

# **VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF A SHOPPING MALL**

## **DESIGN RESEARCH SEMINAR**

**BY**

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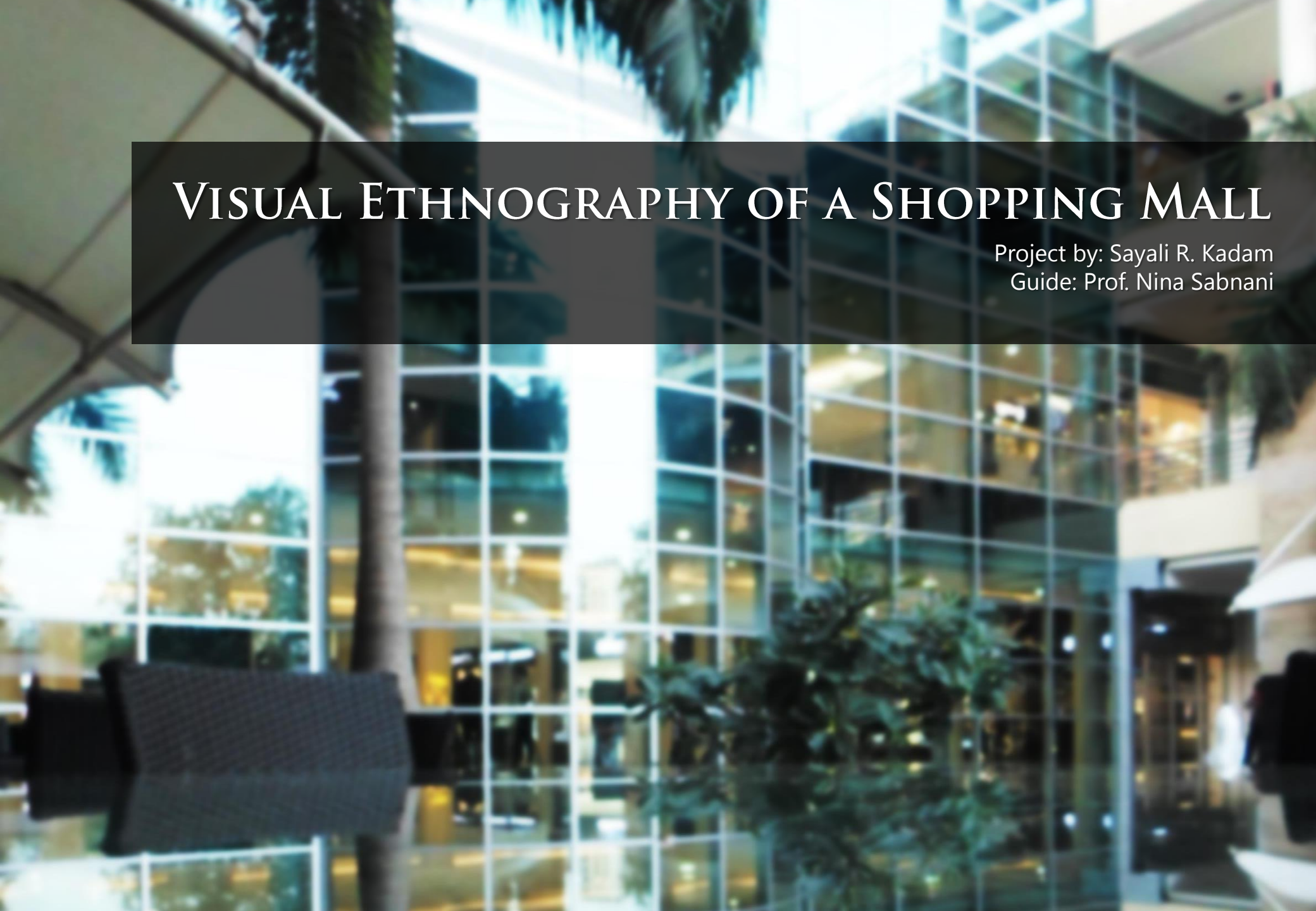
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**INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CENTRE  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BOMBAY  
2015**



# VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF A SHOPPING MALL

Project by: Sayali R. Kadam  
Guide: Prof. Nina Sabnani

# APPROVAL

Animation Design Special Project

## **'Visual Ethnography of a shopping Mall'**

By Sayali R. Kadam

M.Des. Animation 2013-15

has been approved as partial fulfilment of  
requirement of post-graduate degree in Animation  
Design

Prof. Nina Sabnani

[Project Guide]

# DECLARATION

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/ data/ fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature:

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank my guide Prof. Nina Sabnani, for her support and guidance throughout the project and otherwise.

The report, and consecutively the project, would be incomplete without thanking the staff and management at Viviana Mall, for the co-operation extended to me throughout the duration of my project.

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## WHY SHOPPING MALL?

This is from long before the project was conceived. A lot of my friends' plans to meet had started happening in shopping malls. While I waited in the food court for them to arrive, I have looked around and many questions have popped up in my head over the course of time... Questions like so many people! What are they doing here? Do they have a purpose? Or just hanging around... And as my friends would start coming one by one, I would wonder: are malls connecting people? So when the opportunity came, I took up studying this phenomenon as my project. Over the course of the project, I read about the origins of malls. It struck me that maybe the concept of a mall isn't that novel to us after all.

Its just like a bazaar! Our good old bazaars from old times, just in a more fashionable way. In a mall, you don't have to worry about weather. Be it summers or monsoons, you can go there any time of the year, shop from a large selection of brands, eat from a number of cuisines, watch movies at the in-house multiplex, or just sit there. Maybe it's the only place apart from a garden where you can sit for as long as you want free of any charges.

I started the project out of curiosity about the role that shopping malls play in social connectivity nowadays. I have noticed how families now prefer to spend time at weekends in a shopping mall. Friends prefer to meet up and hang out together at malls. Shopping malls are also attracting couples out on a date. For shopaholics, it's the most favorite place to be. Many girls hoard upon coupons, scout for discounts and shop together at malls.





House-wives are attracted by budget shopping in the hyper-retail shops to stock up on the month's grocery. Never have I been to a mall and found it empty. I have encountered people from across generations. Groups of teenagers, mid-aged married couples, even old couples! They all converge at the food court in hopes of spending quality time together! Despite so much crowd being around, people are engaged in their own fun. The lights and ambience is enhanced to make one feel fresh throughout.

The one thing I like about malls is that you can shop from a myriad range of items, from normal clothes to a new-born baby's clothes, from mobile phones to a car wash, everything in one place. You don't have to spend time searching for products in different shops. So many facilities under one roof, literally. Maybe, since these were my reasons, I could find out why other people are coming to malls..

