



***International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)***

*A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal*

*ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)*

*ISJN: A4372-3142 (Online) ISJN: A4372-3143 (Print)*

*Volume-VIII, Issue-III, May 2022, Page No. 56-69*

*Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711*

*Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>*

**DOI: 10.29032/ijhsss.v8.i3.2022.56-69**

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**Behaviour of Consumers in Shopping Malls –  
A Study in Bardhaman District (Purba and Paschim)**

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**Abstract**

*Shopping malls have seen remarkable growth in India during the past few decades. The growth of India's sorted out retail industry has transformed the shopping behaviour of the India customers. Shopping today is significantly more than simply buying-it is a matter itself. Consumers have altered motivations to visit the shopping malls. Shopping in malls has turned into a significant leisure action. Shopping Malls are replacing local stores all over India. The Indian consumer seems to be undergoing an alteration in terms of behaviour, buying intentions, interests, approaches, beliefs and ethics when he or she is making a move from local stores towards shopping malls. India's retail infrastructure is gradually enduring a change with many hi-fi Shopping Malls being made and functioning in various cities. Shopping malls have seen remarkable growth in India during the past few decades. In this context it assumes connotation to study the buying behaviour of consumers, particularly with changes taking place in India's marketing position.*

*The opportunity of this exploration is to assess the overall customer happiness, response of customers with respect to the convenience and quality of products and services offered at shopping malls and the comfort level of the respondents towards shopping in the shopping malls. Factors influencing the customer to shop in the shopping malls, such as socioeconomic profiles, income, frequency of visit, period of relationship between the respondents and shopping malls, purpose of visit, occasion to visit shopping malls are some of the aspects studied in the present study.*

*This paper scrutinizes the pull factors of shopping malls from the shoppers' perspective based on the survey of shoppers of Burdwan, Durgapur and Asansol. This paper proposes to study the shopping mall attractiveness wherein the attempt is to study the behaviour and attitude of the shoppers towards malls.*

**Keywords: Shopping mall, consumer, behaviour, growth, happiness.**

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**Introduction:** What comes to our mind when we hear the word “Mall”? Shopping, food, movies, entertainment or maybe time pass. Well, the word may bear different meanings to different people but it definitely stands for more than any of these things. Today, shopping malls have become a part and parcel of daily life of people living in metros and big cities.

Retailing has been the business that has had significant economic and social effect to any economy. Retail industry has been the pillar of growth for most of the developed economies as it provides employment to many, empower and employ women, propel entrepreneurship, boost demand for the locally made products. Retail traces every aspect of our lives with each day carrying new and innovative ways to offer goods and services. The future is amazingly promising too. However, in this ground-breaking landscape it is important to map out a universal retail strategy to connect with the customers successfully. While the future is promising, the openings may not be evenly distributed. The winners will be those who embrace innovation and transformation and move beyond the traditional retail methods. With the onset of the Digital era, the anytime-anywhere availability of products have been driving the Retail Experience, with customers calling the shots and deciding how they buy, what they buy and at what price they buy.

The retail commerce can generally be classified into two categories: Organised and Unorganized. Organised Retailers characterised by high investment requirements, large premises, trained staff where retailers are licensed and are registered to pay taxes to the government.

Unorganised Retail refers to the old-style form of retail often located near domestic areas. It is generally characterized by low rentals, low tax pay outs with a majority of it being owner-managed and employing personal investment. It includes a tough mix of conventional shops, general stores, mom-&-pop stores and other small retail outlets.

India's retail sector has grown massively from Haat – Weekly Bazar – Pose – Sophisticated and swanky shopping malls. Shopping in India has observed an uprising with the change in consumer behaviour and the whole format of shopping is also altering. The miracle called shopping Centre or shopping mall is rocking India - metros and now even the minor towns are buzzing with the mall craze or mall mania. Modern retail format i.e. shopping malls are categorized by professionally accomplished large format stores, providing goods and services that appeal to consumers, in an ambience that is encouraging for shopping. The recent surge in the growth of shopping malls is changing the way people shop. Today consumers look for facilities like cost, comfort, convenience, in-house parking, entertainment, coffee shops, food courts and children's play areas when they step into the malls and they demand the best of everything.

