



# Tobacco vendors and their compliance with tobacco control laws in Mangalore City, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, India

## Background

Every year, a staggering 14 lakh lives are lost to tobacco in India alone. Despite the existence of the comprehensive Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), the tobacco industry continues to employ various tactics to hinder its implementation.

To strengthen enforcement of COTPA & other related tobacco control laws, Dept of UDD, Karnataka has issued gazette notification on 19/05/2022 mandating Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL). Dept of UDD also issued state level instructions to heads of Urban Local Bodies to implement this policy effectively.

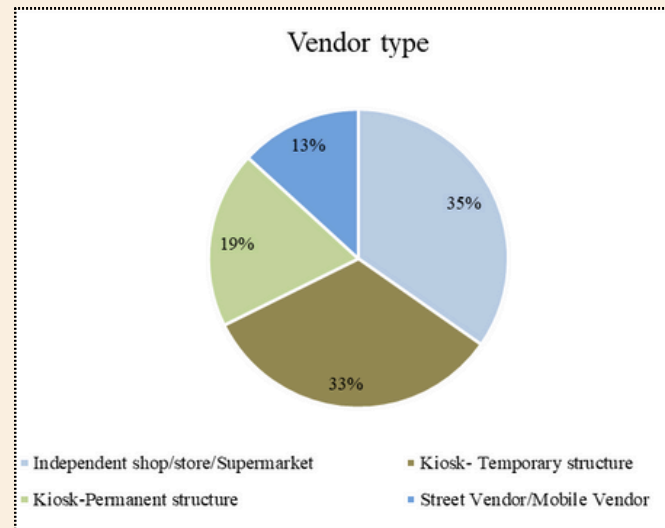
As a process of TVL implementation, baseline survey has been conducted in January 2025 in Mangalore city to assess the number of tobacco vendors and their advertising practices, and adherence to tobacco control regulations in thirty (30) selected wards of Mangalore City (Karnataka), which has a total of sixty (60) wards. These wards were selected based on pre-data collection field visits to identify wards containing retail zones. Those containing cantonment areas or with no commercial areas were excluded.

## Key Findings

### Vendor Characteristics

A total of one hundred and sixty-seven (167) tobacco vendors were identified in the thirty (30) surveyed wards.

The most common vendor type was an independent shop/store/supermarket (34.73%, n=58) followed by temporary structure kiosks (32.93%, n=55), permanent structure kiosks (19.16%, n=32). The least common vendor type observed was a street vendor/mobile vendor (on cart/bicycle) (13.18%, n=22).



### Proximity to Educational Institutions

A total of 26.3% (n=44) tobacco vendors were operating within 100 yards of an Educational Institution.

### Number of vendors

Across all observed wards, the number of vendors found was approximately 5 vendors per km of roadway.

The highest tobacco vendor density was observed in **Ward No. 46**, which had approximately 19 vendors per km of roadway.

Total road length covered in 30 wards- **32km**

Total no. of vendors observed- **167**

## Advertising and Signage Compliance

**Tobacco Advertising:** 26.7% (n=44) of all observed vendors had some form of tobacco advertising. Presence of advertising was highest among permanent structure kiosks, 28.1% of which displayed some form of advertising. Advertising was lowest amongst temporary structure kiosks (25.5%), followed by independent shop/store/supermarket (25.9%) and street vendor/mobile vendor (27.3%).

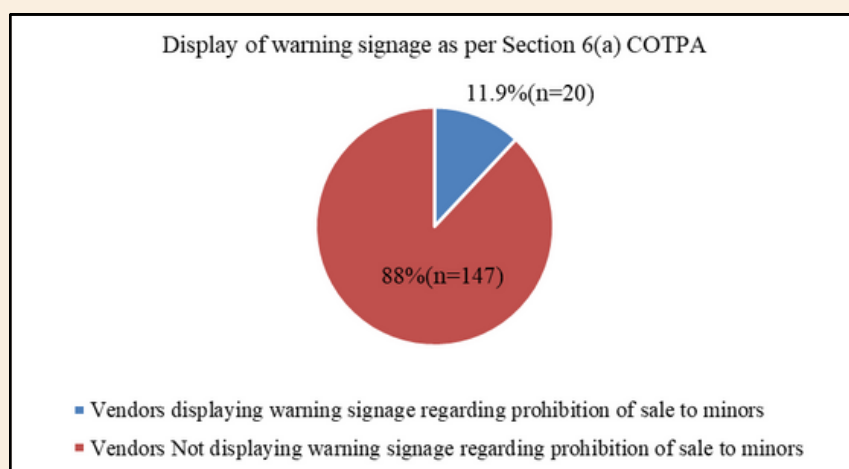
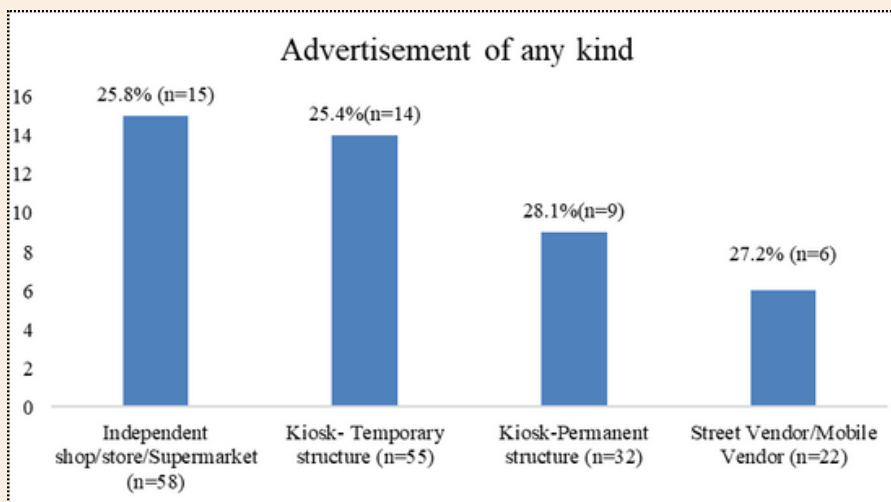
**Warning Signage:** 89% (n=147) of tobacco vendors did not display warning signage stating, "Sale of tobacco to people less than 18 years of age is a punishable offence," as required by law.

