

ISSN: 2454-132X Impact Factor: 6.078

(Volume 10, Issue 3 - V10I3-1162)
Available online at: <a href="https://www.ijariit.com">https://www.ijariit.com</a>

To What Extent would the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link have an Impact on The Economic Growth of Maharashtra and Affect the Real Estate Market in Navi Mumbai?

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#### **Abstract**

The research question at hand explores the anticipated impact of the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) on the economic growth of Maharashtra and its influence on the real estate market in Navi Mumbai. As a transformative infrastructure project, the MTHL holds the potential to reshape transportation dynamics and socioeconomic landscapes in the region. This study aims to assess the extent to which the MTHL will contribute to the economic growth of Maharashtra by enhancing connectivity, facilitating trade, and attracting investments. Additionally, the research seeks to investigate the implications of the MTHL on the real estate market in Navi Mumbai, including changes in property values, development patterns, and market dynamics. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, empirical data, and stakeholder perspectives, the study endeavors to provide valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, investors, and other stakeholders involved in regional development initiatives. By elucidating the multifaceted impacts of the MTHL, the findings of this research aim to inform evidence-based decision-making processes aimed at fostering sustainable economic development and urban growth in Maharashtra and Navi Mumbai.

Keywords: Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, Economic Growth, Real Estate market expansion in Navi Mumbai



## **Introduction:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) also known as the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Trans Harbour Link or Atal Setu an engineering marvel, is a massive infrastructural project that is 21.8 km (13.5 mi) long elevated highway bridge that connects Mumbai with Navi Mumbai, its satellite city, that has the potential to completely alter Navi Mumbai's real estate market and change Maharashtra's economic environment. The bridge is the longest sea bridge in India and the world's 12th-longest sea bridge¹. The project costs a total of ₹17,843 crore (US\$2.2 billion) and has the capacity to handle 70,000 vehicles per day². Construction on the bridge began in April 2018 and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 12, 202413³.

It represents a revolutionary force propelling the region's extraordinary urban expansion and progress. The goal of this study is to investigate its complex effects, with a particular emphasis on Maharashtra's economic expansion and Navi Mumbai's real estate market dynamics. The MTHL is predicted to improve the connection between the two cities, which would facilitate the flow of people and commodities more efficiently, increasing productivity and opening up new investment opportunities. It is also expected to increase demand for real estate in Navi Mumbai and establish the area as a top location for the construction of homes, businesses, and industries.

### **Research Purpose:**

The real estate market in Navi Mumbai and Maharashtra is expected to be significantly impacted by the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL). This study intends to explore two main aspects: its impact on Maharashtra's economic development and its consequences for the real estate market dynamics in Navi Mumbai. Beyond just serving as a route for transportation, the MTHL will facilitate the flow of people, products, and services between Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. It has the potential to open up new doors for commerce, investment, and job creation, boosting Maharashtra's economy.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that the MTHL will transform Navi Mumbai's real estate market and establish it as a top location for business, residential, and industrial development. The bridge is expected to drive demand for real estate, encourage infrastructure investment, and change urban living standards in the area as connection and accessibility grow. Notwithstanding the apparent advancements, obstacles including infrastructure preparedness, regulatory structures, and ecological sustainability remain significant, underscoring the necessity of conducting thorough examinations and devising well-thought-out plans in order to fully use the MTHL.

In light of this, this study critically investigates how the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link may affect Maharashtra's economic expansion and the Navi Mumbai real estate market. In order to properly navigate the intricacies of regional development and urban planning, the research intends to educate policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public by clarifying the opportunities, difficulties, and possible results connected with this revolutionary initiative.

## **Background Information:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is a proposed infrastructure project aimed at alleviating the transportation pressures within Mumbai and fostering connectivity with its satellite city, Navi Mumbai. Discussions surrounding the MTHL began in the late 20th century, evolving over decades of feasibility studies and proposals. However, concrete plans materialized in the early 2000s under various governmental initiatives, reflecting the pressing need for enhanced transportation infrastructure in the region<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai Trans Harbour Link

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-across-the-sea-in-20-minutes-9105812/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> https://indianconstructioninfo.com/mumbai-trans-harbour-link/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai Trans Harbour Link

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Yuvraj Gode, International Journal of Advance Research, Ideas and Innovations in Technology (ISSN: 2454-132X)

The MTHL is envisioned as one of India's longest sea bridges, spanning approximately 22 kilometers and incorporating a blend of viaducts and cable-stayed sections to navigate the Mumbai Bay<sup>5</sup>. The project promises to enhance accessibility to residential, commercial, and industrial areas in Navi Mumbai, facilitating investment, job creation, and improved living standards<sup>6</sup>. Navi Mumbai, initially conceived as a satellite city to alleviate the strain on Mumbai's infrastructure, has evolved into a vibrant economic hub, attracting industries, businesses, and residents.

