

Harassment on Public Transport: A Tale of Three Cities

Shanny Campbell
Senior Social Development Specialist,
Asian Development Bank

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No to Harassment on Public Transport, Yes to Safety

HARASSMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT: A TALE OF THREE CITIES



Women are the primary users of public transport in Asia and the Pacific, and yet the transportation systems they depend on are not geared toward their needs. In 2015, the Asian Development Bank published a report on the prevalence of harassment on public transport across three cities in Central and West Asia. Results from 630 survey respondents show the impacts of this behavior on women’s lives, and why designing transport for women—that is safe and reliable—is designing better transport for all.

Women and Transport

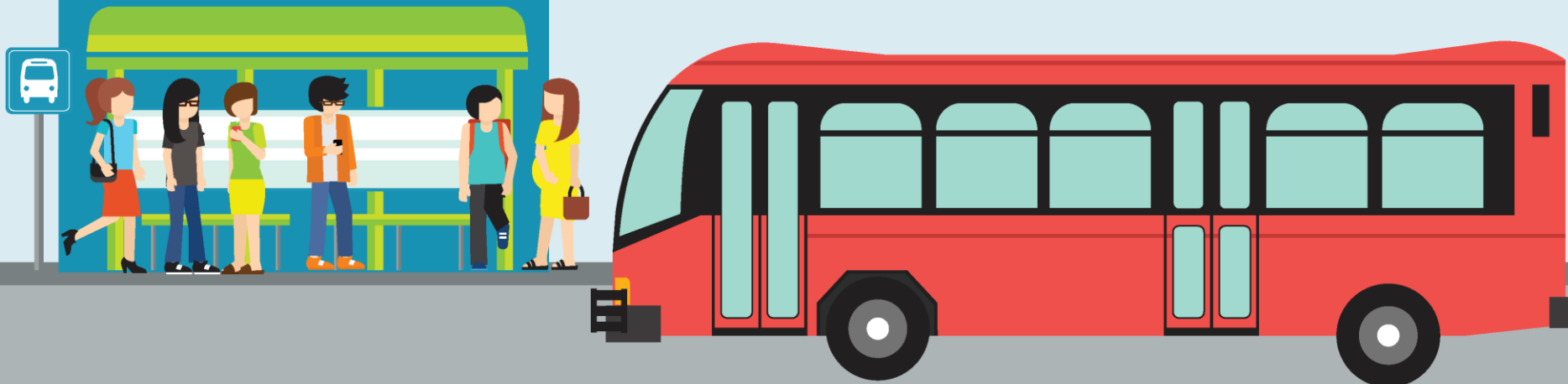
Women are the predominant users of public transport

Because they are less likely to drive a car

Less likely to have priority use of a family vehicle

Women are more likely to be poor than men in developing countries, making ownership, refueling, and maintenance of a car less viable

In some countries, it is not culturally accepted for women to drive a car, or even travel at all



Baku, Azerbaijan

79% incidence rate



82%

experienced harassment
inside the train



35%

on the platform

80%

of women
harassed were
18 to 30 years old



30%

have
decreased
their metro
use

26%

experienced help
from bystanders
(most helpers were
older women)



Almost all did
not react, or only
frowned due to
fear of violence
or escalation

Tbilisi, Georgia

45% incidence rate

86%

received no help from bystanders

78%

of respondents had untoward incidences inside the metro

Most common time of occurrence:

5-8 p.m.



TYPES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

73% leering

38% groping or touching

31% sexual comments or noises

14% pushing against women or rubbing body

14% other behavior

6% scratching his private parts

STRATEGY:

5% don't ride the metro alone

53% seldom use metro or only on off-peak

21% stopped riding the metro at night

21% stopped using metro

Karachi, Pakistan

70% incidence rate

INTERVIEWEES SPEAK OUT

75% say the perpetrator was another passenger

20% by the conductor

5% say it was the driver

Women were touched or groped in **34%** of cases

7% of cases involved following, stalking, or blocking of the way

Less than **4%** of victims asked for help



IMPACTS ARE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL

31% of students, **23%** of working women, and **20%** of homemakers reduce use of public transport after harassment, and opt to take more expensive forms of transport

40% of women avoid traveling after dark, curtailing opportunities for further education or socializing

Most feel they have to cover themselves to avoid unwanted attention

Why does this occur?



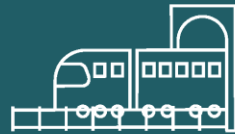
INFRASTRUCTURE OR OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- No security staff or cameras
- Poor lighting
- Overcrowding



POLICY OR REGULATORY ISSUES

- No law against sexual harassment
- Complaints not taken seriously



ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS

- Lack of education among men
- Women too busy to complain
- “Boys will be boys” mentality
- Provocative clothing



What can be done?

- Address overcrowding
- Improve policies of transport authorities, operators
- Conduct staff training on how to deal with complaints and culprits
- Impose legal sanctions, and revoke access
- Make infrastructural changes in transport systems, install lighting and emergency telephones
- Do name and shame or conduct behavior change campaigns
- Reward transit staff and those who contribute to harassment-free environment



Thank you!

Shanny Campbell
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Asian Development Bank

scampbell@adb.org