

Mall Culture: Understanding the Consumer Behaviour

Authors: Dr. Anuj Sheopuri¹, Anita Sheopuri²

¹Associate Professor, Department of Management, BIRT, Bhopal

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management, VNS Business School, Bhopal

Address: E – 1 / 172, Arera Colony, Bhopal – 462 016 (India)

9039908057 / 9826352999

dr.anujsheopuri@gmail.com, anitasheopuri@gmail.com

Abstract

The emergence of malls, as an important and significant destination for shopping, recreation and socialization has turned the face of the retail industry in India. Cities of India like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore etc have received colossal economic and social contributions from these malls making them one of the most prominent cities not only in India but around the globe as well. Even, small cities are now eye witnessing the same phenomenon, described earlier as the “mall culture”. Indian economy has transformed from an extensive controlled economy to a liberal market driven economy. High-income opportunities, changing attitude towards saving, international exposure and necessities of lifestyle are the key drivers for fast evolving Indian consumer behaviour. Indian retail industry is witnessing a paradigm shift as the sector is getting organized and consumers are seeking a one-stop shopping place with convenience and entertainment.

Organized Retailing is introduced in the last decade and has emerged as one of the sunrise industries in India. Today, supermalls are replacing ‘kirana’ stores all over India. India’s retail infrastructure is slowly undergoing a change with many hi-fi supermalls being constructed and operating in various cities. The mall concept has come to stay for good. The Indian consumer seems to be undergoing a shift in terms of personality, buying motives, interests, attitudes, beliefs and values when he or she is making a shift from ‘kirana’ stores towards shopping malls. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to investigate the consumer behaviour towards these shopping malls, with special reference to Bhopal city.

Key Words

Shopping malls, retail, ‘kirana’ stores, customer, and customer’s attitude.

Introduction

According to Assael (1987), shopping behaviour is the most unique for behaviour which the consumers exhibit. Gifts, clothing, groceries, gifts and household items are some of the most common type of shopping which consumers indulge in a highly frequent manner. But according to Dholakia (1999), occasion and motives are also some crucial points which influence the consumers shopping behaviour. For example, for some consumers, shopping is all about getting the best deal out of bargaining, for some (especially teenagers or the young crowd) shopping is a means of getting acquainted and interact more with others in a social context and for some it is a way of breaking out from the regular monotonous professional and personal routine Reid and Brown, (1996). Wakefield and Baker (1998) found out that the architectural design of the mall was the dimension which contributed the most to the mall excitement, while a mall's interior design had the strong influence on customers' desire to stay longer in the mall. Wakefield and Baker (1998) also found a positive and strong relationship between the mall's layout and desire to stay/mall excitement. This tells us that customers not only evaluate the product assortments inside the mall but they also do look for the intangibles that the mall offers like colours, ambience, fragrance, lighting and music. A study on the "impact of malls on small shops and hawkers in Mumbai" (Kalhan, 2007) unambiguously indicated that there has been a severe impact of malls on the unorganised retail shops operating in the vicinity of malls. The study further stated that Mega Malls are making deep inroads in the sales of retailers operating in the unorganised retail sector. According to a study conducted by Loudon and Britta (1993), a better Interior design actually helps to elevate the image of the mall over a period of time. Complementing the discussed findings is the study conducted by Lui (1997) which revealed that today's Malls have seen a paradigm shift in the kind of interior which the designers choose for their malls; from a very relaxed environment to architecturally lavish, affluent and sophisticated design. All in all, atmospheric characteristics are basically an extension to the product assortments and could be manipulated positively to enhance buyers' mood and comprehension, hence affecting behaviour, and to elevate the mall image.

Objectives

To know the attitude of customers towards shopping malls, to understand the customer purchase pattern, and to identify the level of satisfaction among customers.

Testing of Hypotheses

The study is based on the formulation of the following null hypotheses.

H01: The socio - economic profiles of the customers do influence their satisfaction with respect to shopping in the shopping malls in Bhopal.

H02: There is a significant difference in the acceptance levels by the customers with respect to the income category to which they belong to and propensity to shop in shopping malls in Bhopal.

H03: The response of customers with regard to the availability and quality of products and services offered at shopping malls does influence the customer’s acceptance level towards shopping in the shopping malls in Bhopal.

H04: The attitude of customers towards shopping malls and overall customer satisfaction is positive.

