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A consumerist culture can be defined as one where the society is defined by consumerism. In economic terms a consumerist culture is one in which there are policies that place much emphasis on goods and the buying and selling of it. There are also people who claim that a consumerist culture is all about free choices where the consumers and producers can determine the economic course of a country. Consumerism, Consumerist culture and consumer society are all topics that have been under much scrutiny these days and about which there are heated debates around the world.

Opponents of a consumerist culture call for a different way of living, moderates call for sustained consumerism while proponents talk about the benefits of a consumerist society and advocate for the continuation of such a system. Human society has always been a consumerist society, with divisions of labor and one group providing the other with the essentials. The problem with consumerism now is the humongous growth it has seen and how this untrammelled growth is creating inequalities and threatening the existence of the planet.

Much has been said about how a consumerist culture is bad for the planet and the environment. There have been numerous studies that bring out how rampant consumerism has led to the destruction of the societal fiber and the environmental destruction of the planet. A 2006 study 'Global Consumption' and features in the New Internationalist gives out alarming details about the fast pace of consumption in the developed and developing countries. The statistics further demonstrate that at this rate of consumption, the earth would not survive as it is for long and that human beings would need more of the planet. Positing fact such as the folly of the food miles (where food is transported around the world when it can be grown or

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processed locally) and the demand for luxury goods over necessity, the article states that it is important that the world moves away from a consumerist culture and looks towards ethical consumption and ethical finance. Ethical consumption and ethical finance is where people favor organic foods over processed and frozen foods and where finance is all about socially responsible investments (Global Consumption, 2006). The statistics in the article also show that the growth of organic food sector is growing although not as much as the regular food sector. The article and more similar work on the topic basically state that there is a sustained move against consumerist patterns of living as more and more people have understood the futility of such a culture.

Rampant consumerism has also encouraged calls for an alternate form of living. The 'good life' as it is called calls for a life that does not give much importance to material goods and aspects of life but is all about living in tandem with nature and god. Degrowth societies have also been developed and encouraged in many developed nations (State of the world). A Degrowth society is not a society which is under recession or where there is no growth but a society that is about sustainability and proximity. Localization is encouraged and these societies are built in such a way that they are self-sustainable and largely immune to the vagaries of the outside world. There have also been a lot of protests and the formation of movements that have come up against the consumerist society and culture. The freegan movement is one in which dumpster diving is popular. Freegans do not buy anything new but rather go through dumpsters to glean things that can be used. This is also a political movement to show people how much waste is generated and how the waste is not always things that can be never used

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but just things that people have gotten bored with. People have also come up with days where everyone is not encouraged to buy anything for a day or buy anything new for a whole year. This is largely in opposition to days like Black Friday which is an epitome of consumerist greed. Wwoofing (World Wide Opportunities on Organic farms) and couch surfing are other ways by which people fight the normal consumerist way of working and travelling. In wwoofing work is not rewarded with money but with free boarding and food. A consumer culture has also been derided as being a culture that celebrates the 'nowness' of everything. It is a culture that is all about instant gratification and a preference for mobility and transience as opposed to stability and durability (Bauman, 2007). In a consumerist culture people keep wanting and looking for newer things and slowness in production means death of a product. A consumerist culture has also ensured that there is a plethora of products in the market spoiling the consumer with choices. Many people the world over are looking to create a post consumerist society by following voluntary simplicity which is not only about consuming less but a society where people connect and care more for each other.

Supporters of a consumer culture however say that the problem begins with the negative connotation associated with the word itself. Just by calling it a consumerist society, they say, there is a lot of negativity attached to the concept and people can look or think no other way about it. One of the reasons why people support a consumerist society is because it creates a lot of jobs (Whig, 2012). When there is a demand for more goods, there is also a rise in the number of people who are involved in producing the goods. This demand creates not only new jobs but new industries that help previously impoverished people. Another disadvantage or a negative aspect of a

consumerist society says people are the food miles. These people only look at the number of miles the food product have to travel to be sold, but fail to look at the transformation in the lives of people this transportation involves. Transporting food not only sustains the transportation industry but it also created new markets for the producers who grow in surplus. Then there is the frozen food industry which has grown with the bringing in of foods from other far away areas. Not to mention the supermarkets and other places that store and sell these products. A whole chain of dependency and jobs are created because people want more and newer things. This cannot be completely bad. Hatred or opposition towards a consumer culture can also come out of envy. People deride the consumerist culture when they cannot afford the same products as that of their neighbors. It is a sort of keeping up with the joneses thing, and when they cannot really keep up, they go against the whole system. This movement against a consumerist culture says some is also a movement orchestrated by the developed countries. The fear of losing their markets or their position in the world is also a factor that forces some of these countries to discourage a consumerist culture in the rest of the world.

A consumerist culture can be bad for some and can be a blessing for some. Each group has their own reasons for wanting it and getting rid of it. A first generation businessman would be all for it while a farmer who loses his market would be against it. Opinions differ based on the location and the lifestyle of the people involved and there will always be differing opinions and beliefs when it comes to talking about consumerist culture.

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