

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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## CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND DECISION MAKING STYLES OF SHOPPING MALLS: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SELECTED SHOPPING MALLS IN CHENNAI CITY

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### ABSTRACT

*The retail sector in India is witnessing a huge revamping exercise as traditional markets make way for next formats such as departmental stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialty stores. Western-styles malls have begun appearing in metros and second-running cities alike introducing the Indian consumer to a shopping experience like never before. India's vast middle class and its almost untapped retail industry are key attractions for global retail giants wanting to enter newer markets. The structure of retailing is developing rapidly with shopping malls becoming increasingly common in large cities, and development plans being projected to 500 shopping malls by 2015. The industry is rated as the fifth most attractive emerging retail market; India is being seen as a potential goldmine. It has been ranked second in a global retail development index of 30 developing countries drawn up by AT Kearney. The list was developed as a response to request from retail chains facing saturated demand in most western markets. Chennai is a hustling bustling metropolitan and is counted amongst the largest cities in India. Chennai was an important trade center during the British rule and has been growing ever since. After the concepts of globalization and liberalization invaded the Indian markets, there has been a flood of international brands here. With this, the shopping mall culture is spreading at a speed not known before. Shopping Malls are mushrooming with the speed of fire and have completely changed the face of the Chennai city. This paper examines the consumer preference, perception and decision making styles of select shopping malls in Chennai city with the help of certain standardized statistical tool. Moreover, the study focus on the changing habits, preference and life style of the present day consumers, which may help the companies to design their marketing strategies from the angle of changing attitudes of the consumers. As far as the present study is concerned the only limitation of the study is, it considered only selected shopping malls in Chennai city and is restricted to select quality parameters and therefore the results are applicable only to them.*

### KEYWORDS

consumer behaviour, shopping malls.

### INTRODUCTION

**R**etailing forms an integral part of the marketing mix. It includes 6P's (Product, Price, Place, People, Presentation and Promotion). It implies a firsthand transaction with the customers. Retailing, therefore involves a direct interface with the customers and it includes coordination of business activities right from the design stage of a product to its delivery as well as post-delivery services to the customers. Retail stores serve as a communication hub for customers. They transmit information to the customers through advertisement and displays. Retailing therefore facilitates the flow of goods and services from the manufacturers (and/ or wholesalers) to the final users. In other words, retailers act as middlemen linking manufacturers with the ultimate consumers.

### INDIAN RETAIL SCENARIO

The retail sector in India is witnessing a huge revamping exercise as traditional markets make way for next formats such as departmental stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialty stores. Western-styles malls have begun appearing in metros and second-running cities alike introducing the Indian consumer to a shopping experience like never before.

India's vast middle class and its almost untapped retail industry are key attractions for global retail giants wanting to enter newer markets. The structure of retailing is developing rapidly with shopping malls becoming increasingly common in large cities, and development plans being projected to 500 shopping malls by 2015. The industry is rated as the fifth most attractive emerging retail market; India is being seen as a potential goldmine. It has been ranked second in a global retail development index of 30 developing countries drawn up by AT Kearney.

### SHOPPING MALLS IN INDIA AND TAMILNADU

A shopping mall, shopping centre or shopping precinct is one or more building forming a complex of shops representing merchandisers, with interconnecting walkways enabling visitors to easily walk from unit to unit, along with a parking area – a modern, indoor version of the traditional market place. Organized retailing appeared in the Indian horizon in the 70s when shops like Raymond's, Nalli's and Bata set up their exclusive stores and /or franchisees. The early 80s witnessed the emergence of Akbarally's in Mumbai and Spencer's in Chennai. These stores latter evolved into multi-chain outlets and were the first to establish the concept of organized retail in India. During the 90s with the opening up of the Indian economy through LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization), new retailing formats and exclusive outlets like Shoppers Stop (1991) and Pantaloon (1197) appeared in India. In 1998, shoppers stop opened two outlets and RPG's Giant hypermarket followed unit.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian retailing underwent a sea change with the opening up of numerous supermarkets, department stores, chain stores, hypermarkets, big discount stores and malls throughout the length and breadth of the country. The booming of the retail sector opened up new vistas so much so that this sector is now treated as the sunrise sector with prospects of unlimited growth. Therefore, it is no wonder that leading international players like Wal-Mart, Tesco and Carrefour have already opened or are planning to open their outlets in India. Global brands like McDonald's, Swarovski, Lactose, Domino's, Benetton etc. have also shown tremendous interest in the Indian retail trade. National players like Tata, RPG, ITC, Reliance etc. are cashing on this booming sector. Therefore, the country is witnessing introduction of many modern formats and techniques, which are changing the retail landscape for most of the product categories. In fact, south India is witnessing tremendous expansion of modern retailing due to the availability of land at prime locations with lower real estate prices. Places like Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad have emerged as a centre for organized retailing.