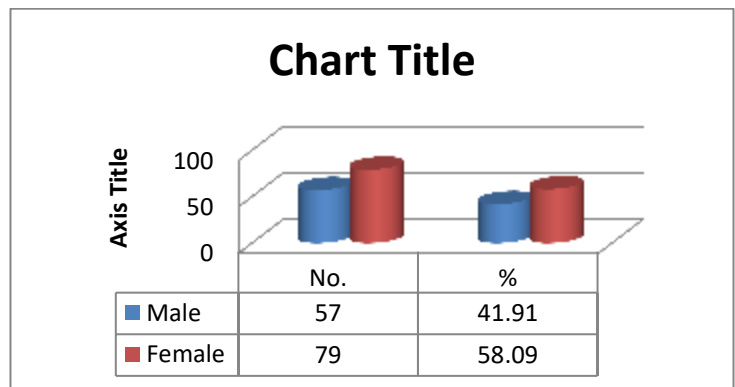
Sampling Design

This study is confined to the customers visiting the select shopping malls in Bhopal. There are 05 shopping malls in Bhopal and these shopping malls are considered the universe of the study. A self administered questionnaire was employed in order to measure the responses of the consumers towards the selected dimensions. A total of 136 respondents were selected purely on a judgmental basis (making it a non-probability sampling technique) at the five malls situated at Bhopal city namely, DB Mall, Ashima Mall, C21 Mall, People Mall and Mall,

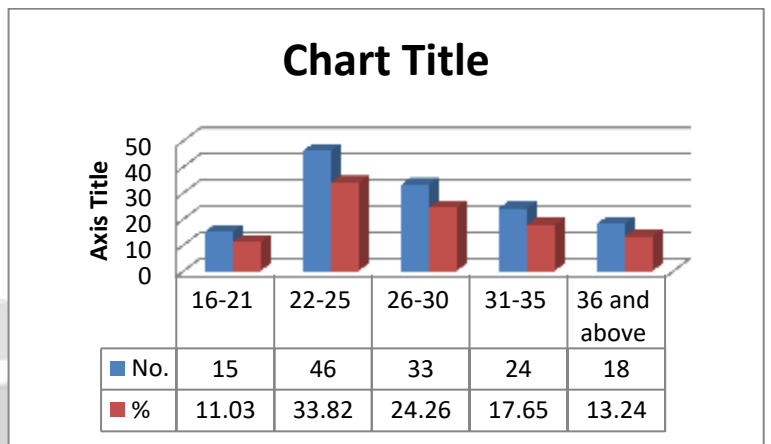
Findings

In order to collect information about “customer attitude towards shopping malls in Mumbai” 500 questionnaires were distributed to consumers. The responses are tabulated, analyzed and explained below:

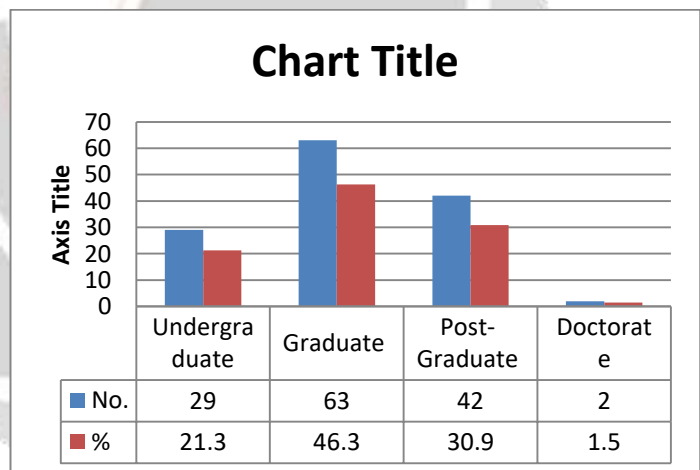
| 1. Gender | No. | % |
|-----------|-----|-------|
| Male | 57 | 41.91 |
| Female | 79 | 58.09 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



