# THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF A SHOPPING MALL

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## INTRODUCTION

Shopping malls are significant landmarks in cities. Modern cities are mainly developed on shopping malls, which impact the daily routines, social relationships, and mobility of the inhabitants. There is a social mixing in shopping malls. This work's aim is to investigate the roles that malls play in contemporary society and to look at how a shopping mall might be transformed into a social space. And how a mall can make changes around its surroundings. As an illustration, this study examined the Lulu Mall in Kochi, Kerala.

### Evolution of malls

In antiquities, a barter system ( exchange of goods), local markets, and weekly markets have existed. After that, trade expands, traders from one point of the world travel to another point for export and import of goods. Many trips across the world in search of goods. This trade allows one to see new places, meet new people and understand their culture. This idea has been altered, and individuals can quickly find the things they need at adjacent stores. Modern society relies heavily on shopping malls for their demands. The history of shopping malls began in the 1920s in the United States. Consumer society emerged as a new community in the 19th and 20th centuries. Shopping malls are one of the more contemporary institutions that have evolved for the consumption of this newly established consumer society. George Ritzer, an American Sociologist, uses the term “new means of consumption” to name the area which allows, encourages, or even forces us to buy a lot of goods. People typically select malls that fit their socioeconomic position and product quality based on this, people select the mall. Modern cities are mostly built on shopping malls, which impacts the daily routines, interpersonal connections,

and mobility of the citizens. The idea of a “shopping mall” has been adopted all across the world, and in many cities, particularly in developing ones, they constitute significant urban features.

**Lulu Mall**

The well-known Lulu Group International, with its headquarters in Abu Dhabi, operates under the direction of Yusuffali M.A. This Lulu chain operates in 34 different nations. One of its branches in Kochi, below figure 1.1, located in Edappally, Kochi, Kerala, inaugurated its doors in March 2013. Mall structured

***(figure 1.1 – Lulu Mall, Kochi online resource)***

around 68,00 square meters, with 57,600 square meters of retail area. With more than 225 outlets, Lulu Mall Kochi has introduced more than 100 prestigious brands, the first time in Kerala. The mall contains one of India's biggest supermarkets, a multi-cuisine food court with seating for 2,500 people, eleven in six dining restaurants, and six cafes. In addition to the largest ice skating rink in south India, the mall has a trampoline park, amusement rides, and 12-lane bowling alley.

It also has a gold-class 9-screen multiplex. Here is a fantastic follow of people all around Kerala going to Lulu Mall. Fifteen million four-wheelers and 6 million twowheelers have entered Lulu Mall parking garages for the past nine years, resulting in 158 million visitors.

**Mall as a social sphere by analyzing Lulu mall**

Malls are essential landmarks of cities. Shopping malls have a significant cultural place. Many people visit these places not only for the goods they carry, but to eat, for leisure, and in general, to interact with other people. Usually, all categories of people go to malls because they are free to enter and open to all, relatively safe, and ultimately a friendly, comfortable place to spend time. People frequently select malls based on their socioeconomic class and the distance between their homes; these favorably influence the mall selection process. Lulu Mall is a popular tourist destination in addition to a mall. During people's leisure moments, many people from various parts of Kerala and beyond the state flow into the mall. Most go to malls more as tourist destinations rather than a shopping sphere. Because they might spend an entire day there, many school children, peer groups, and families also used to visit Lulu Mall. Another explanation for this is that there is no entrance fee, and anyone can enter here without any restrictions, allowing them to wander around freely. Lulu Mall is becoming one of the top tourist destinations in Kerala for tourists. The shopping mall's social atmosphere aids in making it popular and successful. Most shops at Lulu Mall are outlets for renowned brands such as Louis Phillippe, Levi's,

Fabindia, FastTrack, fossil, HP world, fruit bae, KFC, Pizza hut, PVR cinemas, Adidas, Max, Trends, etc. All shops were transparent, this will attract more consumers and standing at the entrance of the mall customers get almost a view of the entire mall like the below figure 1.2. These branded stores where mostly purchased by

*(figure 1.2 lulu mall*

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modern society. People purchase branded items due to their high quality and some to flaunt their luxurious lifestyles. Shops selected randomly by customers on the basics of their choice.

Opening a Mall will provide many job opportunities for many peoples this will help to increase standard of living to certain peoples. A vast area of the parking serves is another feature of the mall. Mostly the customers reach the mall using public vehicles or private vehicles so parking facility is an unavoidable part in mall construction. In Lulu there is a vast area provided for parking, vehicle underground parking facilities at a time large numbers of vehicles can park here. However, the customers must wait hours to enter the Lulu mall parking. Because of this queue a traffic block was created around the Kochi Lulu mall. Vehicles were guarded by lulu mall security officers, and they charged a fair amount as a parking fee calculated on the basics of parking hours. Having access to the transport system is a crucial

feature of the mall. Lulu mall is located in the metropolitan city Kochi; therefore the public transport system is favorably available here. One of the primary means of transport is the metro. Kochi metro serves around Kochi; one of its stations is lulu mall which attracts more people to the mall. From another part of Kerala, people see Lulu mall as a tourist spot. Because there is no metro service in Kerala, rather than Kochi many people come to Kochi to enter the metro and shop in Lulu mall, there is a metro station in the mall.

***(figure 1.3 lulu mall )***

To attract more consumers, special offers were granted. These offers were announced through TV, newspapers, pamphlets, radio, and online platforms. Recently, there was an offer in the lulu mall midnight sale that offered customers a flat 50% off on everything starting from

11.59 pm. This enables the customers to experience the nightlife of the city. A vast crowd gathered during this time in lulu mall shown in figure 1.3. Shopping depends on how much money consumers have.

The food court is another attractive spot; various types of cuisine are available there. Various food items from different countries and traditional items will get there at different price levels. An amusement park is another feature of this mall. Additional entertainment facilities were available here; these all attract a high population to the mall. At a time, the mall is becoming a shopping center and an entertainment sphere.

The mall adapts to its environment. During cultural holidays such as Christmas, Onam, Eid, and other seasonal celebrations, malls will be beautifully decorated. The main focal point of these decorations is seen from the mall entrance open space. Numerous cultural events were held following these celebrations. Instead of being a place for shopping, this mall is evolving into a place for celebration and culture. Due to the high public appearance and the ease of obtaining a large population, probably in malls, television shows were filmed here, and movie promotions were staged. These all blur the distinction between a commercial and cultural space.

**CONCLUSION**

Today's society places a growing amount of importance on shopping malls. Numerous people visit these locations not just to buy the things they sell but also to eat, relax, and socialize. Malls are typically frequented by the less fortunate since they are accessible to all, accessible to enter, somewhat safe, and overall pleasant places to spend time. Young people are drawn to malls, and mall culture is relatively new to the society. Mall shops are making attempts to satisfy young customers. The following characteristics of shopping malls come to

mind: comfort, variety, awareness, crowding/congestion, ambiance, parking, hedonic shopping, and mall culture. Modern mall shopping involves more than just purchasing items for our homes or personal use. It entered into the economic and social functions of malls, the shopping experience, and its significance to consumers. It also interacts with retail spaces (stores, restaurants, and other facilities). Consumers' purchasing power has improved along with their standard of living. This has a significant role in the developing demand for malls nowadays.

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