It's not about shopping, dining or watching a movie, it's a familiarity in itself, a lifestyle hubbub, and providing this experience is what these malls are building up as their Unique Selling Proposal. Mall culture in India and especially in West Bengal has grown with an unbelievable pace. Just a few years back, people had to make a choice among shopping, movies or hanging out on a holiday but thanks to our malls, all these jobs can be performed at the same time, under the same roof and that too with a delightful experience. The

possibility of shopping for clothes, shoes and grocery, while simultaneously having provision for eating and entertainment in the form of movies or video game parlours, has been a convenient experience for the consumers. Pollution free, air conditioned shopping ambience in the malls is preferable to the heat, humidity; noise associated with has become a roadside shopping. The mall culture has become a sensation in terms of changing the lifestyle of Indians – the way they are shopping and entertaining. The changing existences of consumers, strong income growth and favourable demographic shapes have provided various opportunities as well as set more encounters for retailers. Increase in the number of atomic families with double –income groups and close-fitting working schedules have left consumers with less time for leisure.

A shopping mall, shopping centre, shopping arcade, shopping precinct or simply mall is one or more structures establishing a multifaceted of retail stores on behalf of merchandisers with connecting footpaths allowing peoples to walk from unit to unit. Different foundations comprising Motion Picture Theatres and eateries are likewise regularly including. As dealers enthused into more extensive stores in the mid nineteenth century great road grew however richer individuals began needing cover from shower so shopping arcades were produced. With new advancements like stairways these developed into mall and with the ascent of the vehicle these advanced into malls. (Wakefield, K. L., & Baker, J. 1998)

### **Shopping Malls**

The term shopping mall is encompassed by two words precisely shopping and mall. Shopping can be characterized as the movement that includes the trading of products and amenities for cash. It is a movement that includes a vendor and a purchaser. Consolidating the two words, a mall can along these lines be characterized as a structures or set of structures that give paths to people in general to stroll starting with one unit then onto the next inside an indistinguishable building or set of structures from they continue on ahead of trading of products and services for cash (Kuria E., 1975)

As per the Global Shopping Centre Report 2014 (released by Cushman & Wakefield), shopping centres are a foremost economic ecosystem in a city and they strive for economic and social development. In India shopping centres are most usually known as shopping malls.

**Consumer Behaviour:** Consumer behaviour can be characterized as the preparation of activities and activities of consumers in buying and using goods and services. Be that as it may, it includes an investigation of buying motives so as to look at the willpower standards of the consumers for the products they pick and what encourages them to carry on as they do in the market places.

**Mall Culture:** Mall culture in India and particularly in Delhi and NCR has developed with a mind blowing pace; however this culture was at that point existent for as far back as quite a while in other real cosmopolitan urban communities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and so forth. Only a couple of years back, individuals needed to settle on a decision among

shopping, films or hanging out on a vacation, however at this point at malls, every one of these jobs can be performed in the meantime, under a similar roof and that too with a wonderful experience. What's more, it is basically the experience and not the expectation that checks with regards to malls. The motivation behind why shopping malls are so famous lies in their international intrigue. It is by all accounts a thing of history when shopping malls had their essence just in spots like Singapore and Dubai. Truth be told, presently they are wherever around us.

Their choice relies on numerous criteria. Be that as it may, consumer buys have happened much before their real buy. Marketing assumes an imperative job in this. Marketing and Advertising have a solid positive effect on buying behaviour of consumers, and they specifically impact consumers buying a product from an organization that she/he is very much aware of. In antiquated days, consumers were not made a fuss over the traits before purchasing a product. In any case, there comes a massive change in the consumer buying behaviour of the 21st Century.

**Consumer Attitude towards Shopping Malls:** Middle class Indians have severed their love for customary stand-alone Indian stores that have no cooling, sorted out stopping and other open manners. Specialist's state malls all through the nation are getting greater as they are currently being situated as a one-stop-search for shopping, entertainment, leisure and eating-out necessities as contrasting to a spot just to look for style / luxury products. The quickly developing middle-class public, the rise in ladies workforce and consumerism throughout the decade were the major powers in driving interest in the retail area.