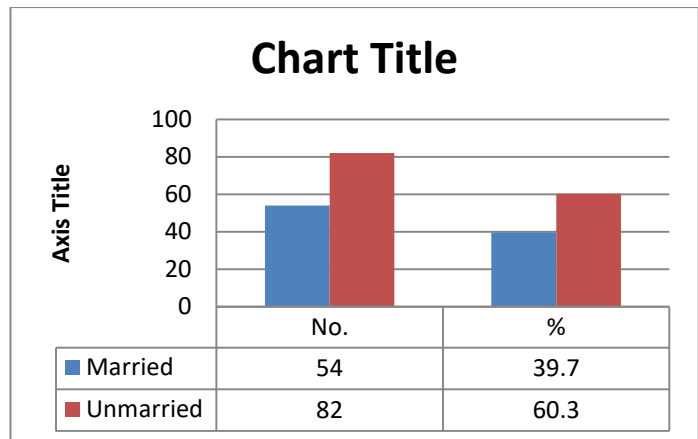
| 2. Age | No. | % |
|--------------|-----|-------|
| 16-21 | 15 | 11.03 |
| 22-25 | 46 | 33.82 |
| 26-30 | 33 | 24.26 |
| 31-35 | 24 | 17.65 |
| 36 and above | 18 | 13.24 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



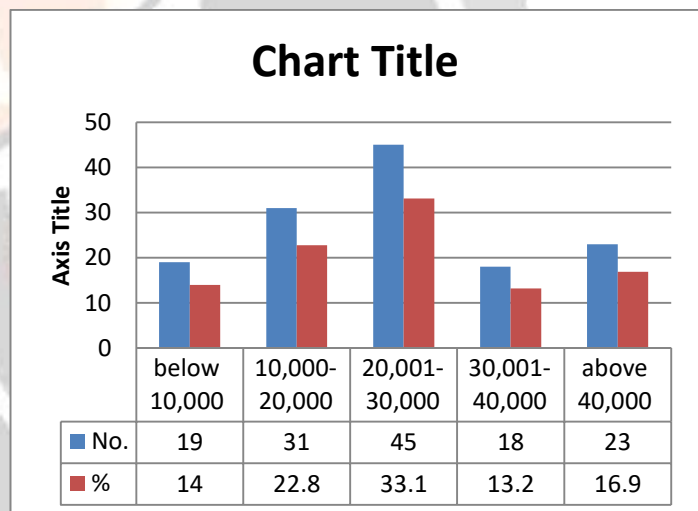
| 3. Acad. Qualification | No. | % |
|------------------------|-----|------|
| Undergraduate | 29 | 21.3 |
| Graduate | 63 | 46.3 |
| Post-Graduate | 42 | 30.9 |
| Doctorate | 2 | 1.5 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



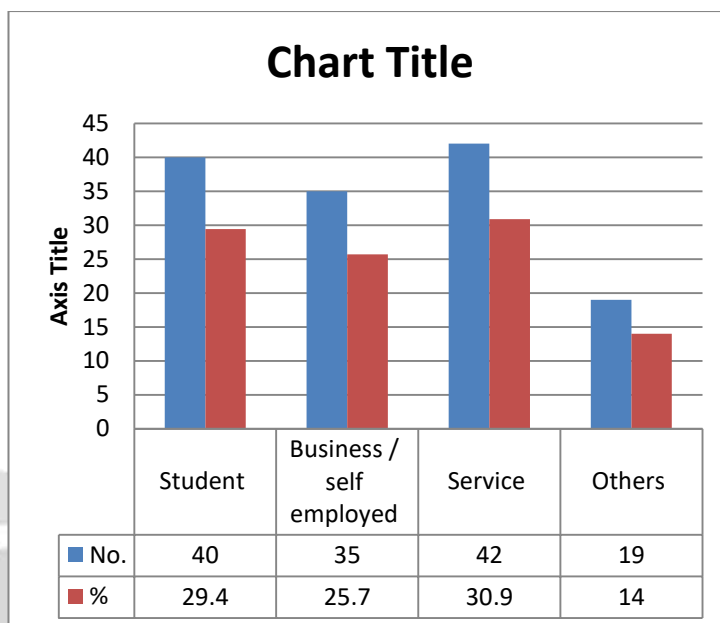
| 4. Marital status | No. | % |
|-------------------|-----|------|
| Married | 54 | 39.7 |
| Unmarried | 82 | 60.3 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



