

Chennai, Wednesday, August 23, 2017



Photos: Manivasagan N

Apart from ferrying passengers, the Metro Rail is also being used as an edutainment tool for a number of students and children from orphanages in the city

UNDERGROUND METRO travel gathers momentum

CMRL footfall doubled after the inauguration of Koyambedu - Nehru Park underground stretch

The underground stretch of CMRL (Chennai Metro Rail Limited) has not done that badly in wooing commuters. Average footfall of the Metro has nearly doubled after the launch of the Koyambedu-Nehru Park underground segment in the middle of May.

The average footfall of CMRL has increased from 12,000-14,000 to 22,000-24,000 after the 8km underground segment became operational, according to CMRL officials, who attribute the spurt in footfall to extended connectivity (23km of the total 45km is operation now), mainly to Airport,

which is reachable in 40 minutes maximum, anytime during the day, from Nehru Park -the farthest Metro station from the international and domestic terminals, as on date.

Indeed, taking a Metro to the airport from Nehru Park or Kilpauk would be a wise choice, largely from an economic (Rs 54 is maximum fare) and comfort point of view, considering the amount of traffic on the city roads, which was one of the factors that has contributed to the marginal rise in Metro footfall.

Metro patronage vis-a-vis Delhi: In hindsight, it might sound an overwhelming increase, but a closer scrutiny would reveal that even the doubled average footfall is a pittance, compared to the volume of people carried by MTC buses, the lifeline of the city's transport system. A whopping 55 lakh passengers depend on buses daily. Despite emerging a distant second, at 12-15 lakh commuters a day, suburban trains have also been carrying a chunk of the city commuters. Even 24,000 average daily footfall leaves little to cheer about by the standards of CMRL, which has peak capacity to carry over 1,200 passengers in a four-car train. CMRL patronage could rise to encouraging levels once the connectivity extends to Chennai Central or rather the full 45km becomes operational, which would bring Anna Salai on the Metro network map.

Kolkata Metro transports more commuters: Curiously, Kolkata, which has an operational Metro network running to the same length as Chennai, carried manifold people. According to a study conducted by transport think tank ITDP (Institute for Transportation and Development Policy), ridership of the 27.22km-long Kolkata Metro is a whopping 5.4 lakh, while it is only 24,000 for CMRL. With only 9.63km long network, Jaipur transports more people than Chennai Metro. One of the reasons for CMRL's relatively low patronage would be feeder service. For instance, Kochi, which is the latest to join the Metro league, had allocated the same quantum of funds for feeder or link service, as it did for the Metro itself.

CONNECTING KEY POINTS

While the city continues to offer various forms of transport facilities to lakhs of commuters every day, Metro Rail's full potential would be known once the entire 45km stretch becomes operational



METRO'S PROJECTED TRAFFIC DEMAND

Corridors	Daily boarding	Distance travelled (km)	Average trip distance
Corr-1 (Airport to Washermenpet)	4,03,169	32,80,363	8.14 km
Corr-2 (Fort to St Thomas Mount)	3,53,297	28,66,624	8.11 km
Total (in 2016)	7,56,466	61,46,987	8.13 km
Corr-1 (Airport to Washermenpet)	5,42,444	45,75,592	8.44 km
Corr-2 (Fort to St Thomas Mount)	5,21,605	43,23,905	8.29 km
Total (in 2026)	10,64,048	88,99,496	8.36 km

CARRYING CAPACITY

4 CAR TRAIN: 1,038 passengers (@ 6 persons per sqm of standee area)

6 CAR TRAIN: 1,580 passengers (@ 6 persons per sqm of standee area)

A Metro train can replace an estimated 16 buses, 300 cars and 600 bikes

TIME TABLE

Headway (train frequency) 20 mins on all days

Peak hours: 8:30am to 10:30am and 5pm to 8pm

First and last trains (All days except Sundays)

Nehru Park - Airport 5:54am and 9:54pm

Airport - Nehru Park 6:05am and 21:55pm

Airport to Little Mount 5:55am and 10pm

Little Mount to Airport 5:51am and 9:51pm

Shenoy Nagar to St Thomas Mount 6:10am and 9:50pm

St Thomas Mount to Shenoy Nagar 6:02am and 9:58pm



METRO BUSINESS

(May 14-July 31, 2017)

Total earnings up to July 31, 2017

₹35.64 cr

Collection from elevated corridor

₹27.72 cr

Collection from underground corridor

₹7.92 cr

AVERAGE PASSENGER FOOTFALL

Footfall before underground inauguration **12,000 - 14,000**

Footfall after underground inauguration **22,000 - 24,000**

Total number of Metro passengers from June 2015 to July 2017

95.87 lakh

MTC buses

55 lakh

Suburban trains

1.2 million

Transit systems are critical for transporting people quickly and efficiently within a city. Chennai's Metro is a step in the right direction. However, for the Metro to be effective, it needs to be integrated with other modes of public transport, at multiple levels. Fare integration across modes is important, with transfers made easier. Putting the scenario in context, Metro currently carries 24,000 passengers, less than one per cent of the number of passengers that MTC carries daily. MTC is the unsung hero of Chennai transport system. Improving MTC is the need of the hour —Aswathy Dilip, Program manager, ITDP

Concessions to woo commuters

CHENNAI: CMRL has been announcing a wide range of concessions to woo commuters of late. The latest is the slashing of SMART card price by 80 per cent to Rs 10, after the inauguration of the underground route, in which it has done away with trip tokens. Earlier, CMRL had introduced tourist cards (Rs 100 + Rs 50 refundable deposit), which offer unlimited rides for a day with a month-long validity from the date of purchase. Not to mention, CMRL had introduced cards for 60 days, 30 days, one week and single trip (20 pc discount for normal class fare) cards to simplify commute. However, one of the biggest drawbacks of CMRL has been its feeder service. Though small buses are being operated to link CMRL to other modes of transport, it has been found wanting in feeder service, mainly in stations like St Thomas Mount and Koyambedu, which are among a few stations that have poor access from interior areas. CMRL had recently introduced bicycle service at a few stations, emulating Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to help regular commuters reach their offices.