Retail segment in India is observing a huge change as traditional markets make way for new formats such as departmental stores, hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialty stores. This is due to the speedy urbanisation, increased family income, a growing exposure to far-off lifestyles, increased aspiration of consumers and the convenience of one-stop shopping. The mind-set of Indian buyers has been changing in recent years. Buyers visit the shops not only to purchase the product but also to experience the enjoyment, personal management and also because of the shopping atmosphere. All these factors have created the expansion of shopping centres where shopping, entertainment and good shopping experience along with the multiple shops are available under one roof. Thus, malls serve the purpose of giving quality time and place for entertainment, socialization, pleasure and fun besides selling required products and services. The mall was originally conceived of as a community centre where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction (Gruen & Smith, 1960) and one can easily say that malls have succeeded in achieving the age-old purpose of bringing them into existence. Thus, in today's consumer culture "Mall" is the centre of the Universe (Feinberg & Meoli, 1991).

**Literature Review:** The review of literature guides the investigator for getting a better understanding of methodology used, limitations of various available estimation procedures, data base, lucid interpretation and reconciliation of the conflicting results. However, only a limited study is available in this field especially in India. A summary of literature reviewed is reported here.

Narahari & Kuvad (2017) examined customer behaviour towards shopping malls. The main objective of their study is to understand the purchasing behaviour of customers who visit shopping malls and identify gender differences, if any, in terms of purchasing behaviour. The study predominantly proves that the customers belonging to Durgapur and Asansol are quite happy with the overall shopping mall experience and absolutely comfortable as they consider it as “One-Stop Shop” for a wide range of products and brands. However, regarding the safety measure, there is a huge dearth of awareness among customers. Overall, the study finds that there are no predominant differences between men and women in their shopping experiences, choices and purchasing decisions. This is a healthy sign for the enhanced role of women. The research also proves that shopping malls are the best locations for socialization, especially for the younger generation to hangout, spend quality time with family, dine out other than shopping.

Rashmi, Poojary and Deepak (2016) analyse the factors influencing customer behaviour and its impact on loyalty towards shopping malls. The purpose of this paper is to study customer behaviour towards shopping malls with six important dimensions using structural equation modelling. The study concluded that the shoppers’ shopping behaviour is having a positive impact on shoppers’ satisfaction and loyalty. This implies that improving the factors that affect shoppers’ shopping behaviour, will lead to an increase in shoppers’ satisfaction and loyalty towards the retail shops in selected shopping malls.

Ahmed and Mayya (2015) conducted a study to examine and analyse the buying behaviour and the perceptions of the customers of shopping malls. Results of their study indicate that consumers have gained a lot of benefits from organized retail on multiple counts like wider choice of products and well-known brands, one stop shopping, new market arrivals, festive offers, huge discounts, and other benefits. The survey results revealed that almost all income groups get benefited through organized retail purchases. Thus, from the consumers’ perspective, expansion of organized retailing is more preferred as different malls and corporate retailers compete with each other resulting in reduced prices with reasonable quality products.

Yaamini Devi (2013) in her study analysed Facility Management like ambience, infrastructure and traffic were analysed particularly. She suggested that malls not only cater to the product needs of the customers, but also a source of entertainment, recreation.

Rajagopal (2009) study aimed to examine the impact of growing congestion of shopping malls in urban areas on shopping convenience and it also studied the cognitive attributes of the shopper towards attractiveness of the shopping malls and intensity of shopping. The study reveals that long term customer values are associated with shopping in malls while customers may derive short term comparative gains over price and newness of products by shopping in traditional markets surrounding large malls. The study concluded that cognitive factors among consumers in brand switching include product, attractiveness, low price, user friendly technology and easy product servicing policies of small retail outlets outside the

shopping malls. The ambience of shopping, assortment of stores, sales promotion and comparative economic gains in the malls attract specific higher customer traffic to the mall.

Abhigyan Sarkar (2008) in his paper concluded that based on the correlation analysis done by the researcher that a less money conservative person is generally more materialistic, tends more towards impulse buying, has a positive attitude towards debt, is open to new experiences & is a high sensation-seeker & is more likely to be young & from high economic class. This type of person is the ideal customer for a lifestyle centre. Undoubtedly, Hedonic motive plays a crucial role when the buyer is engaged in recreational events.