### GROWTH OF ORGANIZED SHOPPING MALLS IN INDIA

The phenomenal growth in the shopping mall sector in India can be attributed mainly to the following reasons:

- The booming Indian economy
- Increasing Proportion of young working population
- Increase in the number of working women providing for double Income households.
- Changing value orientations of the population from austerity to conspicuous consumption.
- Increasing use of debit and credit cards.
- Rapid Urbanization
- Provides an alternative investment opportunity.
- Tremendous scope for expansion in Tier II cities.
- Sectors with High Growth Potential



## RETAILING IN RURAL AREAS

Retail sector offers opportunities for exploration, expansion, and investment in rural areas, in spite of the fact that some of the corporate and entrepreneurs earlier have made a foray into it. ITC launched the country's first rural mall "Chaupal Sagar" offering a diverse product range from FMCGs (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) to electronics appliances to automobiles, attempting to provide the farmers with it one-stop destination for all their needs.

## MAJOR 12 SHOPPING MALLS IN CHENNAI

Chennai is a hustling bustling metropolitan and is counted amongst the largest cities in India. Chennai was an important trade center during the British rule and has been growing ever since. After the concepts of globalization and liberalization invaded the Indian markets, there has been a flood of international brands here. With this, the shopping mall culture is spreading at a speed not known before. Shopping Malls are mushrooming with the speed of fire and have completely changed the face of the Chennai city.

Whether you are with your family or friends, experience in shopping malls is about spending some quality time while you are shopping for articles that could range from apparels to ration. Malls in Chennai do not lag in providing the same experience and the experience is unique when you see the locals, foreigners and tourist all having a fine time under the same roof. These malls provide a completely incomparable shopping experience.

1. Spencer Plaza
2. Gold Mall
3. The city center
4. Alsa Mall
5. Fountain Plaza
6. Hameedia Shopping Mall
7. Prince Plaza
8. Century Plaza
9. Wellington Plaza
10. Abirami Mall
11. Express Avenue
12. Ampa Sky Walk

## IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In organized shopping malls, generally, consumers feel that service quality, product assortment, packaging and ambience are of superior quality. The consumers are provided with air-conditioned atmosphere, well-lit décor, well behaved attendants, shopping carts, soothing music which creates a favourable climate for purchasing. Probability of Impulsive purchasing becomes higher partly due to organized display and partly due to provision of promotional incentives for consumers. Further, it enhances the efficiency of supply chain and value chain so that marketability of farm produce is done with a better price. Apart from these, government also gains substantially, as all taxes and duties are paid along the way there are no leakages. Organized Shopping Malls in India has been mostly confined to big towns and cities. It has not yet penetrated into block and taluk headquarters of rural India. The poor purchasing power of the rural masses, lack of infrastructure, the penchant for living within their mean and absence of the credit facility at retail markets are some of the reasons why rural India is lagging behind in this respect. The entrenchment un-organized sector in retailing, even in urban areas, sometimes creates problems for penetration of the organized players. The experience of Reliance Fresh in this regards is quite harrowing. The main point of concern is that the small, local retailers apprehend that they would fade away without being able to face the stiff competition offered by the organized players. Political compulsions, debates on economic rationality, and the social impact that the modern organized retail would have many dampen the speed of transformation of the retail sector to some extent, but the process looks irreversible.

In view of the importance of shopping malls and their services to the society, and as there is no specific study on consumer behaviour and decision making styles, the present study has been taken up. The study will focus on the following main objectives.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the "Origin and growth of organized retailing in India and Tamilnadu".
2. To study the "Merits and the Importance of shopping Malls and their impact on the Consumer behaviour".
3. To study the "Consumer perception, preference and satisfaction of Shopping Malls".
4. To examine the "Consumer Decision Making Styles and the behaviour of Shopping Malls".
5. To study the "Problems of Shopping Malls from the point of view of Consumers".
6. To suggest the "Marketing Strategies for the Malls from the angle of Consumers".

