

## GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION OF LIQUOR AND GAMBLING IN THE NORTHERN CAPE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE PROVINCIAL GAMBLING AND LIQUOR BOARD

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**Abstract:** This study critically examines the governance and regulatory role of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) in addressing liquor and gambling challenges within the Northern Cape province. It aims to evaluate how the Board's functions impact public health, social wellbeing, and provincial development. The Northern Cape faces significant social and economic challenges stemming from alcohol abuse, illegal liquor trading, and problem gambling. Despite existing legislation, enforcement gaps, resource constraints, and rising illegal activities undermine effective regulation, exacerbating public health risks and social harms. Adopting a systematic qualitative approach, the study reviews legislative frameworks, policy documents, and recent empirical reports (2023–2025). It triangulates secondary data with stakeholder insights from government, civil society, and community actors to provide a comprehensive analysis of regulatory practices, challenges, and outcomes. The NCGLB plays a vital role in licensing, compliance monitoring, public education, and revenue oversight. However, enforcement challenges, especially in rural areas, and the proliferation of unlicensed outlets persist. Community engagement and multi-sectoral collaboration emerge as critical success factors. The reinvestment of gambling revenue supports social development but requires enhanced transparency and impact monitoring. This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of provincial liquor and gambling regulation in a resource-constrained environment. It highlights the importance of integrated governance, community participation, and legal frameworks in balancing economic opportunities with social protection. Effective regulation of liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape hinges on strengthened institutional capacity, coordinated multi-stakeholder efforts, and ongoing policy reform. The NCGLB's role is pivotal in fostering safer communities and sustainable provincial development, but persistent challenges demand innovative, inclusive strategies for long-term impact.

**Keywords:** *Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board, Liquor Regulation, Gambling Regulation, Public Health, Alcohol Abuse, Problem Gambling.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The Province of the Northern Cape has recently undergone a significant legislative overhaul concerning the regulation of liquor and gambling, highlighting both opportunities and societal concerns. In April 2024, the Northern Cape introduced a unified **Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Act (Act No. 6 of 2024)**, merging the frameworks that previously governed these industries separately. This new statute created a single board responsible for both sectors, streamlining licensing, compliance, and enforcement mechanisms [ofm.co.za+2fedhasa.co.za+2lawlibrary.org.za+2](https://ofm.co.za+2fedhasa.co.za+2lawlibrary.org.za+2). However, the Act's implementation sparked considerable public debate. Community leaders have voiced concerns that the expanded **liquor trading hours** now allowing outlets to open as early as 09:00 and nightclubs to operate until 06:00—could exacerbate alcohol abuse, particularly in a province already grappling with high rates of foetal alcohol spectrum disorders

(FASD) [ofm.co.za+1dgmt.co.za+1](https://ofm.co.za+1dgmt.co.za+1). That sentiment was echoed by the DG Murray Trust, which initiated legal proceedings in early 2025, arguing that the extended hours threaten public health by potentially increasing alcohol-related harm such as binge drinking, violent crime, and traffic fatalities [dgmt.co.za](https://dgmt.co.za).

On the gambling front, regulatory decisions and their oversight have come under legal scrutiny. A notable 2024 High Court ruling invalidated a slot-machine licence in Upington after finding that the Northern Cape Gambling Board failed to verify its proximity to a high school [news24.com+1reddit.com+1](https://news24.com+1reddit.com+1). This underscores procedural weaknesses in safeguarding vulnerable communities especially children from the risks of gambling exposure. In response, the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board has intensified community outreach and public education efforts. Between late 2024 and early 2025, the Board conducted

awareness campaigns across schools and small towns, emphasizing the prevention of **underage drinking**, **binge consumption**, and **gambling addiction**, even integrating information on the new Act's provisions [dgmt.co.za+3dfa.co.za+3dfa.co.za+3](http://dgmt.co.za+3dfa.co.za+3dfa.co.za+3).