### Product Display

A total of 68.26% (n=114) of tobacco vendors displayed tobacco products. Among these vendors, nearly 84.2% (n=96) had the products placed at a height accessible to minors.

74.85% (n=125) of stores sold food items, such as candies, sweets, and chips, alongside tobacco products.

Almost all the vendors, 91% (n=152), had evidence of tobacco litter (cigarette/bidi butts, tobacco pouches, etc.) outside of their shops.



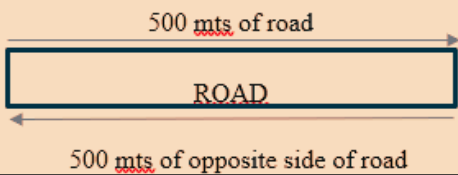
## Methodology:

- An observation study was conducted in 50% (n=30) of wards in Mangalore City.
- Ethical approval was obtained from the institution's ethical committee, and an authorization letter was secured from the Municipal Corporation to carry out the survey.
- An action plan was developed prior to the survey's initiation, and five teams were formed, each consisting of two investigators who were assigned specific wards. Three supervisors were designated to oversee and assist the teams in conducting the survey. Each team conducted a site visit in their assigned wards to familiarize themselves with the municipal boundaries and other practical aspects relevant to the study.
- A tobacco vendor census was carried out along 500-meter stretches on both sides of the road within the 30 selected wards, based on the boundaries outlined by the city corporation. Vendors were categorized into four types: independent shops/store/supermarket, permanent kiosks, temporary kiosks, and street/mobile vendors.

**Data collection:**

- The observations included identifying vendors, recording geo-coordinates, photographing displays, noting the proximity of vendors to educational institutions, and evaluating their compliance with the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003. Data collectors assessed vendor adherence to COTPA, particularly concerning the prohibition of TAPS (Section 5) and the prohibition of tobacco sales to minors (Section 6(a)).
- The study data were recorded using the EpiCollect mobile app, with route measurements (500 mts on both sides of road) tracked via the MapMyWalk app to ensure accuracy and avoid retracing any section.
- Investigators received training on how to use both apps effectively.

**Length covered along the most prominent road of the ward:**



- Photographs of storefronts, tobacco displays, and compliance with advertising and warning signage were taken, with notes made if photography was not feasible. The data collection process was designed to minimize disruption to the vendors' operations.
- Data were uploaded in real-time or stored offline to maintain integrity throughout the survey.

**Recommendation**

The findings highlight the need for targeted regulatory enforcement, particularly regarding implementing various sections of COTPA, 2003. Public awareness campaigns, combined with stringent implementation of TVL, could enhance compliance and support broader tobacco control efforts in Mangalore city.

**Ward wise vendor count/km of roadway**

Ward	Vendors selling Tobacco	Ward length covered (km)	Number of vendors/ km
3	5	1.36	3.7
5	4	1.01	4.0
12	9	1.5	6.0
13	3	1	3.0
18	11	1	11.0
19	7	1	7.0
23	7	1	7.0
24	4	1	4.0
28	3	1.06	2.8
29	2	1	2.0
30	5	1.12	4.5
31	6	1	6.0
32	5	1	5.0
34	4	1.13	3.5
37	4	0.99	4.0
38	2	1.23	1.6
39	1	1.01	1.0
40	2	1.1	1.8
41	7	1.03	6.8
43	5	1.3	3.8
44	9	1.01	8.9
46	19	1	19.0
47	3	1.01	3.0
48	5	1.01	5.0
49	10	1	10.0
53	4	1.02	3.9
54	5	1.02	4.9
55	10	1	10.0
57	5	1.51	3.3
59	1	1.01	1.0
Total	167	32.43	5.0

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