

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECT OF WINE SHOPS SITUATED IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

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Abstract

The rise in the number of wine shops in Indian residential localities has become a matter of increasing concern among citizens, policymakers, and health professionals. This research paper investigates the psychosocial effects that wine shops exert on neighbourhoods, particularly focusing on mental well-being, behavioural changes, social cohesion, and safety perceptions among residents. Through a mixed-methods approach involving both primary and secondary data collection, this study identifies key psychological stressors and social consequences emerging due to the presence of alcohol outlets in community spaces. The findings suggest a strong correlation between the proximity of wine shops and increased levels of anxiety, public disturbances, safety concerns, and the erosion of communal trust. This paper also explores policy implications and proposes recommendations for urban planning and public health management.

1. Identifying and Defining the Research Problem:

India is experiencing rapid urbanisation, and with it comes a shift in lifestyle, consumption habits, and land use patterns. One significant yet understudied phenomenon is the establishment of wine shops within or adjacent to residential areas. While these outlets provide easy access to liquor and contribute to the economy, their presence in housing localities often raises concerns about safety, nuisance, and psychological stress among residents.

Research Problem:

To investigate the psychosocial effects caused by the presence of wine shops in residential areas in Indian urban settings.

Objectives:

- To assess psychological impacts such as stress, fear, and discomfort among residents.
- To explore the behavioural outcomes such

as public disorder, loitering, and vandalism.

- To evaluate the influence on community bonding and social trust.
- To provide recommendations for urban policy and zoning regulation.

2. Review of Literature:

Extensive research in international contexts shows a direct relationship between alcohol outlet density and community well-being. In the Indian context, however, fewer empirical studies address the psychosocial dimensions of alcohol availability in neighbourhoods.

Livingston et al. (2007) observed that increased alcohol outlet density led to a rise in assaults and antisocial behaviour. Similarly, Scribner et al. (2000) found that domestic violence and community dissatisfaction correlated with proximity to alcohol shops. In India, local news and NGO reports have repeatedly highlighted resident protests against wine shops located

near schools, parks, and temples, citing safety and moral concerns.

According to a 2021 report by the Ministry of Urban Development, most Indian cities lack clearly enforced zoning laws regarding liquor shops. Furthermore, a study published in the Indian Journal of Psychiatry (2019) states that increased exposure to alcohol in public spaces leads to normalisation of drinking and elevated stress levels in non-drinking households.

3. Formulating a Hypothesis:

Based on the literature and field observations, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: The presence of wine shops in residential areas leads to increased psychological stress among residents.

H2: Wine shops contribute to higher perceptions of insecurity and fear, especially among women and elderly.

H3: There is a decline in community participation and neighbourhood trust in areas with active liquor outlets.

4. Research Design:

This study adopts a mixed-method research design combining both qualitative and quantitative data.

Study Area:

Four residential localities were selected from the city of Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Two of them had wine shops within 300 metres, while the other two had no liquor outlet within a 1 km radius.

Sample Size and Technique:

A total of 200 households (50 from each locality) were surveyed. Purposive sampling was used for interviews with community leaders, local shopkeepers, and police personnel.

Data Collection Methods:

- Structured questionnaires assessing stress levels, safety perception, and social trust
- In-depth interviews with 20 stakeholders
- Direct observation during peak hours (6 PM to 10 PM) for a period of two weeks

Tools:

- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
- Likert scale for evaluating neighbourhood satisfaction
- Observation checklists for noting behaviours such as public drinking, loitering, and quarrels

5. Carrying Out the Research Process:

The fieldwork was conducted over a three-week period in December 2024. Trained research assistants administered questionnaires in Tamil and English.

Observational Findings:

- Areas with wine shops experienced higher footfall of non-residents during evenings.
- Public drinking and noise disturbances were frequently recorded.
- Residents reported avoiding certain lanes and public parks after sunset.

Interview Highlights:

- A local woman said, "We avoid sending our daughters to the shop alone after 6 PM."
- A senior citizen mentioned, "I stopped my evening walks because I do not feel safe anymore."
- A police sub-inspector noted a 30% rise in petty complaints in areas with liquor shops.

6. Preparing Research Results:

Quantitative Findings:

| Parameter | With Wine Shop (%) | Without Wine Shop (%) |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| ----- | ----- | ----- |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Reported daily stress | 74% | 39% | |
| Avoided public areas after sunset | | 68% | 21% |
| Observed public drunkenness | | 82% | 15% |
| Feel community is less united | | 66% | 24% |
| Women reporting fear/harassment | 58% | | |
| <u>Qualitative Themes:</u> | | 18% | |

1. Perceived Insecurity: Majority of women and elderly felt unsafe during evenings.

2. Stigmatisation: Non-drinkers and families reported feelings of shame living near such outlets.

3. Community Breakdown: Residents felt less inclined to participate in local events and festivals.

4. Mental Fatigue: Consistent exposure to noise and confrontations contributed to chronic stress.

Statistical Analysis:

A chi-square test confirmed that there is a statistically significant association ($p < 0.05$) between proximity to wine shops and elevated stress and insecurity.

7. **Reporting Research Findings:**

Discussion:

The findings validate the hypotheses that wine shops negatively impact the psychosocial environment of residential areas. Increased stress levels, fear, and community disengagement are evident. The gendered impact is also significant, with women experiencing higher levels of anxiety and restricted mobility.

Urban spaces in India are being reshaped without adequate planning for social well-being. While wine shops serve an economic function, their placement must be judicious. The psychological toll, especially in high-density housing areas, is a matter of public health concern.

Recommendations:

- Strict enforcement of zoning laws to ensure liquor outlets are located away from residential zones.

- Community monitoring and feedback systems for accountability.

- Awareness campaigns highlighting the social impact of local liquor availability.

- Support services such as community counselling and helplines for affected families.

Limitations:

- The study focused only on urban settings and may not apply to rural contexts.

- Self-reported data could include bias.

- Seasonal variations and festival times may affect patterns not captured during the study period.

Scope for Future Research:

- Longitudinal studies on the psychological impact of growing up near alcohol outlets.

- Comparative studies between cities with strict zoning versus lax enforcement.

- Economic impact assessment of relocating wine shops away from residential areas.

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