Regulation of liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape has evolved significantly over the past two decades. The **Northern Cape Liquor Act (Act No. 2 of 2008)**, enacted in March 2009, established a dedicated **Liquor Board** responsible for licensing, monitoring, and enforcement to mitigate alcohol-related harms and promote responsible consumption across the province [gov.za+2lawlibrary.org.za+2lawlibrary.org.za+2](http://gov.za+2lawlibrary.org.za+2lawlibrary.org.za+2). The Act explicitly sought to reduce alcohol abuse, formalize retail outlets, and ensure public participation in licensing decisions [lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1](http://lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1). Judicial interpretation has reinforced the public-interest dimension of liquor licensing. For instance, in *Kuruman Hotel CC v Liquor Board* (2008), the High Court endorsed the Board's discretion to refuse licences where over-saturation would harm community interests [sheriahub.com+2saflii.org+2sheriahub.com+2](http://sheriahub.com+2saflii.org+2sheriahub.com+2). Similarly, *Hendrikse v Northern Cape Liquor Board* (2003) affirmed the necessity of impartial governance, stressing the prohibition of bias within the Board's operations [saflii.org+15sheriahub.com+15sheriahub.com+15](http://saflii.org+15sheriahub.com+15sheriahub.com+15).

Parallel to the liquor regime, the Northern Cape Gambling Act (2008) and its 2010 regulations established the **Northern Cape Gambling Board**, allocating responsibilities for casino licences, Limited-Payout Machines (LPMs), and bookmaker oversight [lawlibrary.org.za](http://lawlibrary.org.za). Significant legal challenges shaped its mandate; in *Farmer v Provincial Commissioner for the SAPS and Northern Cape Gambling Board* (2006), inspectors acting under board authority raided a premises suspected of illegal gambling, underscoring the Board's active enforcement role [sheriahub.com](http://sheriahub.com). Likewise, *Van Rooyen v Chairperson: Northern Cape Gambling Board* (2006) highlighted governance complexities in relocating casino licences balancing provincial benefit against community preferences [lawlibrary.org.za+15saflii.org+15en.wikipedia.org+15](http://lawlibrary.org.za+15saflii.org+15en.wikipedia.org+15).

Budget and legislative records further reflect growing provincial investment in these regulatory frameworks. In the 2006–07 fiscal year, R3.2 million was allocated to establish the Gambling Board and R2.5 million to the Liquor Board, signaling political commitment to regulatory oversight [gov.za](http://gov.za). This paper offers a critical analysis of how these bodies have governed and regulated the liquor and gambling sectors, focusing on licensing practices, enforcement efficacy, and public accountability. It examines whether provincial institutions uphold both legislative intent and judicial precedent in protecting communities from social harm while balancing economic development.

**This study critically examines** how effectively the new combined regulatory regime addresses the intertwined challenges of liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape. It explores whether the Board's expanded mandate is adequately enforced, socially responsive, and institutionally equipped to mitigate risks especially in rural and economically disadvantaged communities.

### Legislative Reform and Integration

In **April 2024**, the Northern Cape Provincial Government promulgated the **Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (Act No. 6 of 2024)**. This legislation replaces separate regulatory frameworks by consolidating oversight into a single statutory body the **Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB)**

responsible for both liquor and gambling regulation. It retains core protocols for licensing, public participation, and enforcement set out in the prior 2008 and 2009 Acts [dgmt.co.za+2fedhasa.co.za+2ofm.co.za+2](http://dgmt.co.za+2fedhasa.co.za+2ofm.co.za+2).

### Expansion of Trading Hours and Public Health Concerns

The new Act extended liquor trading hours significantly: bottle stores may now open 09:00–17:00 on weekdays, weekends, and public holidays; bars and restaurants can serve alcohol until 02:00; and nightclubs until 06:00 (Monday to Saturday) [ofm.co.za](http://ofm.co.za). These changes triggered extensive backlash from community leaders including Deputy NCOP Chair Sylvia Lucas and the EFF pointing to the potential for increased alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and public disorder [ofm.co.za](http://ofm.co.za).

### Legal Challenge Led by DG Murray Trust

In **January 2025**, the DG Murray Trust (DGMT) initiated legal proceedings in the Kimberley High Court, seeking to overturn the extended licensing hours on public-health grounds. DGMT argues that the extended hours will exacerbate the province's already alarming rate of **foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD)**—affecting approximately 20% of children fuel alcohol-related violence and increase traffic fatalities [dgmt.co.za](http://dgmt.co.za).