White (2008) in his paper expressed that the customer and their lifestyles have changed, and with that, shopping centres are changing to continue to attract consumers. Entertainment centres, entertainment and destination venues, once of little significance to shopping centres and malls, are now growing in importance as an essential part of the mix, in order to attract today's consumer, goods alone don't work.

Janson Sit and Bil Mersiley (2005) study aims to understand the shoppers satisfaction with entertainment consumption with five key constructs namely hedonic motives, functional evaluation, affective evaluation, overall satisfaction and behavioural loyalty. The study reported that the primary focus of hedonic consumption is on affective experiences, which are likely to be influenced by functional attributes relative to entertainment consumption. This is consistent with environmental psychology theory. The study found that the impact of hedonic motive on overall satisfaction will be mediated by both functional and affective evaluation. Overall satisfaction of entertainment seekers should result in positive behavioural loyalty.

Lorch and Smith (1993) in their study concluded that customers coming from a parking lot walk straight forward to the nearest shopping mall entrance and only those shops which are immediately adjacent to this entrance benefit from it.

**Objectives of the Study:** The mall culture in Bardhaman is changing the approach people shop. While presenting gradual approval of the organized retail set-ups, people are moving out of their zone-based buying behaviour and have meaningfully increased their spending at the malls. The prime objective of this study is to analyse the influence of mall culture on consumer behaviour and buying decisions. In this context, the present study has been started with the following specific objectives:

1. Why are people interested in coming to malls?
2. In which stratum of society used to come in the shopping malls?
3. To find out the consumer attitude towards shopping malls.
4. To study the buying behaviour of the customers of shopping malls.

**Theoretical framework:**

Culture: Culture is the characteristics and awareness of a particular group of people, surrounding language, religion, social habits, music and arts.

**Malls:** A shopping mall is a big surrounded shopping centre, having a variety of shops, restaurants and other business establishments.

**Consumer buying behaviour:** Buying behaviour is the decision process and acts of people involved in buying and using the products. Consumer behaviour denotes buying behaviour of the ultimate consumer.

**Research Methodology :** Research methodology refers to the research process, the technical framework within which the research is being conducted. The success and validity of the research largely depends on data collection and data analysis, therefore methodology in a research needs to be effectively planned. The present study is exploratory in nature. The research study is designed on the survey method. This research study explores the consumer attitude towards shopping malls in Bardhaman, Durgapur and Asansol city.

**Data Collection Methods:** As the study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, interviews with help of Questionnaires method were applied to collect the primary data. Primary data refers to the information obtained firsthand by the researcher on the variables of interest for the specific purpose of the research. Primary data is obtained from structured questionnaires and interviews with the mall visitors. The primary data has been randomly collected from the respondents who are regular customers of Bardhaman Arcade (Burdwan), Galaxy Mall (Asansol) and Junction Mall (Durgapur). The information like gender, income, mode of commuting to go shopping mall, time of shopping, price of product, quality of the product and preference of consumer etc. were collected through questionnaires.

For the current study customers visiting selected shopping malls in purba and paschim bardhaman have been covered. A total of 227 respondents were approached. Out of these 200 respondents, 27 respondents were uninterested in responding or were falling short of time, for which this analysis is being made. Thus a sample of 200 respondents was taken finally for the study. It was not feasible to cover all the customers visiting shopping malls. So for the purpose of this study 200 random customers were selected for the study. Convenience sampling method has been used for selecting the sample. For the study, both primary and secondary data were collected. For primary data, a structured questionnaire was developed and administered to the respondents. For secondary data, existing literature in the form of magazines, papers, company literature, book, journals, web sources were consulted. To collect first hand/ primary data a structured, closed-ended, multiple choice questionnaires was prepared and was administered to the sample of respondents selected for the study. Questions are related to the general profile of respondents, attributes of shopping in malls, customer satisfaction related to shopping in malls, problems faced by shoppers and overall factors influencing shopping in malls. In the project report the data is presented with the help of tables. These have been specifically used to present the data collected from respondents through questionnaires.

