

How BMTC Fares

Report from commuter survey conducted in February 2020

Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike

BMTC is the backbone of Bengaluru's mobility, serving ~40% trips in Bangalore. While it's one of best public transport corporations in the country, there is an urgent need to improve the services to make it more affordable for the common people and increase its mode share to reduce congestion. These have been part of the long-standing demands of Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike (BBPV), a collective of people and organizations advocating for improved Bus Based Public Transport in Bangalore.

Recently, the Karnataka government has taken some initiatives to improve bus services. Some recent announcements about reduction of fares, increase in bus fleet, and introducing bus priority lanes on all high density corridors were welcomed by BBPV and other citizen groups. In the context of the upcoming budget, BBPV conducted a survey to reach out to people in the city (both bus and non-bus commuters) and highlight their experiences and concerns once again, so that the budget can respond to common people's concerns and needs.

The survey and key findings

The survey is focused on drawing out the experiences of the city's working class. BBPV conducted the survey at bus stops, work places, as well as working class communities such as street vendors, domestic workers, Pourakarmikas, and garment workers. 95 respondents participated in the survey. 55.8% of the respondents use bus for regular commute whereas 44.2% use other modes (including walking).

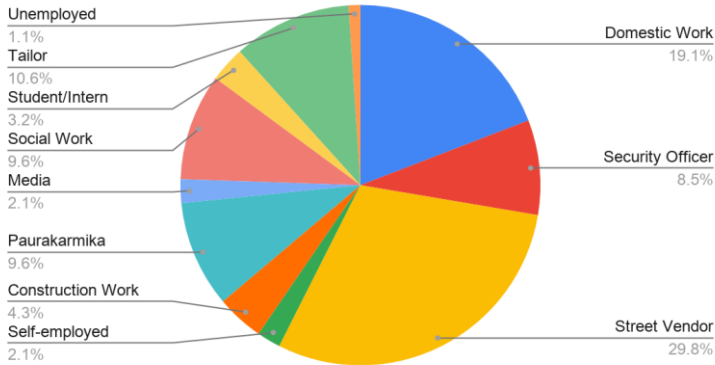
Key insights from the survey -

- 80% of the bus commuters found the bus fares too high, while 41% of non-bus users said they will shift to the bus if the fares are reduced.
- On average, bus commuters spend more than commuters who use other modes. Bus commuters spend 21% of their earnings on commute, compared to 9.5% that users of other modes spend.
- Key issues with bus commute highlighted by all respondents: High fares (60%), Lack of convenient routes (17%), Service frequency (16%), and Traffic (7%)
- 72% of the bus commuter respondents use it because other options are more expensive or unavailable. 17.5% use the bus because it is convenient. Other reasons include affordability and safety (5.8%), and suitability for long distance travel (3.8%).

Gender, Occupation & Income of respondents

The survey focused on the city's working class population. The respondents included street vendors, domestic workers, pourakarmikas, garment workers, security staff, construction workers, and other working class.

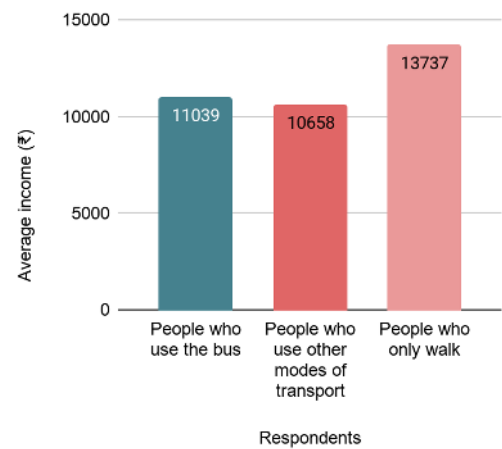
Occupation



Income

The average monthly income of the respondents is ₹11,130. Average monthly income of those who use bus is ₹11,050, and those who use other modes is ₹11,250.

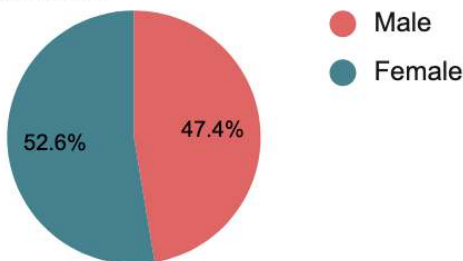
Average income of respondents



Gender

47.4% respondents were female, whereas the remaining were male.

