

**CONNECTING GLOBALIZATION WITH CONSUMERISM: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON
GROWING PRESENCE OF SHOPPING MALL CULTURE IN INDIA**

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, consumerism is an outcome of globalization. The free flow of ideas, finance, culture, technology and trade are insisting consumerism across the globe. Shopping mall is now becoming a very popular domain for increasing rate of consumption in the era of liberalization and globalization at large. The new trend of consumerism is much more associated with multiple factors like globalization, liberalization, urbanization; increasing income and the growth of new professional class (new middle class) in India. This paper is a review based critical analysis on the rise of consumerism in relation with shopping mall culture in India at the lens of globalization. The first section of this paper tries to locate the phenomenon of globalization and the promotion of consumerism. Subsequently the analysis has focused on the depiction of consumerism in India, the essence and impacts of shopping mall in India are described followed by that.

Keywords: Globalization, Liberalization, Consumerism and Shopping Mall

INTRODUCTION

India's consumers' habits have seen a significant transition from the traditional to the contemporary globalised period. Nowadays, consumption is a form of self-expression or an identity marker rather than a means of meeting needs. Consumer behaviour in contemporary society is affected in a new way as a result of globalization and liberalization. Since the start of general liberalization, the emergence of shopping mall culture in India has been the medium of new consumer trends. The new paradigm of consumption and the culture of the shopping mall are being promoted by globalization and liberalization in general and India in particular. Beginning in the early 1990s, India underwent structural transformations as a result of the unrestricted flow of capital, ideas, culture, trade, and technology across geopolitical boundaries. Multinational companies' (MNCs) entry into the Indian market opens up a lot of work prospects for the youth, helping to raise their standard of living and purchasing habits, which in turn leads to increased revenues. The process of globalization, liberalization and the promotion of shopping mall culture no doubt are the key drivers of the promotion of consumerism in India. However, the promotion of mall culture has both pros and cons in India on the domain of consumption. This paper tries to locate the interrelation between the emergence of consumerism and essence and shopping mall culture in the lens of globalization.

CONNECTING GLOBALIZATION WITH CONSUMERISM

Some people embrace consumerism as a way to celebrate liberalization; these individuals legitimize the new political economy and the commodities, technology, and entertainment it produces. However, although some people may find their sense of self in consumerism that upholds the status quo, others may reject this and seek refuge from the impacts of the global political economy in the many indulgences that frequently allow the trans-gressive to express themselves in symbolic ways. A link between globalization, mobility and consumerism could be recognized within the domain of three main factors which are:

- 1) Worldwide accessibility to markets and resources.

- 2) The provision of customers with a wide range of goods and services that were previously difficult to obtain.
- 3) The idea of "consumerism" is at the heart of how the contemporary world and liberalization are understood, yet this term appears to be changing gradually.

Mobility and liberalization therefore create the circumstances for consumption through a linked process that relies on the aforementioned elements. Understanding the scenario of current consumption is crucial for further elaborating this association. The consumption of resources and goods has expanded beyond meeting bare necessities to encompass luxuries and technical advancements. Although such spending above and above necessary requirements should not always be seen negatively, it is important to comprehend the motivations behind consumption and consumerism in the modern society (Shah, 2006). Some characteristics of consumption in the modern world include: (i) choices of consumption are influenced by certain actors; (ii) what should be produced and what should not be produced are decided by certain actors; (iii) a uniformity of consumption patterns is being created throughout the world; and (iv) relationships between people are influenced by material value.

As a result of cultural homogeneity and heterogenization, consumption is now being imposed by globalization. Along with the dissemination of cultural characteristics, political ideologies, and social structures, it also broadens international markets for money, labour, and notably goods and brands. Cultural homogeneity is a process made possible by globalization that enables the spread of similar products, consumer habits, and cultural experiences around the world. Especially domination of American culture across the globe results cultural imperialism (ex-McDonalds). On the other hand market faces many kinds of cultural brands and products. Market fragmentation is the simultaneous existence of several and fundamentally incompatible patterns and modalities of goods, lives, and experiences. It causes cultural heterogeneity and compelled the adoption of many cultural identities. No matter their nationality, consumers are eager to try and experience various cultural items and styles in order to express their individuality. Today, culture is seen as a commoditized good. The managers, marketers, advertising creatives, and independent brokers are only a few of the agents who operate directly in the market economy and develop and promote consumer culture. The media celebrities (ex-movie stars, politicians), who serve as cultural middlemen and model and propagate different types of consumption behaviour, are the subject of their analysis and criticism of consumer items (Firat, 1997). More specifically the spread of consumer culture is a consequence of the global flow of cultural resources which Appadurai (2003) termed as finance scape, techno scape, ethno scape, ideo scape, and media scape.