**Limitations of the study:**

The study is limited to the customer behaviour and the buying decision of the particular sample respondents, and may not be universally valid.

1. The study is micro in nature, and its survey outcomes and interpretations cannot be generalized and may be subject to modification from time to time and place to place.
2. This study is based on the usual customer's behaviour. But the customer's behaviour may change according to time, fashion, technology, development, etc.
3. Data collection of exact data for the research is not possible because there is a gap between what respondent say and what they really do.
4. Information provided by the customers may not be perfect. They may hide some of the information at the time of filling up the questionnaires.
5. As sample size is 200 then, it is not necessary that it truly represents the population universe.

**Data Analysis and Findings:**

Table – 1: Age of the respondents

<i>Age</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
18 – 25	46	23
26 – 30	87	43.5
31 – 35	43	21.5
36 – 40	15	7.5
41 & above	09	4.5
Total	200	100

As per data presented in Table - 1 above, it is observed that 23% of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-25, 43.5% of sample respondents belong to the age group of 26 – 30, 21.5% of the respondents belong to the age group of 36-40 and remaining 4.5% of respondents belongs to 41 and above. This shows that maximum young age people visit malls frequently.

Table – 2 : Qualification of the respondents

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Class V – X	29	14.5
Class XI – XII	51	25.5
Graduate	68	34
Post Graduate	37	18.5
Ph.D	15	7.5
Total	200	100



It is evident from the above table - 2 it is clear that 14.5% of the respondents belong to the educational status group of class V - X, 25.5% of sample respondents belong to the educational status group of class XI - XII, 34% of the respondents belong to graduate in an educational status, 18.5% of the respondents belong to post – graduate in an educational status and remaining 7.5% of respondents doing PhD. This shows that maximum graduate qualification people visit malls frequently.

Table – 3 : Monthly income of the respondents

<i>Income</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
1000 – 5000	34	17
6000 – 10000	43	21.5
11000 – 20000	61	30.5
21000 – 30000	36	18
31000 – 40000	26	13
Total	200	100

It is evident from the above table – 3 it is shows that 17% of the respondents belong to the income group of below 5000, 21.5% of sample respondents belong to the income group of 6000 - 10000, 30.5% of the respondents belong to the income group of 11000 – 20000, 18% of the respondents belong to the income group of 21000 – 30000 and remaining 13% of respondents belongs to 31000 - 40000 income group. We can see from the table that the majority of respondents belong to the income group 11000 – 20000 that is middle income group people.

Table – 4 : Frequency of Visiting Shopping Malls (Monthly)

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Twice	71	35.5
Thrice	87	43.5
More than thrice	42	21
Total	200	100

As per data presented in Table -4 above, it is observed that 35.5% of the respondents visit malls twice in a month, 43.5% of the respondents visit thrice in a month and remaining 21% of the respondents visit malls more than thrice in a month. It shows that the majority of the respondents visit malls thrice in a month.

Table – 5 : Frequency of Time Spent in Shopping Malls

<i>Time Spent</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Below 1hr 30min	35	17.5
1hr 30min – 2hr	65	32.5
2hr – 2hr 30min	85	42.5
More than 2hr 30min	15	7.5
Total	200	100

It is evident from the table – 5 that, 17.5% of the respondents spending below 1hr 30min time in a malls, 32.5% of the respondents spending 1hr 30min – 2hr time in a malls, 42.5% of the respondents spending 2hr – 2hr 30min time in a malls and remaining 7.5% of the respondents spending more than 2hr 30min time in a malls. It shows that the majority of the respondents spent 2hr – 2hr 30min time in a mall.

Table – 6 : Preferred offers by the respondents

<i>Preferred Offers</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Discount offers	53	26.5
Free Gift	62	31
Exchange offers	30	15
Sales Contest	17	8.5
Coupons	38	17
Total	200	100

It is evident from the table – 6 that, while visiting shopping malls 26.5% of the respondents preferred discount offers, 31% of the respondents preferred free gift offers, 15% of the respondents preferred exchange offers, 8.5% of the respondents preferred sales contest offers and remaining 17% of the respondents preferred coupon offers in malls. It shows that the majority of the respondents preferred free gifts and as well as discount offers in malls.

