



Behind the wheels

Understanding The Complex Algorithms That Make Up Your Usual Commute

Pics: Krishnanshu Kapur, AIS PV, X G



Driving the point home



Interacting to know the perspective



Understanding the struggles and victories

Ground Reporting

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The phone beeped, waking up Amar from his already disrupted sleep. A drowsy Amar is notified of another Uber ride. He straightens up and drives off from his quaint little spot of rest last night, to pick a passenger from the airport.

Settling down | A nostalgia

On his way to the airport, Amar reminisces the time when he moved to the capital from his village. Like many others, he joined the blossoming sector after recommendations from his acquaintances. As he glanced at the app, nostalgia struck him; nostalgia of his struggle

to understand and adapt to the app. The ease or difficulty of adaptation varied from person to person, ranging from a day to a week to even a month at times depending on the extent of their exposure to technology beforehand. Ramakrishnan, another Uber driver recounts, “Initially, the company devoted one hour every day to train not so tech savvy people like me with the app. However, when the app interface upgraded, it became more user-friendly for the customer and the driver both.”

Rest (un)assured | Parting with sleep

Amar has accustomed himself to being wide awake even at the most unprecedented hours. The fear of losing out on a potential passenger has made him bid goodbye to peaceful slumber. Amar is not the only one with this predicament. Tushar, an Ola staff manager states, “In

my two and a half years of experience in this metro city, we have forgotten what rest even means. We’ve made peace with just an hour break each day.” However, Ola driver Javed Husain does not compromise with his sleep, because it means compromising the life of his customer. He adds, “The first thing I do after duty is sleep. I ensure that I take enough rest so as not to endanger the life of my customer.”

Lingual complexities | A downside

While picking up a foreign tourist from the airport, one can find Amar brushing up his English communication skills, trying to effectively converse with the passenger despite his lack of fluency. Communication with the passengers is unavoidable, especially while confirming the pickup and drop off locations. “Chinese passengers are most dreaded

because they don’t know English, let alone the hope of conversing in Hindi. In such cases, we either take help from higher-ups or use google translate,” explains Danesh, a driver working for Ola.

Pink alert | Yet to be resolved

Amar picked his second ride of the day, a woman in her twenties. The conversation begins with the commuter asking, “Why are there no female drivers?” Amar isn’t quite sure how to deal with this question. However, he assures her that he will be more than happy to welcome female counterparts. Anand Kumar, an Uber management executive, commented, “Uber recently initiated the ‘Mahila Partner’ scheme that strives to pair female passengers with female drivers. On Diwali this year, our female drivers also received self-defence classes.”

The silver lining | A decent life

Although Amar has come across many speed-breakers in his journey as a cab driver, he believes that it has indeed given him an improved way of earning a living. The comfort of being in the car he drives, thereby avoiding the freezing cold outside reminds him that his life has undeniably changed for the better ever since he started to work with Uber. “The journey with Uber has only turned out to be a better bet for individuals from small towns like me. I don’t have to worry about feeding my family. I always earn enough to afford my daily expenses without even thinking of loans,” stated Mahendra Pawar, an Uber driver.

This is but just a day in the life of Amar, or any Uber/Ola driver for that matter- a bumpy ride splattered with beautiful milestones. 🇮🇳

Pics: Dakshesh Bharal, AIS PV, XI E



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The jewels of GT