

# Uber gives Pakistan drivers classes to deter sex harassment

March 4 2016

---



Uber, which launched its service at a price of 13.7 Pakistani rupees (\$0.13) per kilometre, hopes to expand to other cities in Pakistan outside Lahore

Uber is teaching its drivers in Pakistan how not to sexually harass women, a spokeswoman said Friday, after the popular transport app launched in the conservative country where women are often hassled on public transport.

In Pakistan, "there is lack of knowledge on what constitutes [sexual harassment](#)", said Shaden Abdellatif, a spokeswoman for ride-hailing service that launched in the teeming eastern city of Lahore on Thursday.

"It seems it is not part of the conversation in basic education", she added, saying only Uber drivers in Lahore and in the Egyptian capital Cairo had to undergo the training.

California-based Uber was officially banned from the Indian capital Delhi after one of its drivers raped a young woman passenger there in 2014 in a case that made international headlines.

Women in Pakistan have fought for their rights for decades in a country where so-called honour killings and acid attacks are commonplace and where females face routine public harassment.

The seminar was brief—about half an hour of the four hours of training that Uber's several hundred drivers in Lahore receive—and will continue to be conducted for newly-joined drivers in the future.

Trainees were also told not to contact women after dropping them off, or to pass their passengers' phone numbers on to others.

"Our primary objective is that drivers understand that sexual harassment is not just about assaulting or harming someone," said Tooba Fatima, from Pakistan-based social enterprise RABTT, which designed the seminar.

"Making someone uncomfortable is harassment, whatever your intention is," Fatima said.

"People here tend to stare, make comments on the way one is dressed, ask questions about who you are going to see or why. And it is the

woman who ends up being told: 'You should not be out so late', 'Why would you go here or there'."

Abdellatif told AFP the company is trying to offer "a safer space in public transport for women through educating the drivers, even on a very basic level".

Three quarters of Pakistani women do not participate in the labour market, mainly due to a lack of safe transportation, according to a study by the International Labour Organization.

But there has been a slew of recent initiatives to redress the balance, such as "The Pink Rickshaw" scheme in Lahore, which aims to empower working-class women by providing them with vehicles to transport other females.

The government of Punjab province meanwhile launched an awareness campaign last year called "Women on Wheels" to highlight gender-based violence and street harassment.

Uber, which launched its service at a price of 13.7 Pakistani rupees (\$0.13) per kilometre, hopes to expand to other cities in Pakistan outside Lahore.

The start-up valued at over \$50 billion is now present in 69 countries and some 380 cities.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: Uber gives Pakistan drivers classes to deter sex harassment (2016, March 4) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-03-uber-pakistan-drivers-classes-deter.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.