 Award
- Received Zee's Dare to Dream Award for excellence as a Woman Entrepreneur
- Awarded the Business Woman of the Decade by the Global Women's Economic Forum
- Recognized by Rotary International with Vocational Excellence Award
- Received Aiesec Hall of Fame award
- Won Nari Shakti award for her work for the Environment
- Won design Excellence Award for best Automobile Design
- Won ISGF Innovation Award, for innovation to promote sustainability
- Won Pride of Pune award, for being a Role Model for young entrepreneurs in Pune
- Won FICCI FLO's Top 25 Women of Excellence award, in the Entrepreneurship category

Education, Academic Achievements and Interests

Sulajja has been a Topper throughout her academic career. A Merit Rank holder in her SSC, Sulajja decided to pursue degree in Commerce at the renowned Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce (BMCC) at Pune. As a BMCC student, she stood First in entire Maharashtra State in HSC and graduated with a 2nd Rank in the University.

Sulajja then pursued her higher education in Business Management in USA and holds an MBA from the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University, USA.

Post her MBA, Sulajja worked with investment analytics firm, BARRA International, at Berkeley, California before returning to India. Later, she has also served on the Board of Trustees of the University and was invited on the President's Committee for India for several years.

She is a fitness enthusiast, national level badminton player, marathon runner and passionately pursues adventure sports including skiing, scuba diving, mountain biking and sky diving. She is a loving mother to 18 year old son, Sidhant. She also believes in giving back to the society and is involved in various philanthropic activities.
