

Metro special class, at two times the regular fare, begins to gain traction

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Ever since Chennai Metro's phase I project was completed in February, the number of people travelling in the ordinary class has seen a steady increase, with the average monthly ridership touching 1.15 lakh recently. On the

contrary, the special class continues to be mostly empty, with fares ranging between ₹20-120, which is two times the regular fare.

Latest data shows that 1,546 people used the special class in December. Interestingly, the data shows the number of people using it

has gone up in the last nine months. In April, 978 people travelled in special class, and by December, the users grew to 1,546, registering an increase of 58%. From April to December, 9,617 people travelled in the special class.

According to officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited

(CMRL), a majority of the special class users are one-time travellers. In December, for instance, of the 1,546 users, 1,508 bought tickets (tokens) at the counter. Only 22 purchased smart cards and the remaining used tourist and trip cards.

"Usually, regular travell-

ers don't buy tokens and hence we think these are one-time travellers. And, we also found that many of these passengers were travelling to Chennai airport. There was a dip in May and August, but that apart, in all the other months, we saw people opting for the special

class," an official said. Asked if special class will be changed to a normal coach, officials said that it may not happen. "There is no such plan to convert it to a normal coach as of now," another official said.

While the tokens for both classes look the same, the

smart cards for the special class have a golden colour a person claims to have a ken for the special class, officials can find out. "But often, no one checks. There is a chance that it may be misused. When we go inspection, we check randomly," an official said.