Despite the project's potential benefits, it has encountered challenges ranging from financing and land acquisition to environmental considerations and regulatory approvals. Since workers had to dig up to 47 meters into the sea bed to provide a strong base as a foundation, the project also incurred high costs. However, progress has been steady, with various phases and sections of the bridge being completed incrementally.

## Mumbai Trans Harbour Link: Key Facts:7

1. Total estimated cost: Rs. 17,843 Crore

Total project length: 21.8 Km
 Bridge length: 18.2 Km

4. Material: Concrete and steel

5. Width: 27 M6. Lanes: Sixes

7. Status: Under construction (Partially in operation)

8. Chief lender: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

9. Owned by: Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)

10. Project model: EPC (Engineering, Procurement, Construction)

11. Maximum speed limit: 100 Kmph

#### **Literature Review:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is a 21.8 km road bridge that will connect Mumbai with Navi Mumbai, its satellite city. The bridge will begin in Sewri, South Mumbai, and cross Thane Creek north of Elephant Island, and will terminate at Chirle village, near Nhava Sheva. The total length of the MTHL Bridge is 21.8 km, of which 16.50 km is on sea and 5.5 km is on land. The bridge will contain a 6-lane (3+3 lane) highway+1 emergency lane on both sides. The construction of the bridge involves many unique products and state-of-the-art construction methods<sup>8</sup>. It also incorporates modern Japanese technology including Electronic Toll Technology (ETC) which gathers tolls from incoming vehicles using the contemporary system which was primarily funded by the JICA. The bridge deck comprises precast concrete segments, manufactured off-site and assembled with precision<sup>9</sup>. The structure of the bridge uses concrete segment slabs up to 60 m in span length. Longer spans are being constructed for the first time in India using steel, Orthotropic Steel Deck (OSD) type technology<sup>10</sup>. The OSD spans range from 90m to 180m 1. The OSD spans are being used on the bridge for the first time in India. The high-performance concrete blend used in bridge construction withstands the corrosive onslaught of seawater and the relentless Mumbai sun. Its low heat generation minimizes cracking and ensures long-lasting durability. The project is being implemented using many unique products and state-of-the-art construction methods. Regarding the research on the Mumbai-Navi Mumbai MTHL, Gupta et al. (2019) highlight the potential of the bridge to shorten travel times and ease traffic congestion on current routes<sup>11</sup>. Khan and Patel (2020) investigate the possibility that the MTHL may boost employment and economic expansion while examining how it affects the integration of Navi Mumbai

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://mmrda.maharashtra.gov.in/projects/transport/mumbai-trans-harbour-link/overview

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/India/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-indias-longest-sea-bridge/ar-AA1lQrtH

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://medium.com/@himaninavimumbaihouses/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-updates-and-its-effect-on-real-estate-36c892041dc3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/india/analysing-the-impact-of-mumbai-trans-harbour-link-on-mumbai-and-navi-mumbai/ar-BB1h8upf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-atal-setu-mthl-navi-mumbai-real-estate-property-prices-impact-explained/articleshow/106750237.cms?from=mdr

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> https://dwello.in/news/mumbai-trans-harbour-links-impact-on-real-estate-dynamics

 $<sup>^{11}\,\</sup>underline{\text{https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/india/analysing-the-impact-of-mumbai-trans-harbour-link-on-mumbai-and-navi-mumbai/ar-BB1h8upf}$ 

into Maharashtra's economy and regional economic growth<sup>12</sup>. Sharma and Deshmukh (2018) evaluate the potential effects of the MTHL on Navi Mumbai's real estate market, including changes in real estate prices and urban development patterns<sup>13</sup>.