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were framed based on the objectives of the study.

1. "Pricing factor of the products is greatly influenced by one's income".
2. "Quality consciousness is a major factor for married people as compared to individual".
3. "Recreational Shopping is influenced by age".
4. "Competition doesn't have any significant impact on shopping".
5. "Variety seeking shopping behaviour of consumers has some impact on shopping".

## SAMPLE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study consists of 600 respondents in and around Chennai city. A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire. The study is both descriptive and diagnostic. It is descriptive with portrayal of factors influencing the consumer decision making styles and it became diagnostic when the researcher analyses the level of (respondents) Consumer preference, perception and decision making styles of select Shopping Malls in Chennai City with the help of certain statistical tools. The collected data were analyzed with the help of statistical tool like ANOVA, factor analysis, Chi-Square test, t-test, Correlation analysis and multiple regression Statistical tools.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The present study covers only select Shopping Malls in Chennai City.
2. The study is restricted to select quality parameters.

## MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. It is observed that most of the selected consumers (61%) visiting shopping malls in Chennai are males.
2. It is observed that 35.70% of the respondents visiting shopping malls are in the age group of 26-35 years.
3. It is observed that majority of the consumers (57.50%) visiting shopping malls in Chennai are married.
4. It is observed that 46.80% of the respondents visiting shopping malls are graduates.

5. It is observed that 45.50% of the respondents visiting shopping malls are salaried persons.
6. It is observed that 39.70% of the respondent's monthly family income is less than Rs.20000.
7. It is observed that most of the consumers (53.00%) visiting shopping malls are living in joint families.
8. It is observed that 37.90% of the respondents visiting shopping malls are having family size of more than 4 members.
9. It is observed that 38.40% of the respondents visiting shopping malls are living in middle class background.
10. As all the mean values are above the average level, the satisfaction level towards the consumer preference of a shopping mall locations and its importance is satisfactory for consumers.

#### SUGGESTIONS BASED ON THE STUDY

- i. It is not enough for shopping centres just to have fire-fighting equipment.  
**It is absolutely crucial that the equipment is well-maintained and ready for use, and that staff are adequately trained on the use of the installed equipment and other fire safety measures.**
- ii. With lack of proper safety standards and preventive measures, Indian shopping centres have been witness to a number of accidents, like fall from the top floor etc resulting in deaths or severe injuries to children and adults alike.  
**To prevent these accidents, the side wall and barricades should be raised to more height.**
- iii. The western world is making and installing lifts with weight carrying capacity of 75 Kg per person, while India continues with the age old norm of 68 Kg per person.  
**Therefore, in our country, the norm for carrying capacity of 68 kg per person should be increased to 75 kg per person.**
- iv. The shopping centre owners and managers need to have **volunteers to assist and familiarize people on their use, at least for six months after a new centre opens.**
- v. The carrying **capacity of escalators in a shopping centre must match the expected peak traffic demand, presuming that passengers ride single-file.** Staircases should be located adjacent to escalators, if escalators are the primary means of transport between floors. It may also be necessary to provide an elevator adjacent to an escalator for disabled persons, senior citizens and babies in prams.
- vi. **There should be proper signage to lead visitors to the right cluster of bays within parking lots.** Pedestrians should not be allowed into parking lots. Only shoppers with parking ticket or pass should be able to enter the parking lot from the main retail area of a shopping centre.
- vii. **Many of the respondents have found that kids play areas are not properly enclosed.** The interiors of these areas should not have anything with sharp edges.
- viii. **Put clear signage on each floor to show the location of fire exits.**
- ix. Today, the malls must **"be more attractive, and should create more awareness about their products, location, services and other consumer oriented activities"**.
- x. The malls can provide **"a mega discount week or month"** and during such period, they can offer the **"maximum discounts for their products"**.

#### SCOPE FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has made an attempt to analyze the consumer preference, perception and decision making styles of select shopping malls in Chennai city. However, no attempt has been made to make a comparative study of factors among the shopping malls. Hence, in view of entry of corporate and global giants in retail business, a comparative study of factors will throw light on how the existing organized shopping malls can face challenges from within and outside India i.e. from multinational retail giants and how they can become competitive.

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