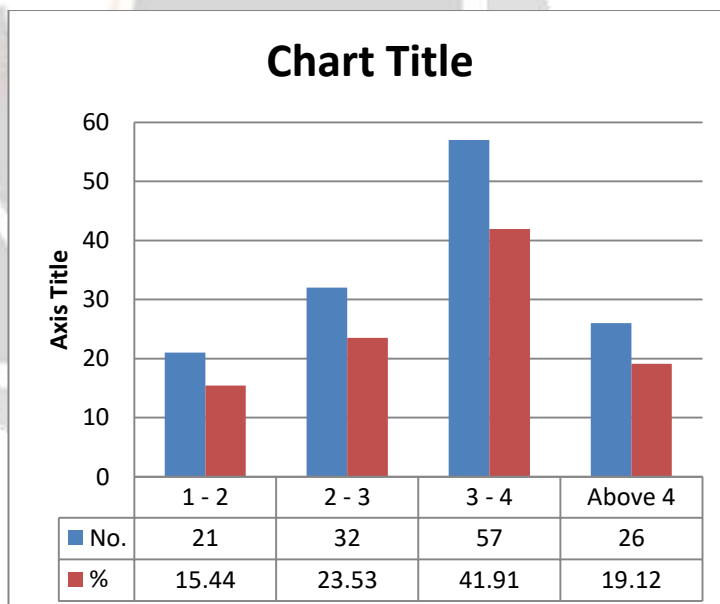
| 5. Monthly Income | No. | % |
|-------------------|-----|------|
| below 10,000 | 19 | 14 |
| 10,000-20,000 | 31 | 22.8 |
| 20,001-30,000 | 45 | 33.1 |
| 30,001-40,000 | 18 | 13.2 |
| above 40,000 | 23 | 16.9 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



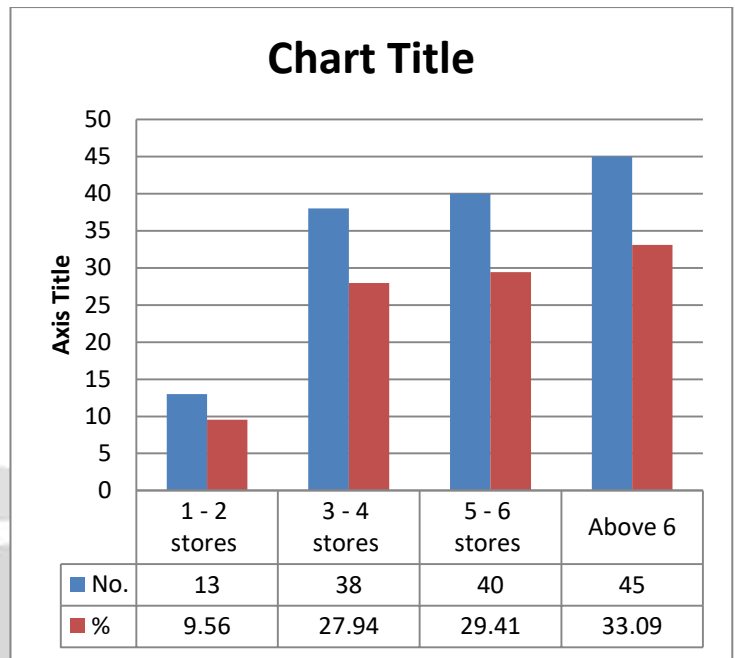
| 6. Occupation | No. | % |
|--------------------------|-----|------|
| Student | 40 | 29.4 |
| Business / self employed | 35 | 25.7 |
| Service | 42 | 30.9 |
| Others | 19 | 14 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



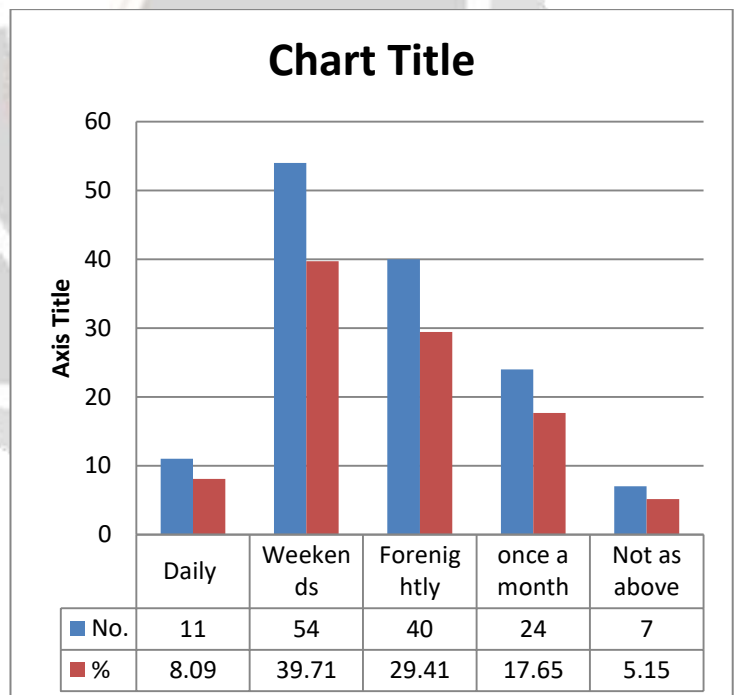
| I. Average Time spent for shopping (in Hours) | No. | % |
|---|-----|-------|
| 1 - 2 | 21 | 15.44 |
| 2 - 3 | 32 | 23.53 |
| 3 - 4 | 57 | 41.91 |
| Above 4 | 26 | 19.12 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



