

Metro Rail redefines commute across the city

Photos: Manivasagan N



Commuters at the Central Metro Station



Passengers inside a Metro train



Self-explanatory ticket vending machines are installed in all Metro stations in Chennai

CHENNAI: As the clock moved to the morning peak hour, the traffic on the road at Vadapalani junction began to increase. It used to be the dreaded period for Ashna J Jose, a 33-year-old working at the Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital as a nurse. But not anymore. After the Metro Rail became operational, the congestion on the road below does not matter for her.

Earlier, she used to take a bus to the hospital, which took as long as an hour and half on days when the traffic was really bad and roads were jammed. "Now, reaching there is only a matter of minutes. This has made my life eas-

ier," said the nurse with visible relief. Now, the bustle on the road is something that she gets a glimpse of from the comforts of the rail coach.

Janaki Venkatraman, who works at a college in Nandanam, is another

Chennaiite whose commuter became simpler after the advent of the service. Now, she added, she has even fallen in love with travelling across the city. "I like the ambience and the convenience of reaching the destination within 30 minutes. The quality of life has improved due to the minimal exposure to pollution and the blistering heat," she added.

The number of patrons is expected to rise further after the opening of the stretch between AG-DMS and Washermanpet, as there are several private establishments and government offices along the way.

"Metro rail has changed the way of travelling, improving connectivity to all the important places [in the city]. The air-conditioned stations that are not crowded is the most alluring aspect of travelling in Metro. I stopped hiring taxis to airport, as one can enter the facility directly from the Metro station," pointed out Rahul Vangara, a software professional.

Regular commuters like Abhinav Vikas, a techie working with a company in an IT park in Guindy, said they have stopped driving their vehicles all the way to work. Abhinav, for instance, first travelled on it when he had to give his car for service. He then became a regular who parks his vehicle at the nearest station.

"Now I find the feeder service is more convenient than driving his car to the station," he said, echoing hundreds who have moved on to public transport since the Metro became operational.