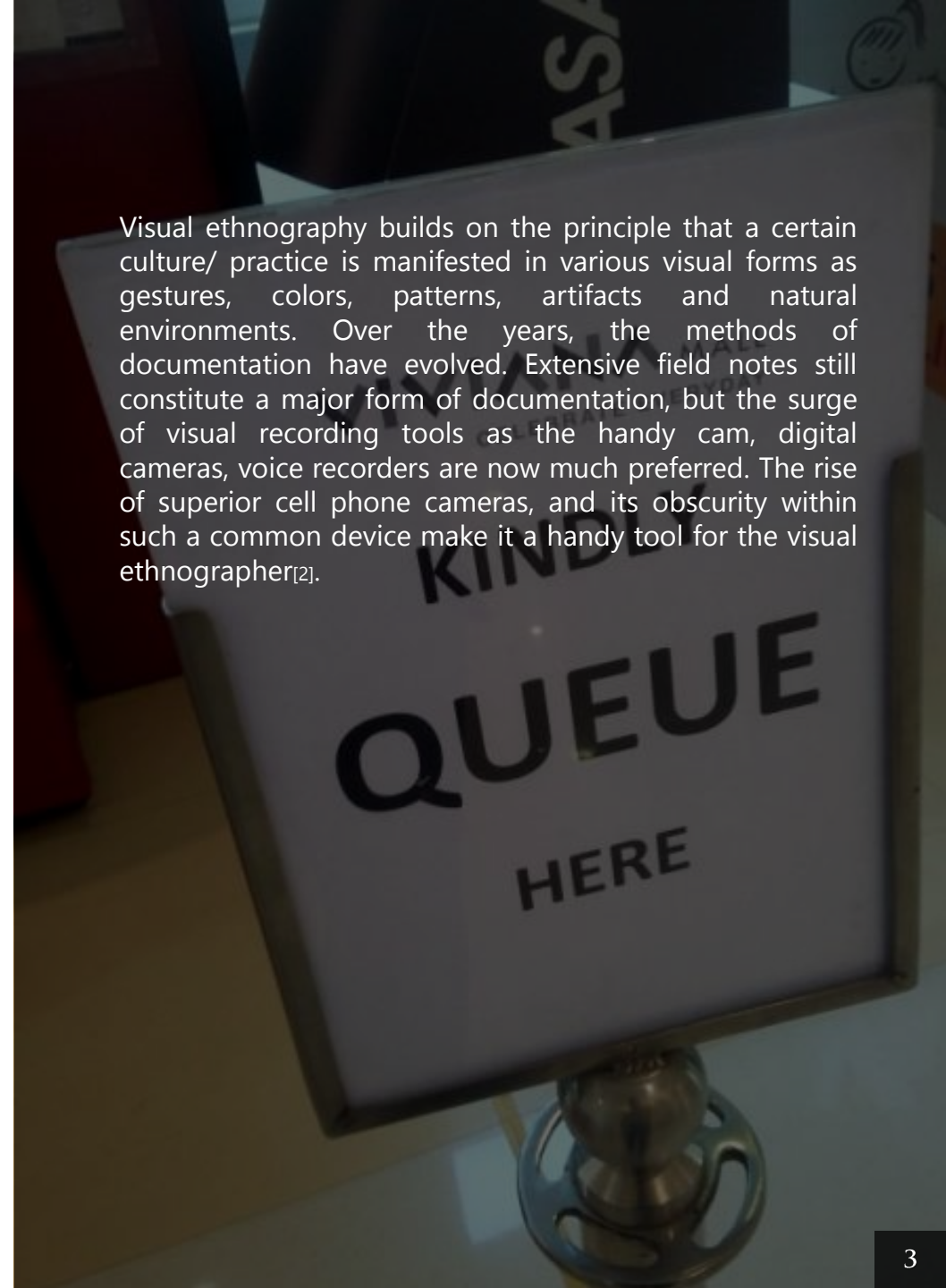
My journey began with searching for the most popular mall currently. The answer was Viviana mall, Thane. With the rising popularity of malls, almost every urban centre in India has one mall that holds the sway over people. What the shopping mall presents to you is a utopian environment, magical staircases, flashy variety of shops, cold basement car parking, all with attractive facilities and occasional discounts! Some malls have open spaces in between so that people can sit in the open air and enjoy. Most malls have their own interpretation of this basic structure, and this in turn gives the mall its identity. The project aims to look for such clues, and the role they play in the modern society.

# VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Humans are very complex living beings. Their behavioral patterns and the way their complex minds work are totally unpredictable. The quest to seek knowledge on humans is now not just limited to tools such as anthropology and biology. Extensive documentation and a keen eye to recognize patterns is the need of the hour. Techniques as ethnography can help in recognizing such patterns. Ethnography not just helps in building a qualitative database but also helps in elucidating steps that are often missed out in technicalities and creating vivid description of people's experiences. Experiences specific to a culture, a region and so on. Ethnographic studies often work within a context. The ethnographer goes about documenting the process, usually observing the scenario in depth keeping the context in mind. An ethnographer also describes a situation by asking multiple people about an event. Multiple responses helps the ethnographer to make fine distinctions and see ambiguities in the way a situation is interpreted<sup>[1]</sup>.

Ethnography is largely dependent on fieldwork. While making inferences, it is also a process of discovery and is helped by an inquisitive nature. as opposed to a rigid, controlled experiment, ethnography is an open ended learning process.

Visual ethnography builds on the principle that a certain culture/ practice is manifested in various visual forms as gestures, colors, patterns, artifacts and natural environments. Over the years, the methods of documentation have evolved. Extensive field notes still constitute a major form of documentation, but the surge of visual recording tools as the handy cam, digital cameras, voice recorders are now much preferred. The rise of superior cell phone cameras, and its obscurity within such a common device make it a handy tool for the visual ethnographer<sup>[2]</sup>.





# ABOUT SHOPPING MALL

The origins of shopping malls can be traced to the Roman forum, or the Greek Agoras, that thrived at the heart of their ancient cities. Closer home, in India, every village had an area reserved for shopping, the Bazaar. Apart from this, a day of the week was reserved for traders, vendors, big and small to gather at the bazaar and sell their goods in abundance. This weekly day saw people from neighboring villages flock to the bigger town in large numbers. The village then assumed the look of a fair, a mela. It was full of fun and relic apart from serious shopping. On one side while the farmers were busy selling their produce, their kids could enjoy tasty snacks, or sit in the huge Ferris wheels that had been assembled overnight. By the next day, all of this had moved on to some other village, and the idyllic pace of life continued.

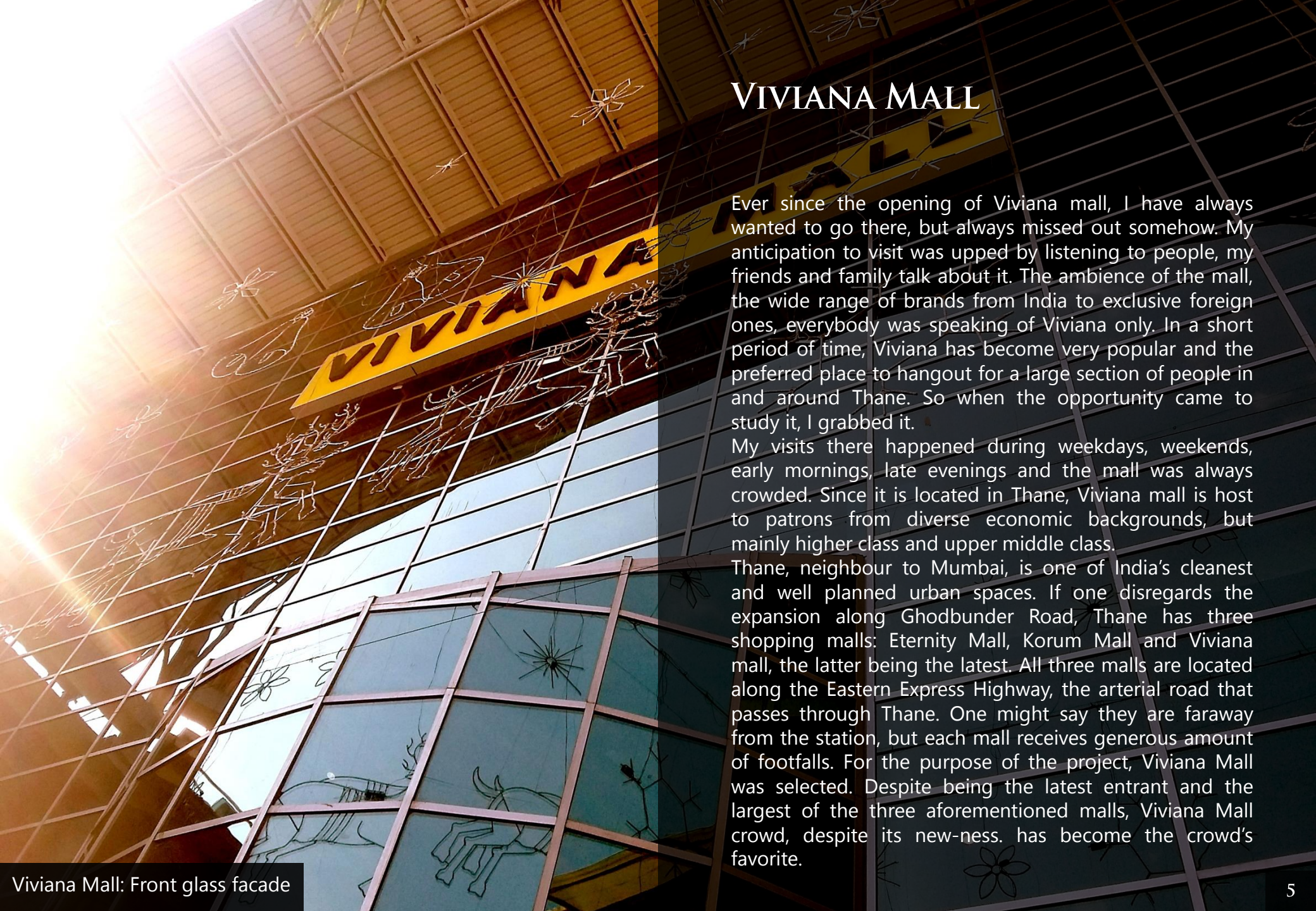
Meanwhile in the west, the concept of a shopping mall was taking birth. Paris saw the rise of enclosed arcades with shops lined on both sides, the passages coverts<sup>[3]</sup>. The industrial revolution led to increased production of consumer goods. Following the demand-supply rule, shopping arcades popped up elsewhere in the developed world. Urban planners like Victor Greun, realised the potential of a shopping centre as the hub of social activities in an urban scenario. He envisaged shopping malls as multifunctional urban spaces meeting the

