

Mall culture by steven l. shepherd

Sociology



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The ideas of Steven L. Shepherd are based on his keen observations of human nature and its exploitation by the advertisers and the malls. It is a natural characteristic of human being that man is always unsatisfied and unhappy with what he possesses and wants new things which he doesn't or can't possess. He is always in quest of something that is beyond his reach. This is the process of life and once a man stops yearning for something, the whole process of producing and selling would cease. This very instinct of man is exploited by the producers, advertisers, and the malls. Things are presented in such an alluring and tempting way that people cannot resist their temptations and feel unhappy and discontent with what they already have. The effect of this culture on our generation is that young people prefer going to the malls instead of indulging in any other productive activity. They rely on buying new things in order to be happy, although, it has taken people away from themselves. Steven L. Shepherd, in this essay, has pointed out this strategy of the malls that people have to be kept unhappy for their way of life to continue. If they cease to want new things, there would be little to sell or care about.

Although the writer is correct in criticizing malls in that they keep people unhappy and wanting, yet their importance cannot be ignored. The writer admits that these malls have become a source of socialization and "a benign environment for prepubescent "boy-girl stuff". He also admits the safety of these malls for the kids to meet with others for socialization and 'being seen'. Certainly, the young generation has different socio-economic set up and environment, they have to gather somewhere they can entertain themselves besides getting necessities of life under one roof. Life has become so busy that one cannot afford much time for the activities of going

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outside and spending enough time playing and roaming about. However, as the writer objects, this mall culture has limited the necessary positive activities of people which the sporting event, parks museums, and beaches offer. At malls, people just gaze at attractive things and yearn to get these. This desire makes men unhappy and discontent. While other venues offer participative indulgence and people are able to generate something from within.

The other remarkable idea in the essay is the desire of the writer for reflection, solitude and rich inner life. Today's life has become so complex and dependent on advertisements that we often buy such things without which we had been doing well some years ago. The advertisers keep telling us constantly that without such and such things we cannot do anything. And we blindly follow these advertisements. We have become buying machines and forget the satisfaction of our inner selves. Verily, for buying such things one has to work hard in a corporate setup and has little time for reflection, solitude and rich inner life. As the material things are necessary for our daily life, likewise the food for the soul is vitally important for one to be happy and content. We can achieve this only by limiting our desires and be content with what we possess. If we avoid too many visiting malls and indulging in the mall culture we can be happy by giving this time to certain other positive activities and participating in other socialization processes. A content person only can reflect on inner satisfaction and have peace of mind which material things cannot provide.