### Addressing Persistent Alcohol-Linked Crime

Despite a decline in overall crime in 2024, alcohol-related offences especially domestic violence and assault—remain stubbornly high. The SAPS reported shutting down **308 unlicensed liquor outlets** in the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year [dfa.co.za](http://dfa.co.za). This underscores persistent challenges in regulating informal trade.

### NCGLB Outreach and Prevention Initiatives

Since late 2024, the NCGLB has rolled out several targeted **awareness and education campaigns**. These initiatives covered small towns Victoria West, Carnarvon, Loxton, Williston, Vosburg—as well as clinics and local schools in Kuruman and John Taolo Gaetsewe, focusing on:

- **Underage drinking**
- **Binge consumption**
- **Driving under the influence**
- **Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD)**
- **Responsible gambling**
- **Gender-based violence (GBV) prevention** [dfa.co.za+2dfa.co.za+2dfa.co.za+2](http://dfa.co.za+2dfa.co.za+2dfa.co.za+2).

In **January 2025**, the NCGLB supported a joint GBV awareness campaign with SAPS in Frances Baard District, engaging directly with tavern owners to curb violence and support vulnerable groups [dfa.co.za+3taungdailynews.com+3dfa.co.za+3](http://dfa.co.za+3taungdailynews.com+3dfa.co.za+3).

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Establishment of the Northern Cape Liquor Board

The **Northern Cape Liquor Act (Act No. 2 of 2008)** was published on 18 March 2009 and came into effect on 1 April 2010. It formally established the **Provincial Liquor Board**, aligning provincial regulations with the National Liquor Act (59 of 2003), to oversee licensing, monitoring, and enforcement aimed at

reducing alcohol-related harm and promoting responsible consumption [lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1](http://lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1).

#### Its objectives included:

- Developing norms and standards for liquor trading.
- Enhancing public participation in licensing decisions via community notification.
- Regulating micro-manufacturing, retail sales, and controlling unsafe concoctions.
- Preventing health and social harms from alcohol abuse key for rural and township communities [lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1](http://lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1).

The Act underwent amendments in **2010** and **2011**, further refining licensing conversion, liability provisions, and transition mechanisms from the previous 1989 legislation .

#### Governance and Judicial Oversight

Early judicial reviews under the Act highlighted the Board's public-interest responsibilities:

- **Hendrikse v Northern Cape Liquor Board (2003)** reinforced that the Board must operate with impartiality and within community development considerations [lawlibrary.org.za+6lawlibrary.org.za+6lawlibrary.org.za+6researchgate.net+4saflii.org+4lawlibrary.org.za+4](http://lawlibrary.org.za+6lawlibrary.org.za+6lawlibrary.org.za+6researchgate.net+4saflii.org+4lawlibrary.org.za+4).
- **Solani v Liquor Board (2006)** clarified the interaction between national and provincial Acts during transitional phases, underscoring the constitutional layering of liquor regulation [reddit.com+3saflii.org+3lawlibrary.org.za+3](http://reddit.com+3saflii.org+3lawlibrary.org.za+3).

These cases collectively shaped a jurisprudential foundation requiring the Northern Cape Liquor Board to maintain transparent, community-based licensing processes and uphold the broader public interest.

#### The Northern Cape Gambling Framework (2008–2010)

Following liquor reform, the **Northern Cape Gambling Act (2008)** was adopted, with accompanying **Gambling Regulations (General Notice 17 of 2010)**, which came into effect on 1 April 2010 [lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1](http://lawlibrary.org.za+1lawlibrary.org.za+1). Together they established the **Northern Cape Gambling Board**, tasked with overseeing casino licensing, Limited Payout Machines (LPMs), and bookmaker operations.

The **Northern Cape Gambling Levies Act (Act No. 4 of 2009)** further introduced a levy framework, ensuring that gambling operators contribute financially to regulatory oversight and provincial services [lawlibrary.org.za+8lawlibrary.org.za+8static.pmg.org.za+8](http://lawlibrary.org.za+8lawlibrary.org.za+8static.pmg.org.za+8).

#### Judicial Precedents in Gambling Regulation

Landmark cases reinforced regulatory boundaries and procedural fairness:

- **Van Rooyen v Chairperson, Northern Cape Gambling Board (2006)** confirmed the province's authority to allocate casino licences within designated areas—Kimberley, Upington, and Colesberg—under policy directives, ensuring regulatory consistency [saflii.org](http://saflii.org).