purposes of meeting place, market place and a connection place. His design firm planned some of the earliest malls across USA. He also visualized shopping malls as hyper-urbanized extensions within the city, presenting them clean, well lit, well planned, better than rest of the city <sup>[4]</sup>.

A disturbing phenomenon is of these early malls already being abandoned. Newer and bigger malls keep on springing up continuously. There have been instances where a failing mall has been a precursor to a locality's devaluation, for instance, the malls in Detroit were failing much before the city's auto industry went bust.

India's first shopping mall opened in Chennai in 1991, the Spencer Plaza mall. The mall concept was glamorous and appealed to new liberal economy and soon shopping malls were opening up all over the country. By 2000s, all the urban centres had sprawling shopping mall complexes. The entry of bigger players like Landmark group, Future Group, Reliance, etc. led to the second generation of shopping malls. These were flashier, well planned, had international quality stores, multiplex theatres, food courts with cuisines from all over the world, they offered India, a glimpse into the future. Soon there was a race to be the biggest. Not one mall could hold the title of 'India's biggest mall' for long! Currently, Lulu mall, Kochi holds the title.





## VIVIANA MALL

Ever since the opening of Viviana mall, I have always wanted to go there, but always missed out somehow. My anticipation to visit was upped by listening to people, my friends and family talk about it. The ambience of the mall, the wide range of brands from India to exclusive foreign ones, everybody was speaking of Viviana only. In a short period of time, Viviana has become very popular and the preferred place to hangout for a large section of people in and around Thane. So when the opportunity came to study it, I grabbed it.

My visits there happened during weekdays, weekends, early mornings, late evenings and the mall was always crowded. Since it is located in Thane, Viviana mall is host to patrons from diverse economic backgrounds, but mainly higher class and upper middle class.

Thane, neighbour to Mumbai, is one of India's cleanest and well planned urban spaces. If one disregards the expansion along Ghodbunder Road, Thane has three shopping malls: Eternity Mall, Korum Mall and Viviana mall, the latter being the latest. All three malls are located along the Eastern Express Highway, the arterial road that passes through Thane. One might say they are faraway from the station, but each mall receives generous amount of footfalls. For the purpose of the project, Viviana Mall was selected. Despite being the latest entrant and the largest of the three aforementioned malls, Viviana Mall crowd, despite its new-ness, has become the crowd's favorite.



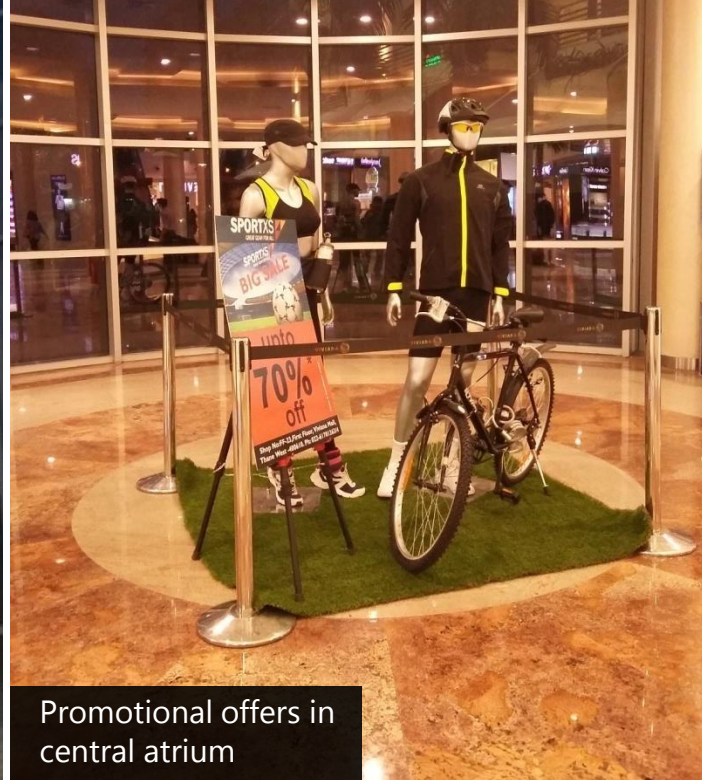


As opposed to the other two, Viviana is positioned more as a luxury mall, with exclusive stores as Zara, Hamley's, Being Human and so on, but it has balanced out its reachability with hypermarkets, bazaar-like small vendors throughout, a sprawling food court and open courtyards. No doubt, Viviana Mall is the most exciting place to be in Thane!