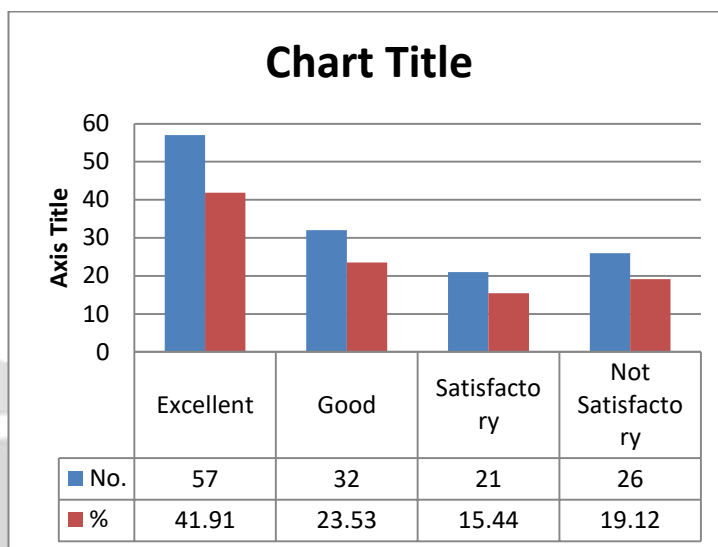
| II. Stores / Shops Visited in Mall | No. | % |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 1 - 2 stores | 13 | 9.56 |
| 3 - 4 stores | 38 | 27.94 |
| 5 - 6 stores | 40 | 29.41 |
| Above 6 | 45 | 33.09 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



| III. Frequency of Visit | No. | % |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|
| Daily | 11 | 8.09 |
| Weekends | 54 | 39.71 |
| Fortnightly | 40 | 29.41 |
| once a month | 24 | 17.65 |
| Not as above | 7 | 5.15 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |

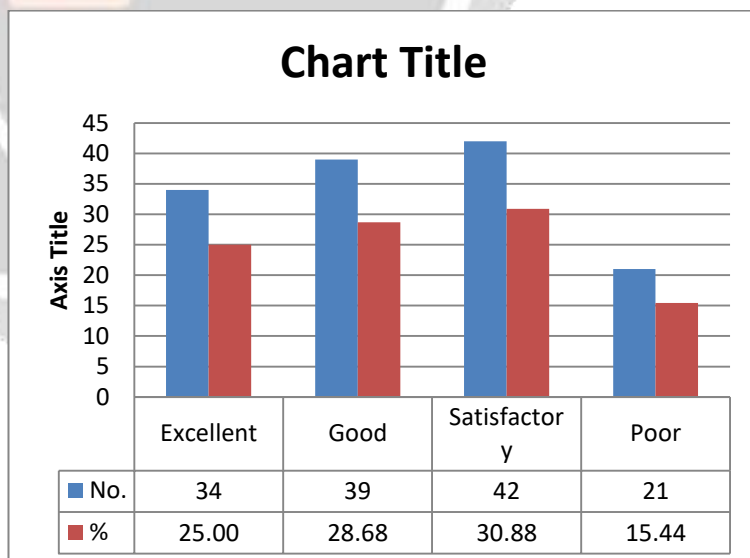


| IV. Quality offered at shopping malls | No. | % |
|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Excellent | 57 | 41.91 |
| Good | 32 | 23.53 |
| Satisfactory | 21 | 15.44 |
| Not Satisfactory | 26 | 19.12 |
| Total | 136 | 100.00 |



The respondents were asked to rate the quality of products available at shopping malls. As per the responses obtained, the products sold at shopping malls seem to have an edge over ‘kirana’ shops and other local pop and mom stores / vendors with regard to quality. While 41% of the respondents stated that the quality of products offered at shopping malls is excellent, only as low as 19% of respondents have reported a ‘not satisfactory’ response towards shopping malls.

