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## Diwali Preparations: Shopping Is a Must and Pleasure

Festivals in India are known to be very vibrant & full of life. With Diwali being right around the corner, everyone has their plate full; let it be cleaning & decoration of their homes or shopping for their well-wishers. But considering our already preoccupied lives and a long to-do list for the season, we usually don't get the time to visit various stores to fulfill all the festive needs and necessities.

So what do we do? Online shopping has been the answer to this problem for quite some time now. There's hardly anything that you'll not be able to find on any online shopping website. From clothes to shoes, electronic lights to traditional 'diyas', gadgets, food supplies, all Indian desserts & sweets, these websites have got it all covered. Sounds convenient? Not so much for the offline retailers, who have faced a 50% decline in their sales, due to heavy discounts available on all the online platforms.

Terms like 'The Great Indian Festival' and 'Big Billion Days' have become the talk of the town as amidst the celebratory season, online shopping websites are offering enormous concessions just to compete with one another, putting their offline competitors at a disadvantage. The traders running small businesses are facing huge losses as the online retailers are using complex business strategies to offer reductions.

Speaking to some of the small traders, we found out that the reason why these huge discounts are an issue causing distress among them is that this makes their business unviable as it destroys the worth of a product in the minds of a consumer. "Everyone wants to buy sweets online. This used to be our peak sale season but now customers think as to why should they buy anything at a higher price when they can get the same thing at a discounted rate," says Balaji, a sweet shop owner near Paradise.

The transactions that are made between a customer and an online retailer seem to be very strange as they are deliberately decreasing the prices of products just to attract more customers. Because of tactic, the online companies may see profits in their accounts as compared to the offline traders, as markets are absolutely deserted even in this festive season.

"Previously it used to be just mobile phones and clothes but now these online retailers are taking over small grocery shops and supermarkets. It's evening now and I have only sold a very few diyas since morning", says Gayathri, who runs a small utensil store in Secunderabad.

The offline traders feel that the e-commerce websites are selling everything at a lesser price than the purchasing price itself, which seems quite bizarre. They feel that the maximum retail price, called the MRP, of all products, should be the same on all online and offline platforms to maintain equality and balance for a fair and healthy business.

This has become a massive issue that the Indian government is also looking into the matter, wanting a full-fledged inquiry as to how are they compensating and making up for all the losses incurred because of the discounts offered. These kinds of schemes may look fancy on the outside but are surely involving some malpractice. So what is it going to be for you, this Diwali?

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Internet browsing or a trip around your neighborhood?

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