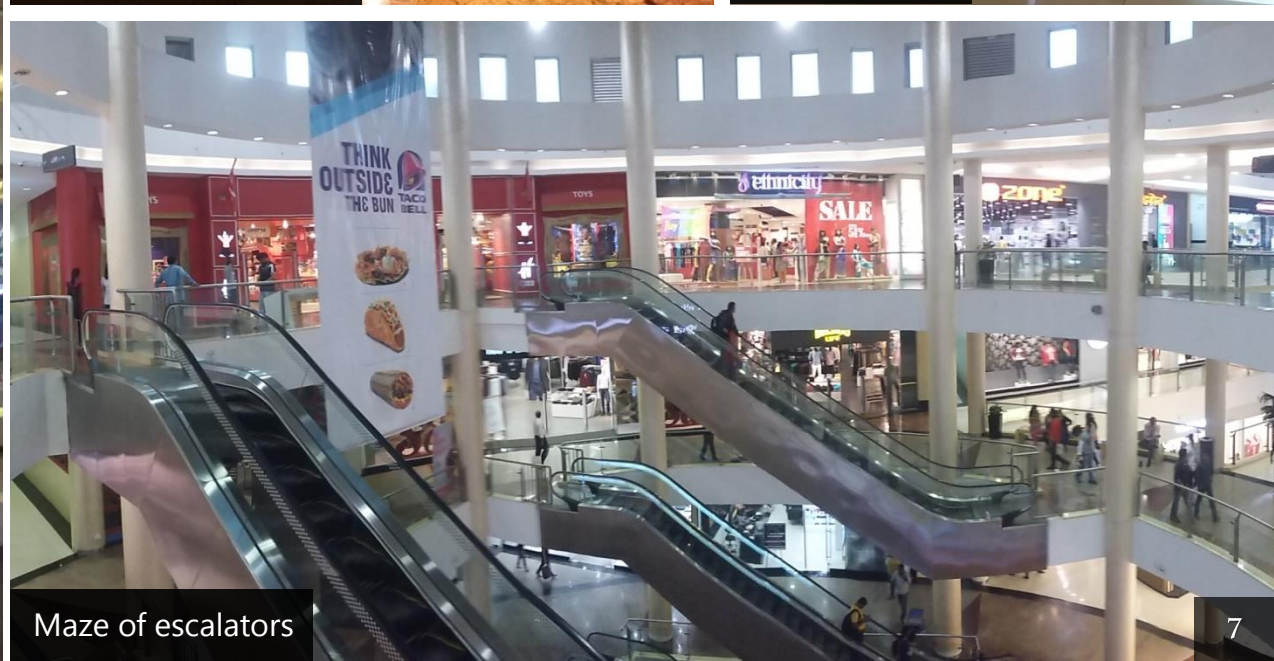
Front glass facade



Promotional offers in central atrium



Hint of green!



Maze of escalators



# VIVIANA MALL

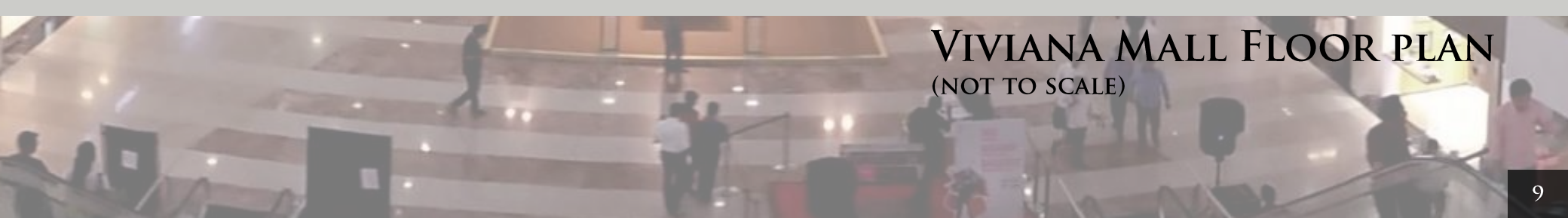
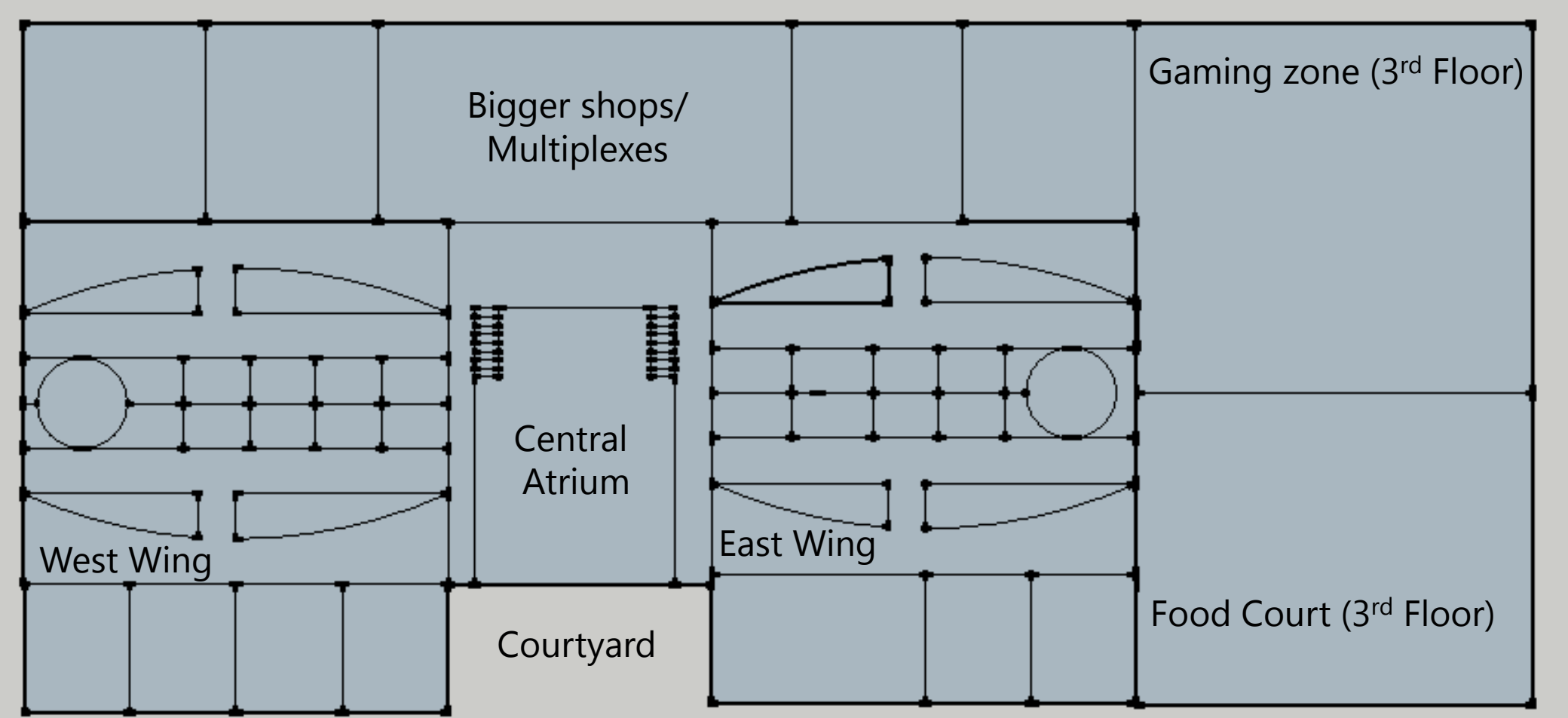
Viviana Mall was conceived and developed by Sheth Builders. It sits next to the JKgram Cadbury Factory along the Eastern Express way. Regular buses and rickshaws ensure easy accessibility to it. The first views of the mall are impressive. Its façade extends long and well designed. At the entrance is a huge courtyard with fountains and seating places. The courtyard is lined by restaurants and coffee houses, that extend three storey up. Almost all the restaurants have been given a front facing location, enhancing their value. Considering its market positioning and image, the international coffee chain, Starbucks, was given one of the prime spots near the front courtyard.

The central glass wall at the back of the courtyard hides the huge inner atrium. Once inside, the mall is broadly divided into three zones: The west court, the central court and the east court. The West and East court, each have two atria, broad passageways with shops on both sides.

The curved elliptical walkways give a dynamic look to the mall and avoid the passivity of straight lines. It makes the space exciting. Going by the standard norms, each retail shop is designed in a width to length ratio of  $x:3x$ , thus giving the shops ample window space and yet not making them deep enough, avoiding a feeling of inaccessibility. All shops follow certain guidelines for signage, window displays and have a demise line, a predetermined outer space beyond which they cannot advertise/display material. A senior fit-out co-coordinator oversees all builder-vendor agreement and are to carry out operations within the given space without any structural alterations.

