Skywalk as Urban Loops

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Abstract:

In the complex tapestry of modern cities, skywalks emerge as elevated pathways weaving functionality with urban aesthetics. Mumbai, a city renowned for its unrelenting pace and extreme population density, introduced skywalks as an innovative response to its unique challenges. These walkways were envisioned as a solution to the city's traffic snarls, chaotic streets, and overburdened pedestrian infrastructure. By creating elevated routes that connect key transit points, such as train stations and bus terminals, Mumbai's skywalks aimed to reduce street-level congestion, ensure pedestrian safety, and provide a seamless commuting experience.

However, the reality of Mumbai's skywalk initiative has oscillated between initial optimism and subsequent criticism. While these pathways were praised for their potential to enhance mobility and urban functionality, they have faced scrutiny over their design, location, and underutilization. Concerns about accessibility, insufficient integration with other transport networks, and their impact on the visual and physical landscape of the city have sparked debates among architects, urban planners, and citizens alike.

This research paper investigates the factors contributing to the underutilization of skywalks in Mumbai, drawing upon a combination of literature review, field observations, and surveys. The study explores various reasons for the public's reluctance to use skywalks, including design flaws, poor maintenance, lack of connectivity, and inadequate security.

Additionally, the paper delves into the potential of skywalks to contribute to sustainable urban development and innovative urban planning. By incorporating sustainable design principles, such as energy-efficient lighting and rainwater harvesting, skywalks can reduce their environmental impact. Moreover, well-designed skywalks can create vibrant public spaces, promote social interaction, and contribute to a more liveable city and helps in increasing cities happy index . However, to realize this potential, this research paper examines the Grant Road Skywalk Ellipse in Mumbai, as a case study in urban infrastructure and place-making to address the challenges that hinder the effective utilization of skywalks. By analysing these issues, the paper aims to identify potential solutions and recommendations to improve the effectiveness of skywalk infrastructure in Mumbai and other urban centres.

Keywords:

Skywalk, Grant Road, Urban Planning.