Gender ratio

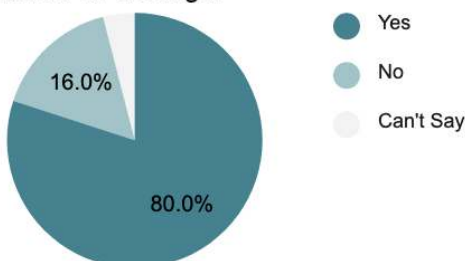


Key Findings

1. Bus fares too high

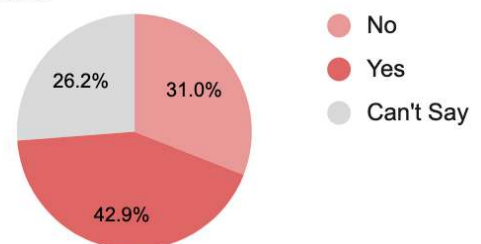
80% of the bus commuters from among the respondents finds the bus fare to be too high.

Is BMTC Fair too high?



Among the non-bus users, 42.9% were said that they will use the bus if the fares are reduced.

Will you use the bus regularly if fares are reduced?



Non-bus users are ready to shift to bus if fares are reduced

“
The bus fares should be reduced. The government keeps increasing the fares and we street vendors barely have any certainty in our earnings. How are we supposed to manage our budgets along with the high expenditures for rent, school fees, etc.

- Street Vendor, from Vijayanagar, who spends 12.00% of her monthly income on BMTC bus alone

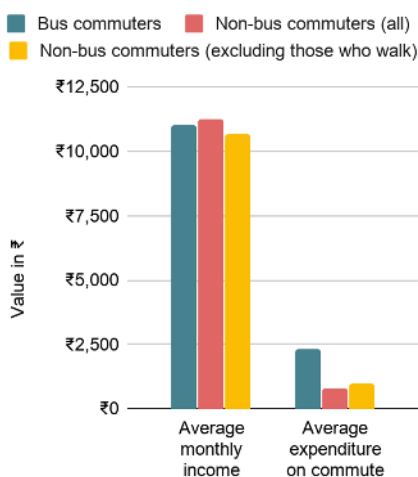
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The BMTC ticket prices are high. Also for two or four stops, conductors collect 14rs. But from first stop to the last stop, they are taking rs. 23/-; further for two stops conductors collect 10rs.; more than three stops, the conductor collects 14rs.

- Field activist, who travels between Koramangala and Yarab Nagar and spends 7.5% of her monthly income on BMTC and 2.5% on other modes of transport.

2. Bus users spend more than users of other modes on commute

The survey found that bus commuters spend 21% of their earnings on commute. Of this, 15% is spent on bus commute, while a significant 6% is spent on first and last mile commute to and from the bus stop using other modes (such as autos/share autos etc.).

Expenditure on commute



Contrast this with 9.5% of earnings spent on commute by users of other modes and it clearly emerges that the bus commuters spend significantly higher than non-bus commuters on mobility.

“
I travel by bus everywhere. I do not get my salary on time and therefore, I am not able to purchase bus monthly pass at the beginning of the month. And the bus pass price has also increased. The daily pass is also very expensive.

- Social Activist, from Somasundra Palya, who spends 20% of her monthly income on BMTC buses alone and an additional of 5% on other modes of transport such as Auto.

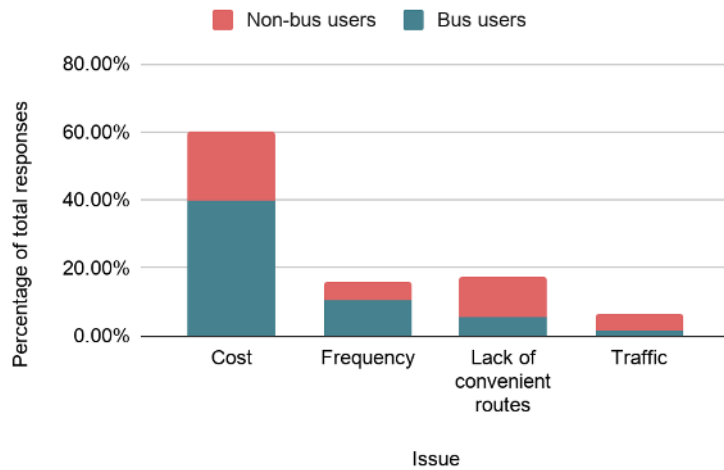
“
BMTC should have a worker's bus pass. It is also good if there are factory buses. If BMTC bus fares are reduced, it will be good and for workers, it will also be good if the bus stops in front of the factory.

- Tailor in the Garment Factory, from Nayandahalli, who relies on private buses for commuting to work. She spends around 4.30% of her income (Rs. 9300/-) for commuting purposes.