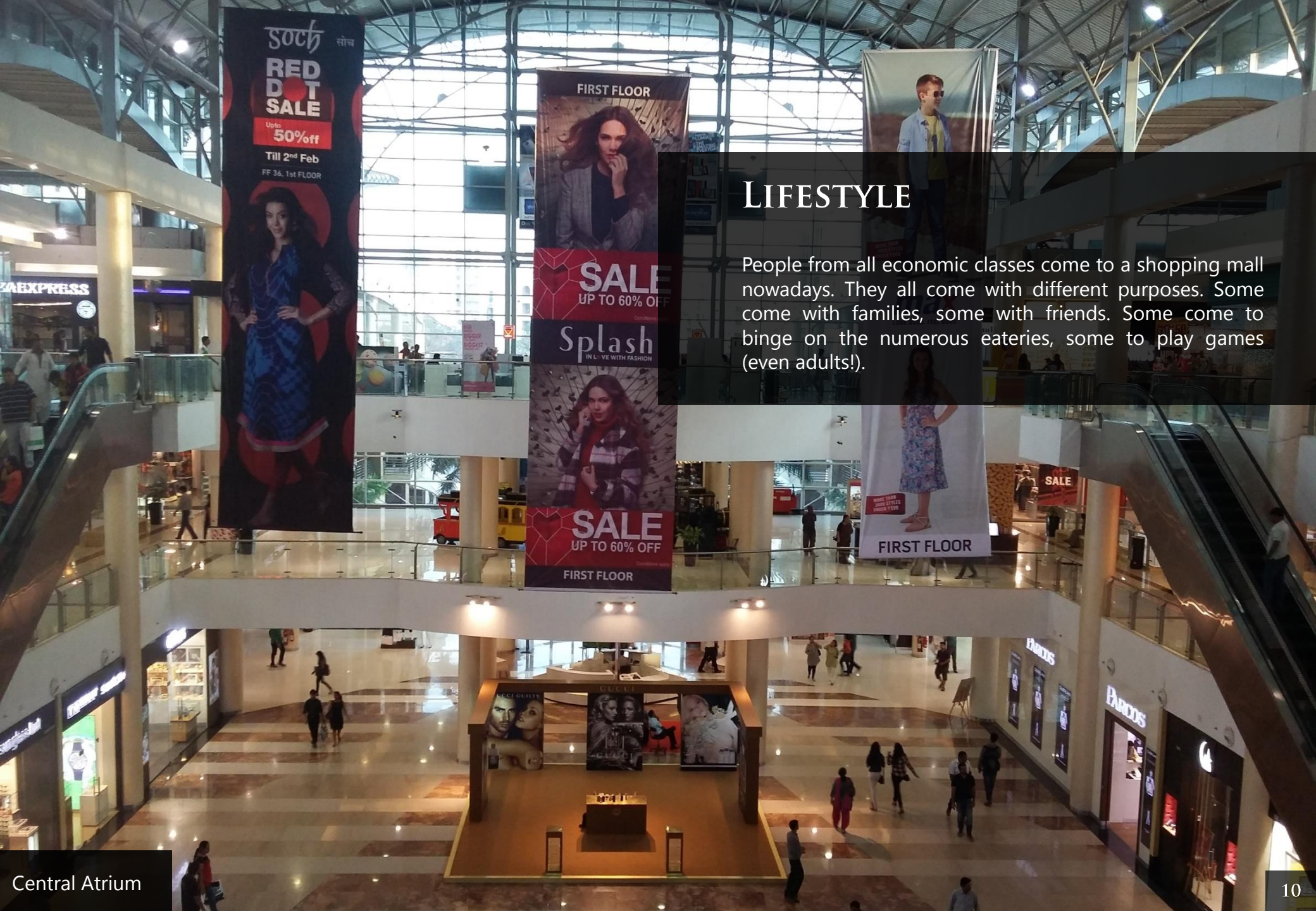
The huge central atrium is the hub of all activities and promotional features going on in the mall. Huge advertising banners hang from the curved roof. At the heart is the Cinepolis multiplex with 14 screens, including and IMAX screen and a 4DX experience screen with ATMOS surround sound.

The East court houses a food court with 2000+ seating capacity. Lined on both sides by every imaginable cuisine, aisles run through this huge indoor courtyard, with screens for broadcasting events as matches, etc. The basement has ample amount of parking for cars (there is also a Car Spa!



VIVIANA MALL FLOOR PLAN  
(NOT TO SCALE)





soch सोच  
**RED DOT SALE**  
Up to **50% off**  
Till 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb  
FF 36, 1st FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR  
SALE  
UP TO 60% OFF  
Splash  
IN LOVE WITH FASHION  
SALE  
UP TO 60% OFF  
FIRST FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

## LIFESTYLE

People from all economic classes come to a shopping mall nowadays. They all come with different purposes. Some come with families, some with friends. Some come to binge on the numerous eateries, some to play games (even adults!).





Taking into context Thane, people come from the neighboring middle class and lower middle class areas of Louiswadi, Wagle estate, Vrindavan colony, Khopat, etc. The more affluent come from Upvan, PanchPakhadi, Hiranandani and such areas. Thane is also home to a number of colleges, and many students come here, after lectures, sometimes even bunking them! A recent trend indicates a willing and welcome mixing of genders in such groups. Maybe it gives these young adults a liberal feel! These youngsters walk around in groups of considerable size, almost like a flock looking to have a good time. Selfies, free wifi have ensured seamless sharing of moments over the internet. This is another reason why malls act as magnets for the hip crowd, you achieve instant gratification of having had an international experience. On the opposite end of the spectrum are young professionals who visit the more upscale coffee shops as Starbucks, Costa coffee and so on, spending entire afternoons in these dimly lit but cosy coffee shops, discussing the world in hushed tones, sipping on their exquisitely named coffee!

Escalators in central atrium,  
with a coffee shop





Central Atrium panorama



## BRANDS

Where Viviana mall triumphs over other malls, is the sheer number of brands it hosts. As mentioned earlier, it is almost 1 ½ times bigger than its closest competitor, Korum Mall. And people like options, be it for serious purchase decisions or casual window shopping. It inspires them, it tempts them.





NAIL SPA

Salon & Spa

Myo Thai Spa  
RETURN TO LIFE

KAPIL'S  
salon & spa  
Beauty Salon

bagzone

TOMMY HILFINGER

WILDCRAFT

happy journey

Accessorize PARCOS Z ESBEDA ZUNI SATYAPPAUL VIARI

hastkala® BLUR Joshn W holii HyperCITY  
PRIMA GOLD Beautifully you. SIA tara Pure Gold JEWELLERS CYGNUS mahi mahi

TANISHQ From TATA péora Nishika ayesha hastkala®

Reebok METRO SKECHERS CHARLES & KEITH CONVERSE WOODLAND REGAL

PUMA adidas RED TAPE Clarks PAVERS ENGLAND Bata Hush Puppies

Nike crocs

Splash FASHION 365 SHOPPERS STOP START SOMETHING NEW lifestyle YOUR STYLE. YOUR STORE. MARKS & SPENCER globus pantaloons Reliance trends

ethnicity FOREVER 21 ZARA max Look good. Feel good.

