



A Study of the Bandra Skywalk In Mumbai

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ABSTRACT

The station areas in Mumbai are marked with chaos which the existing bridges and entry/exit points cannot handle. The objective of the study, firstly, is to find if there was a need of the skywalk at Bandra and thereafter to identify whether the potential commuters are using the skywalk or not. If not, then identify the reasons and suggest a solution for the same.

KEYWORDS : Skywalk, hawkers, congestion.

INTRODUCTION

The ever growing population of Mumbai is putting lots of pressure on the existing infrastructure especially on the transportation segment. Mumbai suburbs such as Dadar, Bandra, Andheri and Borivali are marked with congestion problem mainly near the station area. The station area is marked with chaos which the existing bridges and entry/exit points cannot handle.

The problem aggravates with the road side hawking and vehicular parking. The sky walk is an elevated walk way dedicated to the pedestrians connecting the railway station, high concentration commercial area and destination points where the concentration of pedestrians prevail. The purpose of the sky walks is for efficient dispersal of commuters from station/ congested area to strategic locations viz. bus stops, taxi stands, shopping areas, off roads etc. and vice versa. This would hopefully help to decongest the crowded streets.

The objective of the study, firstly, is to find if there was a need of the skywalk at Bandra and thereafter to identify whether the potential commuters are using the skywalk or not. If not, then identify the reasons and suggest a solution for the same.

This research will give policy makers a lead on whether to go ahead with such projects or modify few aspects that may benefit the commuters.

THE BANDRA SKYWALK: AN OVERVIEW

Bandra is one of the major suburban stations in Mumbai. More than thousand suburban trains operation take place every day with about 5 lacks commuters traveling through this station. Bandra Station Area Traffic Improvement Scheme (SATIS) is a project formulated for Bandra suburb of Mumbai. The recently commissioned Bandra Skywalk is one such project, which is part of Bandra SATIS.

The project is planned in two phases. Phase-I is recently commissioned, which comprised of constructing a skywalk from Bandra Station (East) to Kalanagar. Phase-II envisages the construction of a skywalk on the western side from Bandra Bada Masjid to Bandra Talav, Bandra Station to Mohd Rafi chowk.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

- To find if there was a need of the skywalk at Bandra.
- To identify whether the potential commuters are using the skywalk or not.
- To identify the reasons for using/not using the skywalk
- To give recommendations to policy makers

Research Design

The reason for carrying out this research is to identify the usage of the skywalk and hence infer whether it was worth the investment or not. Studying and analyzing the reasons for using/not using the skywalk for better efficiency.

Data Collection

Secondary Data: Secondary data was collected from the MMRDA Website, Newspaper Clippings and the Internet Primary Data: Primary data was collected through Questionnaire and the personal observations of the researcher.

Sample Universe

Basis of Sampling:

The sample is homogeneous as the target units are the potential users of the skywalk, i.e.

- Potential Commuters who travel between Bandra Station (E) and their workplace (probably Bandra Kurla Complex) (24 nos.)
- People residing at/near the skywalk and hence become potential customers for using it. (8 nos.)

Sampling Technique:

Stratified Random Probability sampling had to be used, as the sample units are potential users of the skywalk. The stratum consists of people residing or working near the Skywalk. The sample has to be chosen in the without replacement format.

Judgmental Non Probability sampling has been used to select the individual units for better productivity of the questionnaire. A well educated person may be able to reason out the questions in the better way.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The distribution of the sample population is as follows:

Table 1- Distribution of sample population

Age Group	Number	%
up to 18 years	0	0
18 to 25 years	18	54.55
25 to 40 years	9	27.27
40 to 55 years	6	18.18
55 + years	0	0

Table 2- Travel pattern from Bandra Station to destination:

Travel method	Number	%
Walk	13	39.39
Bus	8	24.24
Auto	6	18.18
Other modes	6	18.18

We can see that the around 40% of the commuters prefer to walk from Bandra Station to their respective destination. They are the most likely commuters to use the Skywalk.

The bus queue is usually very long; they probably could go for another mode of transport which could be the Skywalk. One has to motivate them to use it.

Auto rickshaws, though they have the “sharing auto” system, they take the longer route and comparatively charge a higher price.

But, there is lot of congestion because of the autos that block the exit/entrance of the Bandra station.

Other modes of transport include private cars and offices pick up cars and buses.

Table 3- Do Commuters who shop/stop on the way

Shop/Stop	Number	%
Yes	14	42.42
No	19	57.58

There is no clear distinction between people who prefer shop on their way and those who don't. Their comments on the hawker in the skywalk are also at the extremes.

Table 4- Commuters' perception on the Skywalk:

Use	Count	%
Useful	28	84.85
Useless	5	15.15

Though 85% of the commuters feel that there was a need of the skywalk, i.e. they found the skywalk is a useful concept to them, only 60% of them use it and among them only 18% use it daily.

Table 5- Commuters' reasons for usage/ non usage:

Usage	Count	%
Convenience	14	28
Fast and safe	17	34
Other modes	6	12
Time Consuming	6	12
Don't Use	2	4
Leisure or Evening/Morning Walk	5	10

There are commuters who have positive views on the skywalk and finds that it is a useful concept by the MMRDA but still they have issues like it being time consuming and their preference over other modes of transport.

Thus the reasons for non-usage can be listed as under:

- No mode of transport from Kalanagar onwards
- Security problems
- Hawkers
- Thieves
- Poor Quality of construction
- Limited Exit Points
- Dangerous for Kids because of lack of side railings
- Beggars and Antisocial Elements
- Time Consuming

But the basic reasons for non usage that can be inferred through observation are

- Laziness
- Resistance to change: One is habituated to their regular time table and their mode of transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- More benches for people who have their morning/ evenings walks and hangouts
- Dustbins for cleanliness
- Telephone Booths
- Trolleys for people to carry goods. Will help people carry

goods from the station till their destination, or the auto / bus stand

- Promote it as a convenient and safe alternative mode of transport
- Space on the skywalk could be used to spread social awareness

CONCLUSION

There is a definite need for an alternative mode of transport to reduce the congestion. The skywalk is an excellent alternative for that. It has reduced the congestion and traffic at and near Bandra station to some extent.

Even though most of the potential commuters are not using it, it has become a good source of revenue by selling the maintenance contract. The maintenance contract carries all the necessary activities that need to be done on a regular basis.

The other skywalks that are coming up have space for hawkers, which will reduce the congestion near the station. Anyways, the hawkers near the station are illegal. This will give them an opportunity to set up their stall legally. It will also motivate commuters who shop from the hawkers to use the skywalk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are recommendations that came up in the process of filling the questionnaire, many of which are already implemented or taken care of, few are not feasible and others were fantasy.

Feasible Recommendation:

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- Dustbins for cleanliness
- Telephone Booths
- Trolleys for people to carry goods. Will help people carry goods from the station till their destination, or the auto / bus stand
- Promote as a convenient and safe alternative mode of transport
- Space on the skywalk could be used to spread social awareness

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