

It's a man's world at airport, say women cabbies - 18th July, 2013

[Bipin.Singh @timesgroup.com](#) TWEETS@_MumbaiMirror

Drivers of Priyadarshini Tax Service, an all-women fleet of cabbies, have alleged discrimination at the Mumbai International Airport. The women drivers say officials manning the prepaid taxi service booth at the airport make them wait for hours before allotting them passengers, and that too mostly those travelling short distances.

The prepaid taxi booth at the international airport is managed by a firm named Crystal, under the supervision of Mumbai International Airport Private Limited (MIAL).

Sushma Hiwale, a Priyadarshini cabbie, said: "Our company is registered in the prepaid category, but we are forced to wait up to three hours every day for passengers, while other cabbies are issued fare slips within minutes."

She said the 'discrimination' is taking a toll on the drivers' income. "We have to depend on passengers who don't opt for prepaid services, or request our regular passengers to book our taxis. But the daily struggle to find passengers is affecting the business," Hiwale said.

The airport authorities said they can't do anything beyond setting up a taxi booking counter. "If someone's not getting passengers despite an exclusive prepaid taxi counter, then we can't do much about it," an MIAL spokesperson said.

Priyadarshini Taxi Service was launched in 2005 by entrepreneur Susie Shah, with an aim to take women empowerment beyond the conventional ideas of khakhra and achar making.

Shah told Mumbai Mirror that MIAL hasn't responded despite several communications. "I request the MIAL top brass to intervene at earliest to support this initiative of empowering women," she said.

A driver from her company, Summaya Wajir Pathan, said the attitude of the prepaid booth minders was the problem. "I really don't know what their problem is. They give us short distance fares, which isn't helping my income at all," Pathan, 29, said.