Barbie GINI JONY Vitamins Queen Anne's Label me moms PVT. LTD. UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON. mothercare

ZOO Spin'Arch GJ JEANS

homecentre

oren KITCHEENWORLD

BOMBAY PTEC

portico

Nette

Shalini's HOME SHOP

nyassa

foresight opticals

sunglass hut

Ray-Ban BARELY



Seating Around indoor trees (with access to wifi)

## PEOPLE



Toy cars like animals, waiting for kids, their customers





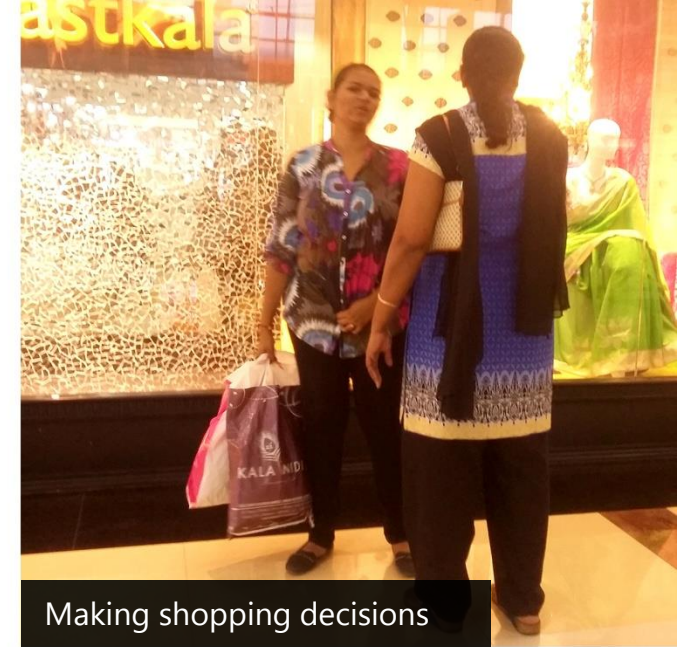
Viviana is home to some exclusive showrooms of foreign brands. All the clothes in the mall reflect the changing sensibilities of modern Indian women, and such trendy fashionable clothes attract more and more women to malls. The more exclusive showrooms are frequented only by the elite, the stores in turn extending elite memberships and loyalty programmes to regular customers. The hyper-retail stores are visited by families belonging to middle class and lower middle class (I explicitly mention families!). Even they try selling loyalty programmes, albeit less successfully, and if they do it is only after careful and repeated scrutiny of the offer by the customers.





Maze of escalators

One more delightful discovery was how mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws come together to shop in the afternoons. Sometimes a group of older mother-in-laws is accompanied by a daughter-in-law of one of them. Its great fun to see them selecting an ice-cream flavor having finished the shopping.



Making shopping decisions



Passages











Delicate earrings

## VENDORS

The shopkeepers, the vendors pump life into the mall. The shop-owners maintain a different outlook than smaller stand-alone shops outside the mall. They have to come up with innovative ways to display their wares, to catch the customer's eye before he/she slips to the adjoining shop. They directly engage with the customer, and they make sure no stone is left unturned in this endeavour. Some prefer over-the-top décor, while some prefer classy, muted decors. They gauge their look by the customers they are targeting. The bigger retailers, say for e.g. Baggit purses, Hamleys, have an established theme/style for their shop outlook that is replicated to ensure similar experiences across venue.

As opposed to market, there is absolutely no bargains on the fixed price. The shopkeeper might cut his commission if he really wants to hold the customer, but this is usually in favour of long-term retention of the customer. So that the customer returns, the shopkeeper might also give him some refreshments, complimentary of course, in the higher end stores.

But one thing common across the spectrum is the uber-politeness in the customer interaction on behalf of the shop managers, the guards, the attendants, everyone!





Colorfully displayed accessories for girls



Absraction



## RICKSHAW-WALLAHS

The mall is located a bit away from the station, hence transport relies heavily on rickshaw-wallahs, and Thane is a bit notorious in that aspect. Many refuse to ply on requested routes. Despite this Viviana mall manages to have a disciplined serpentine queue of rickshaw-wallahs at the front. They ply customers to and fro wherever the customers want. How is this possible?

The mall runs a unique venture for rickshaw-wallahs who ply customers to their mall. It is called "Hum Saath Saat (60) Hai". For each trip, the rickshaw-wallah is handed a coupon. Upon collecting a 60 such coupons, he can bring his family to one of the hyper-markets in the mall to buy monthly rations worth Rs.2000 [5]. This altruistic venture is certainly worth a mention. This is one of the reason for huge crowd in mall, unlike other malls where you have to wait for several minutes for rickshaw. The mall has thus addressed the customers' needs and reached out to the rickshaw-wallahs in a unique way. Within a month of its implementation, this venture has received a good response. It has also helped the traffic authorities regulate the traffic outside the mall in a better way.

The programme is a wonderful example of corporate social responsibility and well-thought management practices on behalf of mall authorities. It is also a nod to how important a link, the rickshaw-wallahs are in the urban scenario.







Cleaner in the food court



Kiosk attendant



Security Guard

## WORKERS

The mall is a hyper clean environment, as mentioned earlier. It's a smoothly running social congregation place. The management gives directives, decides policies, but more than that, it is the workers who actually help run the illusion. And they do so, while quietly merging into the background, almost invisible to the crowds who enjoy the experience of the mall environment. The workers report to the supervisor in charge of each court. They toggle, work in shifts and are finally answerable to a senior Environment, Health & Safety Officer. The workers are constantly moving about in the mall, oblivious to everyone. The food court is especially a challenge. The crowds are constantly coming, leaving, sitting. They are also eating, leaving behind trays on the tables which have to be constantly cleaned. For the washrooms also, dedicated teams with their cleaning gear can be spotted.



It is an interesting dynamic to observe. These people work hard to earn their pay, and yet they are witness to at times mindless expenses by the visitors to the mall. Their aspirations also include being able to buy things off the shelf from one of these fancy shops, but in the course of the project I have seldom seen them getting distracted from their work. Indeed a commendable team!



Cleaner in the courtyard





## KIDS

For kids, mall is an attraction. Its decorated spaces, colorful displays and their understanding that it is home to innumerable toys fuels their attraction. And the mall knows that the kids tag along their parents, the true spenders. It increases footfalls and thus better popularity. So the little ones decide a lot of factors! At Viviana, there's a full fledged toy train that runs through the mall. Along within this, it also has a vast toy store, Hamleys. The mall also holds drawing competitions, weekend activities, dances and so on, to keep their little customers engaged!



Kid overlooking the pool in the courtyard





## CUSTOMERS

The purpose of the mall. To host. To entertain. To sell. And all these activities pointed to one single entity. The customers. A mall is conceived and only after extensive studies of consumer patterns is it executed. The mall does not need one customer shopping truckloads at a costly outlet. It needs truckloads of customers shopping at all outlets. Viviana mall has smartly positioned itself. It caters to those with more than average spending capacity, having outlets like Zara, Louis Vuitton, Hamley's and so on in the higher bracket. The visitors here are smartly dressed, they are serious buyers instead of usual window shoppers. They are loyalists and often have an idea of what they want. The other medium range outlets are very competitive and have aggressive marketing and are often successful in influencing the customer to buy something maybe they didn't have in mind, often a bit beyond their budget. These outlets appeal to the aspirational values of the customers. The customers visiting the hypermarkets however always end up buying more than what they had planned. These include customers irrespective of their segment. People however don't like to be mentioned as 'customers', often tending to have an upper hand in all transactions. The trick is to make profits while ensuring the customer has a good shopping experience, thus also ensuring return. For this, the malls employ various tactics. The display of the shop window is the most important tactic. Sales, discounts, offers come next. Once inside the shop, proper layout and service are the deciding factors.