GLOBALIZATION AND CONSUMERISM IN INDIA

The transition from a welfare-centric state to a market-driven economy caused significant changes in the Indian economy. Every area of human life the economic, the political system, the society, and the culture has been impacted by globalization and liberalization. Due to market liberalization in the 1990s, India now has free movement of international commerce, capital, goods, and cultural trends. The liberalization process brought about a fundamental shift in Indian society and fueled economic expansion. The liberalization process encourages foreign corporations to enter the Indian market in order to compete with local firms. Economic growth and the rise of a new middle class segment are two benefits of India's liberalization strategy. The expansion of the Indian middle class, the emergence of a global culture, and the free flow of goods across borders all contributed to the promotion of consumerism in India. By employing communication media as a tool to expand the options available to the middle class, the rise of MNCs in the Indian market encourages the development of consumer

culture. People who work in highly professional, white-colored occupations, embrace new lifestyles, and exercise their freedom of choice via consumption are considered to be members of the new middle class. The socio-economic and cultural stratifications are part of the many diverse divides that make up the modern concept of middle class. In India, globalization has caused a shift in consumer culture. Consumers of India, those who are residing in the cosmopolitan cities accept the culture of west and preferred foreign brands that process is called consumer acculturation. Consumer acculturation is defined a process in which consumers make a shift from local consumer culture to global consumer culture with respect to specific cultural components (Verma, 2015).

THE ESSENCE AND IMPACTS OF SHOPPING MALLS IN INDIA

Shopping mall is an important domain for the promotion of consumerism. The emergence of shopping mall culture stimulates consumerism by meeting ever changing demands of consumers with entertainment. Shopping is also regarded as a daily activity of the consumers but when it relates with shopping mall culture helps to shape social status of the consumers. Shopping mall facilities attract consumers and try to trap them into a new wave of consumerism. Various studies explain shopping mall culture in relation to consumerism and its essence on society. In addition to facilitating the growth of shopping centers and supermarkets in India, the new wave of consumerism is driven by fast changes in population, rising urbanization, increase in standard of living, lifestyles, and sophisticated information technology. Indian culture transitioned from a producer-oriented civilization in the nineteenth century to a consumerist one in the twentieth century, which is referred to as consumerism. The workforce is changing, and there are more women working in both public and private enterprises, which greatly contributes to the paradigm change in consumer culture. The footprints of the new western modular shopping malls, which are carefully planned, constructed using international retailing standards, and integrated with entertainment and dining to offer a full range of services, have been spreading throughout Indian cities. The shopping malls are now trying to meet the ever changing needs of consumers (Ramaraju, 2014). Shopping malls are expanding at an alarming rate, and this has both positive and bad effects. Mall culture has benefits and drawbacks. On the plus side, the growth of mall culture makes it easier to find excellent items and information about their prices. It also creates a comfortable shopping atmosphere with extended hours and additional payment alternatives, including credit card and debit card facilities. The downside of mall creation in the current neoliberal period is that they operate as social dividers. As a result of liberalization, India is now a part of the world economy. Large retail malls are being built by MNCs and international businesses in the Indian market. A thriving economy leads to the creation of new quasi-public spaces, such shopping malls, which make individuals who do not belong to the emerging middle class consumer group invisible. The new social dividing practices start at the mall. The prejudice between middle class and poor customers is emphasized by the dividing behaviours. The poor are not allowed to use the mall's electronic amenities, and a growing class of professionals with technical skills has emerged (cultural capital). The power of the emerging middle class of professionals is founded on cultural capital; they exploit and control the new export monitoring requirements to categorize new purchasing patterns. New middle class development based on knowledge rather than capital (Voyce, 2007). In Delhi the mushrooming growth of shopping malls are the representatives of new kind of spaces that have come up since the beginning of liberalization policy in 1990s. The opening up of the Indian economy stimulated the increasing rate of middle class in Delhi and promoted consumerism. The shopping malls based on the American model with multi stores, circulating areas to connect different stores, theaters, restaurants, night clubs and entertainment. The Delhi elites have never seen the marked facilities ever before. The New Delhi's new shopping malls are the space of consumption and spaces of exclusion as well as creating new consumer citizens in the city.

CONCLUSION

To conclude one can say that consumerism is becoming very dominant in the 21st century. Increasing consumption patterns and habits are the outcome of the process of globalization as well as liberalization considerably. Globalization is a socio-economic process which results integration and interdependentness of nations across the globe, it reduces the national barriers for in view of global village. Globalization results the free flow of trade, ideas, culture, finance, products, and brands in the whole globe without any restrictions. Corporate sectors or the international trade came into India due to the policy of liberalization in 1990. International trade helps to increase income and the working population in urban areas which ultimately facilitates the promotion of consumerism by setting large scale malls across the country. Technological advancement especially the advertisement media insists the free flow of various cultures and cultural products in the globe; undoubtedly it ultimately enhances consumerism. Corporate giants try to proliferate their ideas and products through the advertisement media. The key factors like globalization, urbanization, increasing income, rise of professionals, changing lifestyle and standard of living of the consumers are stimulating the consumption abilities of the consumers in India. Shopping mall is the primary factor for the promotion of consumer culture in India in particular and in the world in general. Now shopping malls are trying to meet the needs of modern consumers by adopting different marketing strategies. Consumers are also changed their shopping behavior and attitudes by culmination with social and cultural identity on the domain of consumption. However, apart from the merits shopping mall culture has some demerits in the society. A new form of dividing practice has emerged in India on the domain of mall culture and consumption at large.

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