**Empowering Women Drivers in Pakistan**

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Driving is a liberating and empowering activity for anyone who enjoys it. Imagine cruising down the Margalla Hills of Islamabad, feeling the thrill of the road. But for many Pak­istani women, this experience can be cut short by a flat tyre, a dead battery, or the fear of societal judgement.

Despite challenges like societal pressures and limited resources, Pakistani women are determined to exercise their right to drive. As per Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Muntazir Mehdi, Lahore recorded the highest number of female drivers in Pakistan in 2022. This surge sig­nifies the growing empowerment and independence of Pakistani women who are taking the wheel and claiming their right to mobility.

However, the increase in the number of women drivers doesn’t mean they have an easy time on the road. They still face chal­lenges like harassment, vulnerability during breakdowns, and the misconception that car maintenance lies outside their do­main. One major obstacle is the lack of basic car maintenance knowledge, leaving women susceptible in unexpected situations. This dependence not only hinders their self-reliance but also re­inforces harmful stereotypes portraying them as incapable and in need of constant male support. A common scenario that illus­trates this obstacle is being stranded with a flat tyre while nav­igating Karachi’s bustling streets during rush hour. Changing a tyre requires physical strength and can be daunting, especially for women unfamiliar with the process. In such instances, they might rely on male help, potentially exposing them to harass­ment or exploitation, particularly in isolated areas.

[Punjab CM assigns portfolios to eighteen-member cabinet](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/punjab-cm-assigns-portfolios-to-eighteen-member-cabinet)

Therefore, car maintenance is a valuable skill that can empow­er Pakistani women drivers. By learning basic checks like tyre pressure and different fluid levels, they can prevent breakdowns, save time, and money. Additionally, knowing how to change a tyre or jump-start an engine equips them to handle emergen­cies efficiently and fosters self-reliance. Furthermore, it liberates them from relying on others for car maintenance and builds self-esteem and independence.

According to a 2024 report by The Nation, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, offi­cially inaugurated Pakistan’s first women’s driving school and test centre at the Police Lines Headquarters in Islamabad. This ground-breaking initiative aims to provide specialized train­ing to women under the guidance of experienced instructors, empowering them with essential driving and car maintenance skills. It’s a significant step towards creating a safe and support­ive environment for women to learn and excel in automobile me­chanics and driving. Fortunately, online platforms like YouTube are also making car maintenance knowledge accessible and em­powering women. Car maintenance empowers Pakistani wom­en to break stereotypes, take charge of their mobility, and claim their rightful place on the road. It also serves as a gateway to the male-dominated automotive industry.

[US says Israel plans to build new settlement units in West Bank continue to be 'barrier to peace'](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/us-says-israel-plans-to-build-new-settlement-units-in-west-bank-continue-to-be-barrier-to-peace)

These women inspire all Pakistani women who aspire to en­ter the automotive industry. They prove that with passion, deter­mination, and education, women can overcome the barriers that limit their participation in the sector. But these women are not alone in their quest for change. They need the support and en­couragement of other women who share their vision and ambi­tion. Here’s what you can do to join them:

Encourage other women: Seek guidance from experienced mechanics, and share your car maintenance knowledge with friends and family. This will create a culture of learning and em­powerment.

Support female-owned businesses: Patronize female-owned vehicle repair shops and businesses, increasing their opportu­nities and visibility.

Advocate for Change: Stand against gender discrimination and support diversity and inclusion initiatives in the automotive indus­try, fostering a more balanced workplace for women in the field.

[KPRA conducts workshop on automated tax deduction](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/kpra-conducts-workshop-on-automated-tax-deduction)

Shifting gears for change is not just metaphorical; it’s a practical action Pakistani women can take to improve their lives and society. By embracing car maintenance and driving skills, they can over­come challenges, defy stereotypes, and create opportunities for a more diverse and inclusive automotive industry. Pakistani wom­en, let’s embrace this change and drive towards a brighter future.

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