Couple shopping



Making shopping decisions



Shopping carts lined up at hypermarket



Salman Khan's brand: Being Human

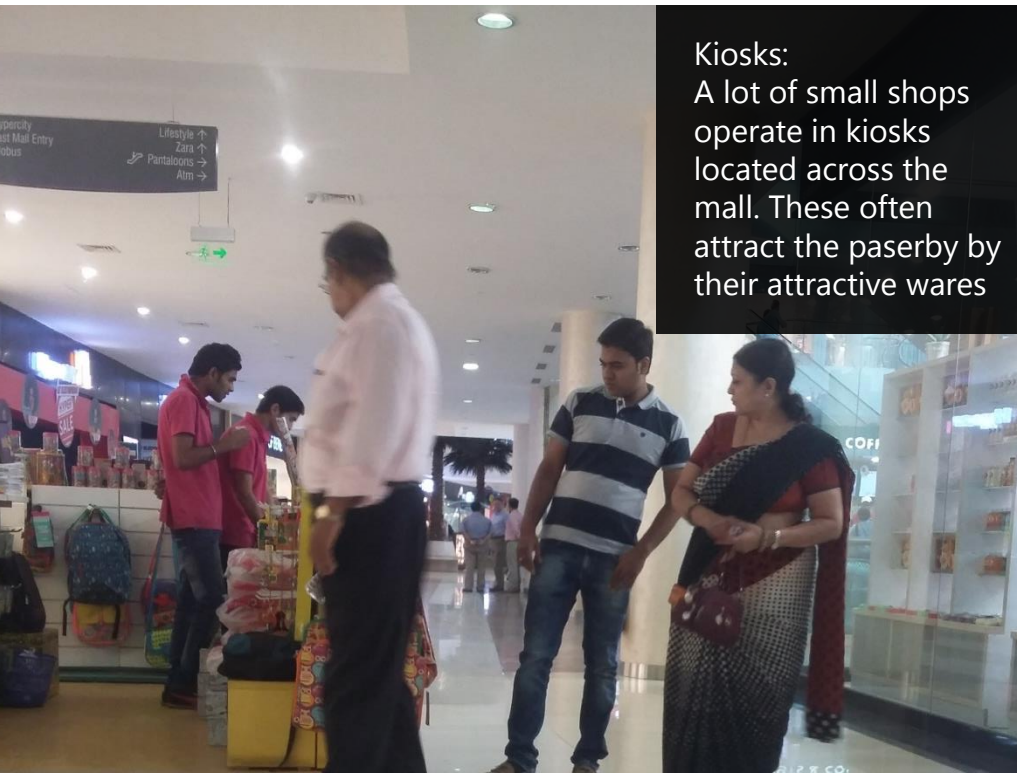


Family shopping



In-mall kiosks





Kiosks:  
A lot of small shops  
operate in kiosks  
located across the  
mall. These often  
attract the passerby  
by their attractive wares







Sale:  
Discounts, offers attract a lot of customers and shops throughout the mall participate in such a 'sale season'.

A large outdoor advertisement for Shoppers Stop. It features two women smiling and holding shopping bags with the Shoppers Stop logo. Below them, a sign reads 'UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICES. up to 51% off SALE. BEGINS JAN 3'. To the right, another sign says 'SHOPPERS STOP START SOMETHING NEW' with icons for 'In store' and 'Online'. At the bottom, it says 'Shop online 24x7 at www.shoppersstop.com'.





Attractive sale displays







Ornate décor of an ethnic Indian outfit shop, Hastkala, carefully also showing its market positioning





### Mannequins:

Its funny how much a mannequin helps customers gauge how they will look in a particular dress. At times it is their abstract expressions that help, but that a mannequin influences buying decision cannot be disputed. "please show me the dress on that one!" is an often heard line. And shops have taken these figurines and their innovative arrangement seriously.







Innovative non-conventional  
Chrome mannequins at  
Forever 21





### Arrangement and Layout:

All shops cater to a certain ethos that they try to reflect in someway through the way they display their goods, so be it shoes, jewelry, bags or clothes. The way finding has to be easy and the premium products have to catch the customer's eye.







Themes:  
As shown in the pic above, Bata which is trying to break into the outdoor footwear business, is doing so by keeping rustic props and so on. Meanwhile, on the right, Allen Solly can be seen taking its logo a bit more seriously, by actually displaying a faux antler bust!





No nonsense display and advertising:  
The layouts and outward display of  
collars shows UCB brand getting directly  
to the point.





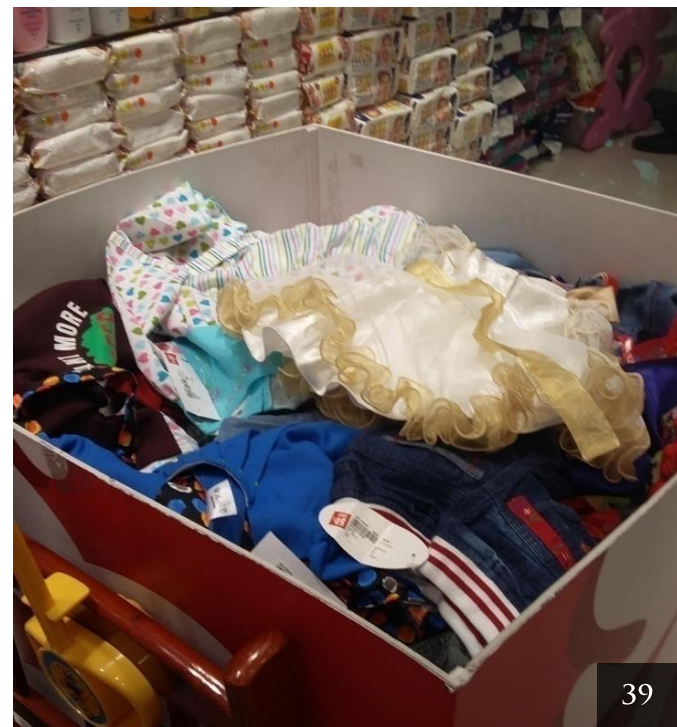
Displays of toys at Hamley's would make even an adult go weak in the knees!





Maternity shops are the latest trend. They thrive on the nervousness of the expecting mother and the assurance of quality and safety that such shops offer means good business. The shops are especially softly lit, with well displayed goods as cribs, soft blankets, baby clothes, baby food, toys, all well segmented over the period of baby's growth.