### **Overall Economic Impact:**

# Major advantages<sup>14</sup>:

- Shorter Travel Distance: The Mumbai to Navi Mumbai trip will take only twenty minutes instead of two hours thanks to the MTHL. This significant reduction in journey time will ease commuting burdens, ease traffic, and boost the effectiveness of transportation as a whole leading to an increase in labor productivity due to lesser travel times.
- Influence on the Real Estate Sector: The MTHL's enhanced connection is anticipated to benefit Navi Mumbai's
  real estate sector. An increase in real estate development and property prices will result from the increased
  accessibility, which will draw investments and promote regional growth.
- Interconnectivity Between Ports: The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) would benefit from improved connections as a result of the MTHL. The easier movement of commodities and products between the ports, increased trade efficiency, and increased regional economic activity are all benefits of this interconnectedness.
- o The Mumbai-Pune Expressway will be easily accessible from Pune thanks to the MTHL, enabling faster and more effective commuting between the two cities. Both commuters and companies will gain from this increased connection, which will also promote company expansion and economic progress in both cities.

#### **Business and economic growth**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, being such a vital infrastructure component in a congested city, is expected to generate economic benefits by boosting business activity, attracting more industries, and creating employment opportunities. Additionally, it offers clear logistical advantages to various businesses by reducing transport and travel times. Vikram Ahuja, co-founder of ANSR and CEO of Talent500, highlighted to TOI that Mumbai, which currently represents 15%-16% of India's digital tech talent pool, is poised to experience further growth with the advent of the Trans Harbour Link. The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is expected to have a significant impact on the real estate market in Navi Mumbai. According to experts, the bridge's improved connectivity and infrastructure development are likely to lead to an increase in real estate activity, demand, and prices 15. The bridge is expected to bolster the Navi Mumbai property markets as the connectivity and further infrastructure development is likely to result in a surge in real estate activity, demand, and prices. The bridge is estimated to cater to around 70,000 vehicles daily, connecting Sewri in central Mumbai to Chirle at Navi Mumbai<sup>16</sup>. The enhanced connectivity is likely to push demand for affordable housing options as more people may explore Navi Mumbai as a viable 17 residential destination as against other locations in Mumbai that are at least three times more expensive. The availability of more land along the MTHL corridor is also expected to keep prices in check. According to Bhavesh Shah, Joint MD, Today Global Developers, Navi Mumbai's demand for commercial, retail, office as well as residential for both affordable as well as luxury housing is expected to grow substantially with both users and investors looking at the long-term horizon. As these infrastructure projects including MTHL, Navi Mumbai Metro, and Navi Mumbai International Airport unfold, the city is likely to experience increased demand for both residential and commercial properties. Real estate investors and homebuyers are closely monitoring these developments, recognizing the potential for long-term growth in the real estate market 18. Therefore, the construction of the MTHL is expected to lead to a large increase in the national output by boosting Maharashtra's GDP by approximately 5% and national GDP by 1%.

<sup>12</sup> https://www.homebazaar.com/knowledge/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-mthl-complete-project-overview/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> https://mmrda.maharashtra.gov.in/projects/transport/mumbai-trans-harbour-link/overview

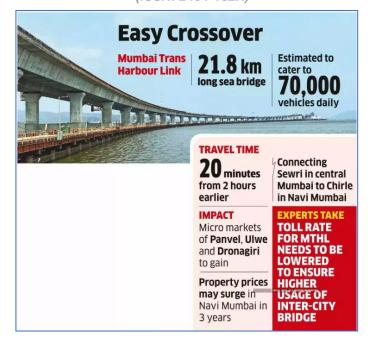
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> https://medium.com/@himaninavimumbaihouses/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-updates-and-its-effect-on-real-estate-36c892041dc3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> https://www.claytoncountyregister.com/news2/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-will-it-push-up-real-estate-prices-in-navi-mumbai/990664/

 $<sup>\</sup>frac{16}{\text{https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property-/-cstruction/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-to-spark-surge-in-navi-mumbai-real-estate-activity/articleshow/106674976.cms}$ 

 $<sup>^{17}</sup>$  <u>https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/property-/-cstruction/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-to-spark-surge-in-navi-mumbai-real-estate-activity/articleshow/106674976.cms</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> https://www.freepressjournal.in/business/analysing-the-impact-of-mumbai-trans-harbour-link-on-mumbai-and-navi-mumbai