Table – 7 : Reason of the respondents

<i>Reason</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Pleasure	63	31.5
Necessary	103	51.5

Leisure activity	34	17
Total	200	100

It is evident from the table – 7 that, 31.5% of the respondents do shopping for pleasure, 51.5% of the respondents do shopping for their necessity and the remaining 17% of the respondents do leisure activity in malls. It shows that the majority of the respondents are going to the mall for their daily necessity rather than pleasure.

Table – 8 : Purpose of the respondent

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Window shopping	27	13.5
Shopping	93	46.5
Entertainment	31	15.5
Eating	13	6.5
Family outing	08	04
Meeting friends	28	14
Total	200	100

It is evident from the table – 8 that, 13.5 % of the respondents coming for shopping, 46.5% of the respondents coming for shopping, 15.5% of the respondents coming for an entertainment purpose only, 6.5% coming for an eating, 4% coming as family outing and the remaining 14% of the respondents coming here to meet friends hangouts in malls. It shows that the majority of the respondents are coming to the mall for shopping.

Table – 9 : Satisfaction of the respondents

<i>Satisfaction</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Very good	75	37.5
Good	99	49.5
Average	19	9.5
Poor	07	3.5
Total	200	100

As per data presented in Table – 9 above, it is observed that as per their satisfaction level 37.5% of the respondents feel very good, 49.5% of the respondents feel good, 9.5% of the respondents fill average and remaining 3.5% fill poor in satisfaction level. It shows that the majority of the respondents are feeling satisfied.

Table – 10: Occupation of the respondents

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Response in Percentage</i>
Student	27	13.5
Self Employed	37	18.5
Govt. Service	39	19.5
Private Service	43	21.5
Agriculture Labour	13	6.5
Business	41	20.5
Total	200	100

It is evident from the table – 10 it is observed that, 13.5 % of the respondents are student, 18.5% of the respondents are self-employed, 19.5% of the respondents are engaged in government service, 21.5% are in private service, 6.5% engaged as agriculture labour and the remaining 20.5% of the respondents are business class. It shows that the majority of the respondents are coming to the mall from private sector job holders and business sections.

### Findings:

The study shows that:

- The maximum young age people visit malls frequently.
- The maximum graduate qualification people visit malls frequently.
- The majority of respondents belong to the income group 11000 – 20000 that is middle income group people.
- The majority of the respondents visit malls thrice in a month.
- The majority of the respondents spent 2hr – 2hr 30min time in a mall.
- The respondents preferred free gifts as well as discount offers in malls.
- The majority of the respondents are going to the mall for their daily necessity rather than pleasure.
- The majority of the respondents are coming to the mall to shop.
- The majority of the respondents are feeling satisfied.
- The majority of the respondents are coming to the mall from private sector job holders and business sections.

**Conclusion:** My study area is a mixture of many cultures and languages. As malls are attracting more consumers nowadays, it has become a mode of cultural transformation. Mall management can conduct many events to attract the public by cultural shows which help to promote local culture. They can conduct weekly and monthly cultural events so that they can attract many people as they prefer to visit on a weekly and monthly basis. Many people hesitate to visit malls because of their high prices. Retailers can attract these consumers by

pricing strategy. The retailers can also use many promotional strategies to attract the consumers.

Shopping malls have been playing a significant role for every shopper, where they used to purchase the goods in a single place called a shopping mall. Multi shops with multiband facilities are available in the shopping mall. Availability of the products has to satisfy the consumers, which makes them to repurchase the product. Shopping malls have to focus on the consumer expectations and that has to be satisfied by considering the price, offers, vouchers etc. Buying behaviour of the customer will vary from one consumer to another consumer. According to that the mall has to create an effective marketing strategy and effective advertisement to attract more customers that may influence buying behaviour of consumers.

Shopping malls have become a fashion and a new lifestyle among the present generation. Modern world is more attracted towards shopping malls as these organised shopping provide many advantages. The mall's culture is increasingly influencing shopping behaviour and patterns of consumers. The retailers should give more attention to these changes in order to survive in the market.

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