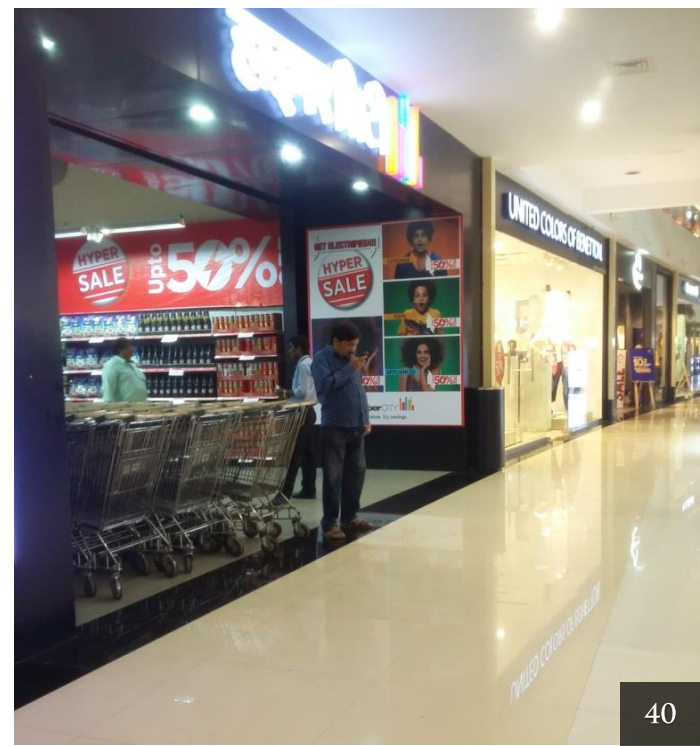




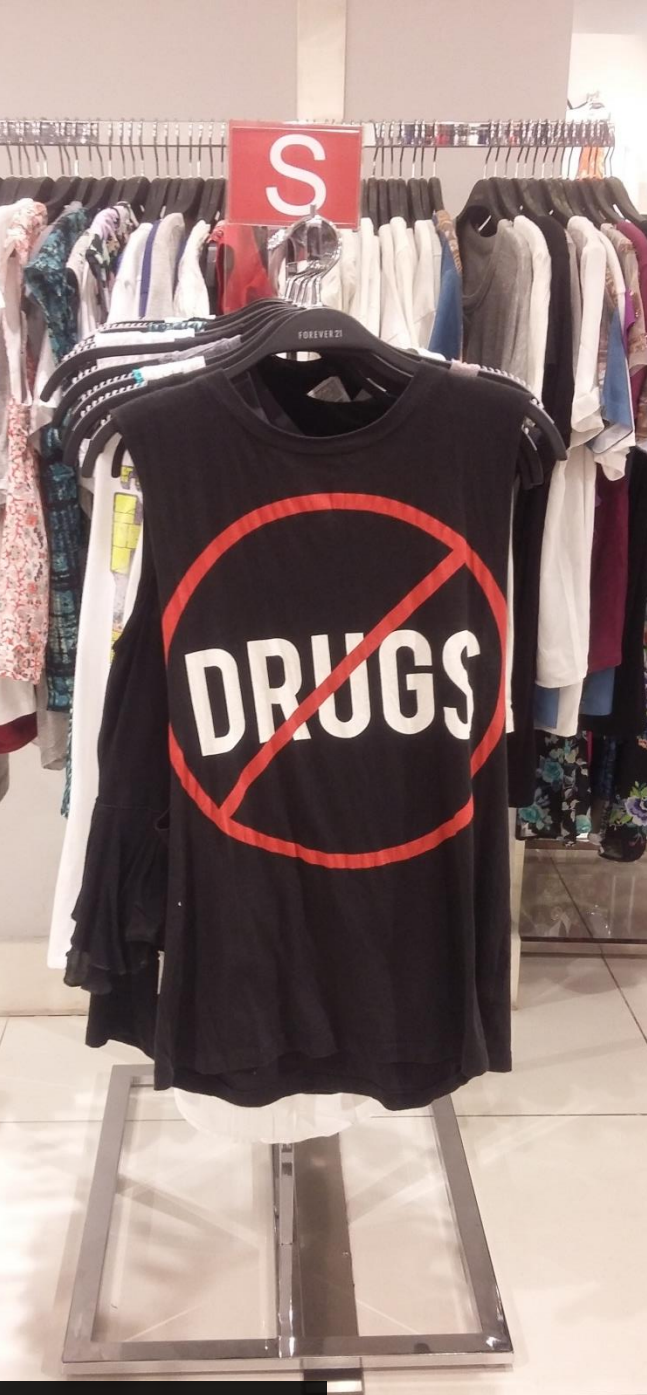
Premium ladies shop



Bookstore







Social message tees



Toy cars parked



All sold!



An authentic Oriental spa



Navigation cues





The multiplex



Balloon guy



Predicting futures!



In-house florist



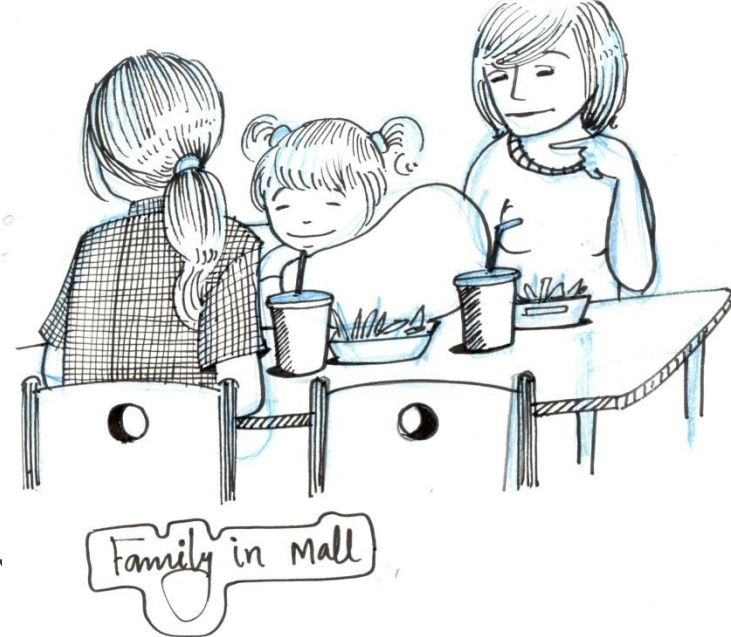
The food court is the hub of many activities in the mall. People just meet up here, waving to their friends who have just arrived, thinking aloud of what to eat from the numerous eateries, or just sit and stare into their lover's eyes! The food court is a wonderful place to observe human behaviour of various types, its like a mall within a mall!



The foodcourt

Cleaner in the food court













The food shops are no way behind clothes and accessories shops in enticing customers. One look at the Mad over Donuts (top), and one is immediately thinking of warm sweet donuts. Amul's girl (top, right) instantly wants you to have icecream. Taco bell's logo (bottom, right) immediately ensures you of a different non-bread eating experience. The mall is food lover's paradise!





## SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

Apart from these establishments, the mall also holds special events on occasions like festivals, concerts, etc. Families might walk into a mall, buy weekly/ monthly ration and then maybe go for a movie, eat at the food court. But such events give an extra festive tinge to the experience, and it is common knowledge that we Indians love a little bit of music and dance! They make plans to return on the next festival, just in case.

Festivals especially are very important to the Indian psyche. The mall already has space, crowds, and by incorporating a festival and participation from these crowds, malls have brought a new meaning to celebrating festivals.

During the course of the project, I got to witness Christmas and new year celebrations at the mall. It was treat to see the mall covered in deep red with golden adornments and tall Christmas trees throughout. Throughout the second half of December, the mall was host to Santa, his generous nature of gifting kids. The individual shops also participated in the festive flavour, decorating their display areas attractively, some even going far to have snowmen!





IT'S RAINING TOYS!

HAVE A

*Hamleys*  
EST. LONDON 1749

CHRISTMAS













Christmas decorations











Christmas Eve







#### Other Festivals:

The mall also celebrates other festivals as Gandhi Martyr's Day (30<sup>th</sup> January), Gudi Padwa, Republic Day (26<sup>th</sup> January) along with exhibitions such as the one on Photos of Forts of Maharashtra.

(Photo courtesy: Viviana official website)







#### Events:

Apart from usual festivals, the mall organises occasional events and pledges, eye donation camps, concerts, flash mobs and street plays. This infuses dynamism into the mall. You never know what to expect in the mall each time you walk in!

(Photo courtesy: Viviana official website)





# CONCLUSIONS

I started out with a general observation, a hypotheses that maybe shopping malls have become centres for social connectivity. Connectivity would mean engagements in which paths cross, influence lives and possibly change them. After spending time at mall, I have observed most of this to be true.

Malls have achieved what they set out to do: be the hub of all modern urban activities. Activities that have general crowd participating in it. Malls satisfy the aspirational values of the average person in terms of services, products, etc, to simplify, just make people feel special. Many a times, shopping is just an excuse to take out time and reconnect in an environment that is relaxed and offers all services from food to washrooms, to gardens (and even a spa for your car!)

In the process, the visitors touch many lives, beyond just their own circle- the rickshaw wallah who ferries them to the mall, the car parking attendant in the basement, the polite shop attendant, the silent cleaner.

They come in touch with people across strata, see trends and fashions, both local and international, in short, just move out and see the world, albeit locally in a microcosm of the world that is the mall.

*"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."*

-FERRIS BUELLER

The mall is no walk in a garden, but it can be safely concluded that no other place is as convenient as a mall to spend some time with your preferred people in urban areas. So take some time and reconnect with someone special at a mall!



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