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TOPIC – Impact of “Mall Culture” on Indian Society

In 3. The term “mall culture” is a loaded term. It is a new phenomenon. It had its beginning post 1990. Indian society is thus yet to grasp its full impact.

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

Display of wealth by the rich, to the more traditional, often epitomises Westernisation. Mall culture often sees it both.

Some may view it with admiration, like his younger counterpart. However for some its an asset on Indian economy. For some it is an assault on Indian culture.
employees in the nation.
Even the meaning of the term 'mall' 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 "mall" - discos, pubs, etc. No wonder Western - discos, pubs, etc. 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 impact on all fields - economic, social, political, etc.

Malls, whether they are, conglomeration of shops under one roof, departmental stores/supermarkets, or single brand, obviously benefits from the "economies of scale." 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 and order, results in easy monitoring for law enforcement, less policemen required, less accidents, less patience required.
Now technology can be deployed much more easily & economically) e.g. It's 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 listing of footage of child pickers from the footage of footages in many cities proves their utility.

Even otherwise 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 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 against heavy odds, to do a job, malls are a blessing. Malls provide plenty of them. Most of these jobs belong to categories e.g. sales woman which are considered suitable for women by the patriarchal male. Coupled with the safe environment that malls provide, they may (and are) a catalyst towards women empowerment. This is more so for women from poor backgrounds or with little education. Mall jobs 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. That ordinary shops cannot afford. This has several benefits. For one, it reduces the pull of cities. It helps integrate the rural economy by providing goods &
& technologies in rural areas at no extra cost, it snatches away the edge of an urban entrepreneur's & 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 etc. faster than it would have normally.

Besides availability helps attraction services in rural areas in knowledge & 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 & live a life of their own.
However, to portray the effect of "mall culture" on Indian society as all good would miss 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 hear news of young girls & boys committing suicide when refused a mobile phone etc. In China a young boy sold his kidney to buy an expensive gadget.

Traditionally, Indians & 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 causes. 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 merchants' peddlers can go to sell stuff.

Greed & gated communities can have multifaceted effects. It may greed may subvert the more noble emotions like sacrifice, joy of staying with family etc., the acquisition of consumer items becomes the sole means of judging status & emotional gratification, nobler emotions lose out. Social solidarity suffers.

Besides such "gated communities" are a visual representation of the inequities. True, they may kindle envy, 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 by providing necessary linkages & in economic integration, malls by providing standard items through the nation, helps individuals stay at any mobility. Individuals can stay at any corner of nation for job & yet get his
Like fast food, cosmetics etc., the nature of consumption patterns that malls often encourage their users to indulge in is a threat to the economy, e.g. environment & health. Besides the fear of many about malls eating up the "kizana" stores has its merits.

However, none of those are unwanted consequences. 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 deviation difficult. The 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 at how we use it. If they are a necessary step in the march towards industrialization, if used well they will spell wonders.