3. Common Concerns with Bus Commute

There are 4 key issues with bus commute, as highlighted by both bus- and non-bus commuters.

Common issues with the BMTC service as pointed out by both bus and non-bus users



“
In Tamil Nadu for 18kms they are taking Rs. 7/-.
Also, they still have Rs. 3/- ticket in Tamil Nadu.

- Street Vendor, from Shivajinagar, who commutes using his two-wheeler. He spends 10.00% of his income on commuting using the two-wheeler.

High cost of commute is the largest common concern, with 60% of all respondents raising it. 80% of all bus users found the fares too high.

17.3% of the respondents indicated a **lack of convenient routes**. This suggests the need for reviewing and revising BMTC's existing network. This has also emerged as a need in BBPV's other community interactions and as well as with members' own experiences of using BMTC. However, a larger demand mapping exercise is needed to ascertain the extent of this need.

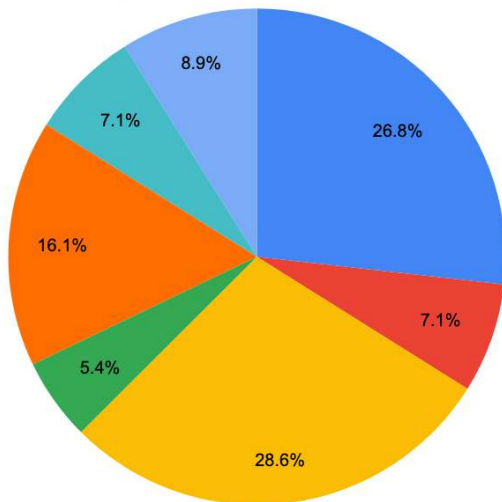
Frequency of service or demand for more buses is again a key issue as it has been in all commuter interactions BBPV has had. However, apart from more buses, effective scheduling based on demand is also required to ensure adequate frequency of services in all areas. This may also have a link to route rationalization.

Traffic has been mentioned as a problem by many respondents. The bus priority lane pilot on outer ring road, when it was effectively operating, showed that it can help buses and bus commuters escape the traffic and reduce their travel time. If extended to all high density corridors, they can be a solution to this problem.

Apart from these concerns, 28.6% of non-bus commuters indicated distance from bus stop as a reason for not using bus. Which means that apart from the reasons mentioned above, first and last mile connectivity could be a problem. Together with the fact that 30% of the commute cost for bus commuters goes into traveling to and from the bus stop, first and last mile connectivity emerges as a key problem.

Why do you not use BMTC buses?

- Cost
- Frequency
- Bus stop distance
- Bus too crowded
- Lack of convenient routes
- Traffic
- Private vehicle



“ If I walk to the bus stop and take a private bus, they stop closer to the factory. Secondly it costs Rs. 10/- per day in private buses. On the other hand, the BMTC ticket costs me Rs. 20/- per day, and also the BMTC bus does not stop in front of the factory and I have to walk further. Therefore I take private buses.

- Tailor for Garment Factory, from Vinayak Layout, who commutes in private buses to work. She spends around 3.33% of her monthly income (Rs. 9000/-) for commuting using the private buses.

4. Why do bus commuters use the bus?

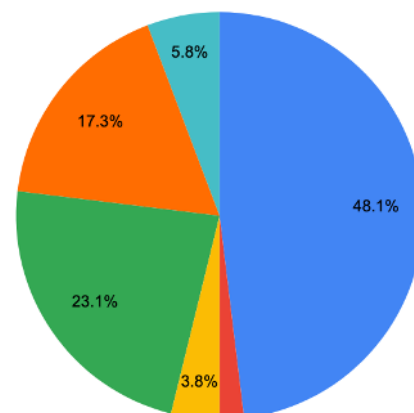
The main reason why bus commuters currently use the bus is that they have no other option, or other options are more expensive. 71.2% of bus commuters gave these two as their reasons.

17.3% use the bus because it is convenient, while 5.8% use it because it is affordable and safe.

A key goal for BMTC should be to increase the percentage of commuters who use it because it is convenient, affordable and safe.

Why do you use BMTC buses?

- Other modes are more expensive
- Inconvenient to walk
- Good for long distance travel
- No other option
- Convenient
- Affordable and safe



“ I travel from Bhovipalya to Marathahalli. If I were to go by auto, it will be expensive. By travelling by bus reduces my expenditure.

- Domestic Work, from Bhovipalya, who spends 25.71% of her monthly income on BMTC buses alone and an additional of 12.86% on other modes of transport such as Shared Auto and Auto.