#### **Impact on Real Estate:**

The Mumbai-Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is poised to have a profound impact on the real estate market in Mumbai and its neighboring areas. By enhancing connectivity between Navi Mumbai, Panvel, Karjat, Kalyan, and other mainland communities, the bridge promises significant improvements in accessibility to Mumbai. Anticipated economic activity and rising real estate values in these areas are expected outcomes of the MTHL's completion. Recognizing the potential surge in housing demand, prominent real estate developers have already commenced construction of residential buildings near the MTHL project. Furthermore, the enhanced connectivity will streamline commutes for residents, facilitating easier access to work, schools, and other amenities, while businesses stand to benefit from more efficient transportation of goods and services. Overall, the MTHL's impact extends beyond infrastructure, shaping economic growth and real estate dynamics in the region <sup>19</sup>.

According to a report by Economic Times, the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), also known as 'Atal Setu', is expected to have a positive impact on the property market in Navi Mumbai, as **improved connectivity and infrastructure** development are likely to lead to an increase in real estate activity, demand, and prices<sup>20</sup>. The improved connectivity and infrastructure development are likely to lead to an increase in real estate activity, demand, and prices in Navi Mumbai. Areas such as Panvel, Ulwe, and Dronagiri, which will have a direct linkage to the bridge, are expected to experience a greater impact<sup>21</sup>. Anuj Puri, chairman, of Anarock Group, said that MTHL could trigger a momentum in real estate, which could be extended to faraway places like Alibaug. Niranjan Hiranandani, CMD, of Hiranandani Group, said that Atal Setu would do to Mumbai what Noida and Gurugram did to Delhi. He believes that over the next decade, Navi Mumbai will not only complement the economic growth of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) but also play a leading role, thanks to major infrastructure projects such as the international airport<sup>22</sup>. Experts predict a significant growth in demand for commercial, retail, office, and residential properties in Navi Mumbai, catering to both affordable and luxury housing segments. Factors such as lifestyle, easy commuting, improved connectivity, and relatively lower property prices in Navi Mumbai compared to other areas of Mumbai are expected to influence homebuyers' decisions. Affordable housing options in Navi Mumbai are still available within the range of Rs 30-40 lakh.

#### **Potential for Luxury projects:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is not just a convenience enhancer for commuters, but also a potential game-changer for luxury real estate. The MTHL's one-way toll of ₹250 positions it as a premium mode of travel, catering exclusively to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> https://medium.com/@himaninavimumbaihouses/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-updates-and-its-effect-on-real-estate-36c892041dc3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> https://m.timesofindia.com/business/india-business/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-atal-setu-mthl-navi-mumbai-real-estate-property-prices-impact-explained/articleshow/106750237.cms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> https://m.timesofindia.com/business/india-business/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-atal-setu-mthl-navi-mumbai-real-estate-property-prices-impact-explained/articleshow/106750237.cms

https://www.news18.com/india/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-how-atal-setu-will-change-the-game-for-real-estate-explained-8738148.html

affluent segment. This exclusive accessibility ensures that only individuals belonging to the upper echelons of society would find this transportation option viable<sup>23</sup>.

The MTHL's impact on Alibaug real estate could be significant. Alibaug, known for its scenic beauty and tranquil ambiance, stands to gain significantly from the MTHL. The sea link's ability to reduce travel time between South and Central Mumbai to Alibaug to approximately an hour makes it an enticing proposition for luxury living<sup>24</sup>.

The streamlined connectivity facilitated by the MTHL, coupled with the exclusivity of its toll structure, could spur heightened interest in luxury real estate projects in Alibaug. The allure of Alibaug as a tranquil retreat, combined with the newfound accessibility offered by the MTHL, positions it as a prime destination for those seeking opulence and serenity in equal measure<sup>25</sup>.

#### **Commercial Real Estate Potential:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is poised to transform not only residential but also commercial real estate dynamics in Mumbai and its surrounding areas. Its impact is expected to invigorate both the old Central Business District (CBD) of South Mumbai and data center hotspots within Navi Mumbai, ushering in a new era of connectivity and opportunity.

#### 1. Revitalizing the Old CBD of South Mumbai:

The MTHL is anticipated to breathe fresh life into South Mumbai's historic CBD area, acting as a catalyst for renewed commercial activity. This revitalization underscores the transformative potential of infrastructure projects like the MTHL, paving the way for strategic retrofitting and redevelopment to meet modern business needs.

