

**WALK AN IDEA!** | Smelling a business opportunity, few malls are thinking of opening malls between 6-9:30am for walkers

# Malls' wealth depends on walkers' health? May be

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**Bangalore:** One man's inconvenience is another's business opportunity. How? Here's how.

Lack of open spaces is a major weak point of our cities. There are fewer spaces to jog or walk. What is the solution? More parks and cycle lanes, you might say. But there's an unlikely solution as well. Few malls in the city are mulling over opening their doors a little early, so that morning walkers can stroll in the corridors and have a look at the brands displayed.

A Western concept, that has found acceptance in Mumbai, 'mall walks' is expected to enter Garden City very soon.

Players like Inorbit, and upcoming ones like Vega City and Virtuous Retail are charting out plans of opening their

## WHAT JOGGERS SAY

Jogger Manas S, a BPO employee living in Rajajinagar, feels parts of old Bangalore has plenty of gardens. "When I can get direct sunlight by going to a nearby park, why would I want to go to an enclosed environment? That defeats the purpose of a morning walk."

Thirty-year-old Swathi Swaroop, who lives near Bannerghata Road, feels she would be open towards trying out a 'mall walk'. "In fact, there is no public garden near my place. So yes, I would be a willing mall walker."

malls between 6-9:30am primarily for walkers. The early morning hours will have a handful of food outlets remaining open to lure walkers for quick bites.

While malls feel people in areas lacking open spaces will be the first to jog in, the underlying reason is simply this: increasing footfalls during lean hours, that can later get converted into purchase decisions.

"The idea is to get people to spend more time in a mall," says Nishank Joshi, assistant

VP, marketing, Pioneer Property Zone, which manages malls.

The key remains getting people acquainted with the brands, outlets and offers during morning walks, something that can very well translate into handsome buying decisions at a later stage.

Experts say city malls spend anywhere from Rs40-50 lakhs to create publicity about their promotional events during peak periods like Deepavali, Christmas-New Year and summer vaca-

● There are 29 malls in Bangalore at present. They make up 8.347 million square feet of mall space amongst them.

● 33 new malls are waiting to open. Once operational, these 33 new ones will add an additional 17.18 million square feet of mall space.

● So all in all, Bangalore will stand to have 62 malls in 5 years, with a total mall space of 25.529 million square feet.

● Average footfalls in malls range from 20,000 on weekdays, to over 80,000 during weekends and festivals.

tions. And mall walks help arrest the overflowing budgets, since a great deal of publicity can happen right there.

Malls say even if 70-80 people were to use the premises for daily walks, the purpose is served.

Moreover, the walks can help establish loyalty between customers and the mall, a much needed virtue when competition is tight.

"It can create a bond between a customer and the mall. The way a person has an at-

tachment to a particular park, and would always go to that one for a walk," says Kishore Bhatija, CEO, Inorbit Mall.

According to Indraneel Majumdar, centre director, Virtuous Retail, Whitefield, the objective is to build a community centre by making it more people friendly.

Malls are currently assessing whether the concept can take off in Bangalore, where open space is not yet a major hurdle, unlike Mumbai.

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