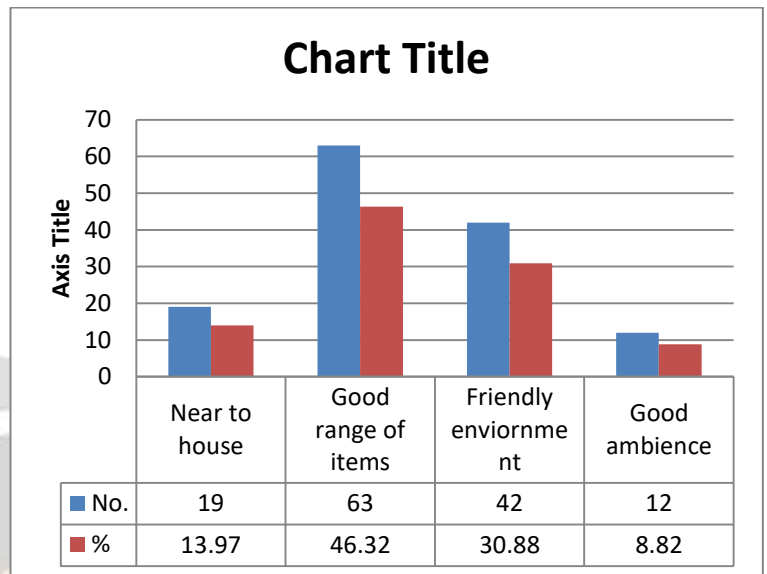
| V. Parking facility | No. | % |
|---------------------|-----|--------|
| Excellent | 34 | 25.00 |
| Good | 39 | 28.68 |
| Satisfactory | 42 | 30.88 |
| Poor | 21 | 15.44 |
| Total | 136 | 100.00 |



Shopping malls are considered to be vehicle friendly as they provide excellent parking facilities. Therefore, a majority of the sample have a positive response about the parking

facilities offered at shopping malls. Only as low as 15% find the parking facility to be “poor” at shopping malls.

| VI. Reason for Buying from Shopping Malls | No. | % |
|---|-----|-------|
| Near to house | 19 | 13.97 |
| Good range of items | 63 | 46.32 |
| Friendly environment | 42 | 30.88 |
| Good ambience | 12 | 8.82 |
| Total | 136 | 100 |



14% of respondents favor ‘near to the house’ which makes shopping malls more convenient and attractive for the shoppers. Apart from that, most of the consumers are attracted to various ranges available in shopping malls i.e. 46%, friendly shopping environment 31% and good ambience 9%.

Conclusion

Resource and time constraints led the researchers to select a limited sampling frame for the purpose of the current research. Although the study offers exciting results and some great managerial implication yet they are not suitable for generalizing to the whole of the nation.

The purpose of the research is to analyze the “customer attitude towards shopping malls in Bhopal” which is found to be positive. Today multi storey shopping malls are a shopaholic’s paradise in Bhopal. These shopping malls accommodate every taste, pocket and style. From the study it is revealed that a majority of consumers do prefer to shop at shopping malls as it is a convenient place to buy anything they desire. Most respondents expressed that the shopping malls are just not a place to shop due to its constant availability, but has also created an ideal environment for social interaction for people of all ages. Also shopping malls offer excellent parking facilities, create value for money, credit / debit card facilities, and so on. As a result, higher customer traffic is attracted towards shopping malls. All thanks to shopping malls for bringing about an overall development in Bhopal.

References

1. Assael, H. (1987), *Consumer Behavior and Marketing Action*, 3rd ed., Kent Publishing Company, Boston, MA.
2. Dholakia, R.R. (1999), Going shopping: key determinants of shopping behaviors and motivations, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 154-65.
3. Loudon, D.L. and Bitta, A.J.D. (1993), *Consumer Behavior: Concepts and Applications*, 4th ed., McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
4. Lui K. F. (1997), Shopping behavior in Kuala Lumpur shopping malls, Universiti Putra Malaysia.
5. Reid, R. and Brown, S. (1996), I hate shopping! an introspective perspective, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp 4-16.
6. Wakefield, K. L. and Baker, J. (1998), Excitement at the mall: determinants and effects on shopping, *Journal of Retailing*, Fall, pp. 515-50.

