

Stuck in Bengaluru Traffic? Don't Blame BMTC Buses

In Bangalore, there are currently more than one crore private vehicles, compared to 6800 buses.

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Bengaluru is synonymous with traffic. If you happened to be stuck in your car or bike in places like Silk Board, K.R. Puram, Marathalli, or Outer Ring Road, you are surely to blame BMTC and KSRTC buses for occupying the entire road and blocking your way.



Source: Bangalore Insider

"Public transport occupies a much lesser space compared to any personal mobility vehicle, car, two-wheeler. Plus public transport emits a much lesser tailpipe emission per passenger they carry," said [Dr Ashish Verma](#), Convenor, IISc Sustainable Transportation Lab, in a conversation with **AIM**.



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Well, this is true when calculated with a full bus, usually public transportation, especially eco-oriented buses that have lesser emissions than two-wheelers or cars. In the same respect, a bus which occupies the space of 2 cars can carry up to 10 cars worth of people. It is noted that these are the calculations done with a full bus, which is not always the case.

There have been so many instances where buses with one or two passengers making the rounds in the city, occupy more space, leading to more traffic.



Source: Deccan Herald

So, how is BMTC addressing this concern, alongside optimising its buses and routes?

BMTC recently introduced **Namma BMTC**, a passenger information app for phones, under the Government of India's Nirbhaya scheme. Developed by MCT Cards & Technology and Amnex Infotechnologies, the app can be used in both Kannada and English and offers comprehensive details about bus schedules, routes, stops, and other relevant details for public transportation.

Buses: The Unsung Lifeline Transportation System

"We have a footfall of around 30 lakh passengers on a daily basis in buses which is almost six times than the metros, and we can proudly say that it is the lifeline of Bangalore where people, mostly low-income household bank on buses for the daily commute," said [A.V. Surya Sen](#), Director, IT, BMTC.

In Bangalore, there are currently more than one crore private vehicles on the road, but they are hardly able to transport another 30 lakh passengers. In comparison, there are only 6800 buses operating in Bangalore, making the bus population nowhere near the vehicle population in terms of providing transportation services. So according to Sen, blaming the volume of traffic solely on the number of buses is unfair.

Nonetheless, even with the availability of various modes of transportation, buses retain a crucial function. They are not only vital for connectivity and convenience but also serve as a means of providing essential services to the public. Buses can complement the higher-level public transport system while also offering distinct advantages.

"Additionally, buses are a cost-effective and affordable option, especially for individuals from low-income households. Hence, buses contribute to equitable transportation accessibility," added [Verma](#).

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AI is Solving Traffic

The Namma BMTC app is an ode to the successful implementation of AI and ML algorithms. "The use of ML and AI is instrumental in providing effective solutions. The availability of extensive historical and legacy data allows us to make accurate predictions about bus arrival times and create algorithms for determining bus schedules and locations," added Sen.

Having a comprehensive mobile application that offers a range of features, including real-time tracking, trip planning, identifying nearby bus stops, and suggesting optimal travel routes, is an important aspect of an information system. However, it is essential to understand that the app itself does not provide a complete solution. It is just one part of a larger set of actions and initiatives that need to be taken.

According to Verma, the app in the future will also function as an Automated Fare Collection (AFC) system, enabling mobile ticketing, mobile passes, and digital wallets, revamping the process of purchasing tickets and travelling on buses by introducing digital payment methods.

Compared to other metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Chennai, and Delhi, BMTC is extremely expensive.

However, the government is taking steps to address the issue of affordability, and it is expected that improvements will be made in this regard.

"It is important to note that service quality and affordability are two separate aspects. Urban public transportation should be viewed as a service rather than a profit-oriented business, and efforts should be made to enhance service conditions while making it more affordable," commented Verma.

Read more: [Don't Call Us Back to the Office](#)

Moving Towards a Greener City

According to the NASSCOM report of 2021, Bangalore is the top destination for IT professionals in India with over 1 million people moving to the city each year in search of work. Now, with employees returning to the office as [remote work](#) is ending, buses are now in higher demand along with places to rent.

Public transportation promotes sustainability by reducing emissions, improving air quality, alleviating traffic congestion, and fostering social equity. It efficiently carries more passengers, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, reduces pollutants, saves time and money, and provides access to opportunities for those without cars. Furthermore, in terms of carrying a single passenger, public transport emits significantly lower levels of tailpipe emissions per passenger.

"Public transportation is a viable solution to combat global warming and carbon emissions. Prioritising public transportation and reducing reliance on private vehicles leads to a cleaner environment and improved quality of life," concluded Verma.

The headline of the story has been updated to show that BMTC is not the reason behind Bengaluru's traffic.

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