### 2. Connecting Data Center Hotspots:

Beyond traditional business districts, the MTHL will connect data center hotspots within Navi Mumbai to the broader Mumbai Metropolitan Region. This enhanced connectivity positions Navi Mumbai as a vital component of the data center ecosystem, fostering innovation and the efficient exchange of information.

#### 3. Opportunities for Retrofitting and Development:

The MTHL's seamless connectivity not only revitalizes existing business districts but also presents opportunities for retrofitting and development. Underutilized spaces can be transformed into modern, tech-enabled commercial hubs, aligning with the evolving needs of businesses in the digital age.

In essence, the MTHL represents a significant opportunity for the commercial real estate sector, offering the potential for growth, innovation, and adaptability in Mumbai's ever-changing urban landscape.

## **Research Evaluation (Diverse Expert Opinions):**

Diverse viewpoints among real estate experts regarding the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) underscore the complexities of Mumbai's evolving property market. While some foresee an uptick in property prices, others urge caution, citing ample land availability as a potential mitigating factor. These varying perspectives enrich discussions on the potential ramifications of the MTHL on Mumbai's real estate landscape.

# 1. Predictions of Price Escalation:

Certain experts anticipate that the MTHL will drive property prices higher. They point to the improved connectivity and strategic positioning of areas along the MTHL route, such as Panvel, Ulwe, and Dronagiri, as drivers of increased demand. This foresight has led developers and industry insiders to project a positive trajectory for property values, making these locales more appealing to investors and homebuyers.

# 2. Counterbalancing Factors:

Conversely, some experts advocate for a measured approach, highlighting the abundance of available land as a potential counterbalance to price surges. A seasoned industry professional offers a nuanced perspective, suggesting a gradual price increase of 7 to 10 percent across MTHL-influenced regions. This viewpoint underscores the importance of sustainable growth and suggests that significant price surges may have already occurred.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> https://www.nobroker.in/blog/mumbai-trans-harbour-link

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> https://housing.com/news/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-a-gamechanger-for-real-estate

 $<sup>\</sup>frac{^{25}}{www.msn.com/en-in/news/India/mumbai-trans-harbour-link-will-it-push-up-real-estate-prices-in-navi-mumbai/ar-\underline{AA1mW5mx}$ 

The spectrum of opinions reflects the multifaceted nature of Mumbai's real estate environment. While the MTHL undoubtedly represents a transformative endeavor, its impact is interpreted diversely by industry experts. Whether it serves as a catalyst for price escalation or a stabilizing force due to increased land availability, the discourse surrounding the MTHL's implications enriches the ongoing narrative of Mumbai's dynamic real estate sector.

#### **Environmental controversy:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is a 21.8 km-long bridge that will connect Sewri in Mumbai to Chirle, and Nhava-Sheva in Uran. The project has been mired in controversy due to allegations of large-scale environmental damage to the coastal ecology, flora, and fauna around the construction site<sup>26</sup>.

However, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has dismissed these allegations and informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that ₹135.6 crore has been spent towards environmental impact reduction. The MMRDA has also allocated ₹5.05 crore for compensatory mangrove afforestation across 200 hectares and ₹5.8 crore to the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay for undertaking a water quality study and developing an effluent treatment plan for the creek<sup>27</sup>.

The NGT principal bench directed the MMRDA to submit the MTHL project status and respond to allegations of environmental damage to the coastal ecology, flora, and fauna around the construction site. The bench was hearing an application by Mumbai resident Dileep Nevatia challenging the coastal zone regulation (CRZ) clearance granted to the project.

# **Conclusion:**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Sea Link, the longest sea bridge in India, is poised to bring significant benefits to Mumbai and its neighboring areas. It promises to shorten travel times, alleviate traffic congestion, and unlock new commercial opportunities. Improved connectivity will enhance residents' daily lives and facilitate the smoother flow of goods and services. The project represents a major milestone in infrastructure development and holds the promise of a brighter future for the city.

The Sea Link's impact on Mumbai's development and well-being is expected to be enduring, owing to its impressive engineering and architectural achievements. As a symbol of progress and innovation, it is set to leave a lasting legacy on the city's landscape.

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