

ESSAY BY OUR STUDENT

RAJARSHI DAS GUPTA - IAS 2013

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

TOPIC - Impact of "Mall Culture" on Indian Society

FEEDBACK BY CrackingIAS.com team

OVERALL - GOOD.

1. GENERAL FLOW AND CREATIVITY - GOOD.
2. VOCABULARY LACKING - MACDONALDISATION, CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION, CULTURAL SHOCK
3. THE ASPECTS OF CORPORATISM AND MUSHROOMING OF MALLS COULD BE EXPLAINED FURTHER.
4. CONCLUSION CAN BE FINE TUNED FURTHER.

TOTAL MARKS - 112

Ans 3. The term "mall culture" is a value loaded term. It is a new phenomenon. It had its beginning post 1990. Indian society is thus yet to grasp its full impact & meaning.

To different people it carries different meanings. To the cash rich urban youth it symbolises his country's rise in on the economic ladder. It signifies greater freedom, greater convenience. To the rural poor it may at best symbolize a dream, something to aspire for. At worst it may symbolize vulgar display of wealth by the rich.

To the more traditional, mall culture often epitomizes westernization of the nation. Some may view it with admiration, like his younger counterpart. However for some its an assault on Indian tradition - a platform facilitating the assault.

For some Malls stand for maturation of economy, a necessary step in the path of fast growth. yet for others it symbolizes the death knell of the small shopkeepers - one of the largest

CrackingIAS.com

employers in the nation.

Even the meaning of the term ~~is~~ has not attained any rigidity. It is highly fluid. Thus "mall culture" may refer to physical shopping malls. For others it may represent anything considered western - discos, pubs e.t.c. No wonder opportunistic politicians often resort to "mall rampage" to display their credentials.

Mall culture is a fast growing phenomenon in the country. It is having its impact on all fields - economic, social, political, e.t.c.

Malls, whether they are, conglomeration of shops under one roof, or departmental stores/supermarkets of a single brand, obviously benefits from the "economies of scale." ~~From~~ From sharing common physical infrastructure to security guards, malls save money. This helps both buyers & sellers.

For the government it results in easy monitoring for law compliance. This means less accidents, less tax evasion, less policemen required

(∴ now technology can be deployed much more easily & economically) e.t.c. Its economy that wins at the end of the day.

For women, malls are convenient shopping centres. Most malls have CCTVs, something not available, or for that matter affordable in conventional markets. Criminals are thus much less comfortable here. The recent tracing of child pickers from the footage of CCTVs ^{footages} in many cities proves their utility.

Even other wise the well lit & well facilitated malls are a far cry from the conventional markets. A safer market place for women is a necessary aspect for their empowerment. Markets & malls are arenas for socialization. A safe mall where women can socialize ^a freely, away from gaze of family (and often patriarchal values) helps women empowerment.

In a male dominated society like India, where women have to, in many areas, struggle to ~~even~~ come out of against heavy odds, to do a job, malls are a blessing. Malls provide jobs, plenty of them. Most of these belong to categories e.g. sales woman which are considered suitable for women by the patriarchic male. Coupled with the safe environment that malls provide, they may (and are) serve as catalysts towards women empowerment. This is more so for women from poor background or with little education. Mall jobs ^{often} do not demand high skills & thus helps bringing up the lowest down in the hierarchy.

Thanks to the economies of scale, malls can be located in rural areas. More importantly they can provide services & products in rural areas that ordinary shops cannot afford. This has several benefits. For one it reduces the pull of cities. It helps integrate the rural economy to By providing goods &

commodities, ^{& technologies} in rural areas at no extra cost, it snatches away the edge of an urban entrepreneur vis a vis his rural counterpart. It thus facilitates maturation of rural economy.

It helps rural societies in other ways too. Thanks to their clout they can pressurize authorities to build roads, supply electricity e.t.c. faster than it would have normally.

Besides availability of goods & services in rural areas helps attraction & retention of talent in knowledge intensive industries, which for various reasons have to be located in thinly populated areas e.g. nuclear sector. These industries in turn facilitate the growth & prosperity of villages.

By providing all material under one roof, malls facilitate convenience. For today's urban youth, for whom time is precious, it significantly reduces stress. For those in their golden years, it helps them venture out & enjoy themselves.

However to portray the effect of "mall culture" on Indian society as all good would be missing its less desirable features. Thus, malls depend on selling consumer items - the more sold, the better. - A realization of the "shop till you drop" ideology. For its fructification, greed has to be nurtured - greed for newer & fancier goods. However greed if unregulated can prove fatal - for the individual as well as society. No wonder we often here news of young girls & boys committing suicide when refused a mobile phone e.t.c. In China a young boy sold his kidney to buy an expensive gizmo.

Traditionally Indians ^{elite} rich had at some point or the other come face to face with poor. This kept him grounded, aware of the poverty that plagued the society. Thus intellectual (& the rich) had the motivation to fight against its cause.

However with malls & high rise flats the elite can now

afford to live in "gated communities", ignorant of the problems of the poor. Malls are not the places where beggars or poor merchandise peddlers can go to sell stuff.

Greed & gated communities can have multifold effects. It may Greed may subvert the more noble emotions like ^{when} sacrifice, joy of staying with family etc. ~~Acquisition~~ Acquisition of ~~st~~ consumer items becomes the ~~me~~ sole means of judging status & emotional gratification, nobler emotions lose out. Social solidarity suffers.

Besides such "gated communities" are a visual representation of these inequalities. True, they may kindle dreams, desire & ambitions. But they may also trigger resentment, especially if one finds that the road to achieving such is locked. This may give birth to violence. While By providing necessary linkages in economic integration, malls by providing standard items through the nation, helps mobility. Individuals can stay at any corner of nation for job & yet get his

nature of ^{like fast food, cosmetics, e.t.c.} consumption pattern, that malls often encourage their users to indulge in. It is a threat to the economy, e.g. environment & health.

Besides the fear of many ~~However none~~ of the "Kirana" stores has its merits.

However none of these ~~are insurmountable~~ unwanted consequences are insurmountable. Greed can be regulated by education. In fact its proliferation of aids to greed (like malls) may actually push the government towards faster development in the education front. Unsustainable consumption can also be regulated by educating consumers.

While malls may help break up of families by helping the cause of mobility, mobility, it must be recognized is a necessity for industrialization & economic growth - a path we have chosen consciously.

While gated societies may be source of resentment, fear of such happening, if the elite are sensitized to this aspect, can actually help the cause of social mobility

Besides malls to make tax deduction difficult. This labour laws can be better enforced. All this augurs well for the moral fabric of the society.

At worst malls may be regarded as a double edged sword, & It depends on our society & how we use it. If they are a necessary come step in the march towards rapid industrialization. If used well they will spell wonders.



Rajarshi Das Gupta



Pradeep Kumar



Vasu Devan Nedumaran



Rashmi

Jai Arvind

and 40 more students
 ■■■■■ IAS 2013 Results
Congratulations