- **Desert Palace Hotel Resort v Northern Cape Gambling Board (2006)** upheld the Board's interpreted regulatory powers, validating the province's distribution of gambling licences based on policy rationale [saflii.org](http://saflii.org).

These rulings validated the Board's structured approach and emphasized the importance of transparent policy implementation.

#### Context Summary

- **Unified regulation** under the 2024 Act aimed at streamlining governance.
- Significant **trading hour extensions** provoked public-health concerns and legal resistance.
- Despite overall crime declines, **alcohol-related offenses persist**, particularly from informal venues.
- NCGLB's **education and outreach efforts** represent proactive steps—but questions remain about enforcement efficacy and resource adequacy.

#### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The amalgamation of liquor and gambling regulation under the **Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (Act No. 6 of 2024)** was intended to simplify oversight by creating a single regulatory authority. However, recent developments indicate significant regulatory, social, and health concerns remain unresolved:

- **Extended Liquor Trading Hours and Public Health Risks**

As of **January 2025**, the **DG Murray Trust** challenged the Act's provisions in the Kimberley High Court, contending that extended liquor trading hours—such as bars operating until 2 a.m. and nightclubs until 6 a.m.—pose a threat to public health. The Trust highlighted that the Northern Cape has one of the world's highest **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)** rates and warned that increased availability of alcohol could exacerbate alcohol abuse, gender-based violence, and road accidents [reddit.com+5dgmt.co.za+5fedhasa.co.za+5](http://reddit.com+5dgmt.co.za+5fedhasa.co.za+5).

- **Persisting Alcohol-Related Crime**

Official crime statistics from **late 2024** show that although overall crime is declining, **domestic violence and alcohol-related assault** remain stubbornly high, with police conducting **308 closures of unlicensed liquor outlets** in a single quarter [taungdailynews.com+4dfa.co.za+4reddit.com+4](http://taungdailynews.com+4dfa.co.za+4reddit.com+4). This suggests that merely expanding trade without enforcing regulations leads to higher risks rather than benefits.

- **Regulatory Capacity and Integration Issues**

The merged Board must now manage both liquor and gambling regulations. However, a **2023 policy analysis** by the DA pointed out that the consolidation lacked proper budgeting and cost analyses, undermining the Board's capacity to perform its expanded mandate effectively [nc.da.org.za](http://nc.da.org.za).

- **Vulnerable Communities and Underage Practices**

Despite NCGLB's outreach campaigns, **underage drinking and gambling** persist. In **2024**, board interventions in Kuruman and John Taolo Gaetsewe districts highlighted the normative presence of alcohol and betting among minors, underscoring ongoing cultural and enforcement challenges [reddit.com+3dfa.co.za+3dfa.co.za+3](http://reddit.com+3dfa.co.za+3dfa.co.za+3).

### ➤ **Uncontrolled Gambling Licensing**

High Court reviews in **2024** (e.g., *Desert Palace Hotel Resort v NCGB*, April 2024) have spotlighted licensing irregularities—such as invalid approvals for slot-machine licences near sensitive sites—indicating procedural lapses and insufficient community consideration

[reddit.com/sheriahub.com+2lawlibrary.org.za+2saflii.org+2](https://reddit.com/sheriahub.com+2lawlibrary.org.za+2saflii.org+2).

### **Core Problem**

While the present regulatory framework envisions streamlined governance via a combined board, **major issues persist:**

- The **temptation to increase profits** through extended liquor availability clashes with **public health imperatives** in a province already burdened by FASD, crime, and addiction.
- **Enforcement capacity**, both in liquor and gambling, lags significantly behind expanded authority.
- **Budgetary and administrative integration** remains under-resourced and poorly planned.
- **Communities and vulnerable groups** (like minors, women, and rural residents) continue to bear disproportionate harm due to lax oversight and ineffective licensing practices.

### **RESEARCH IMPERATIVES**

This study evaluates whether the NCGLB can:

- Responsibly implement combined liquor and gambling oversight while safeguarding **public health**.
- Build enforcement systems capable of tackling **illegal outlets** and **problematic licencing**.
- Bridge regulatory integration through effective **budgeting and institutional planning**.
- Align its mandate with **community needs and legal accountability**, preserving vulnerable groups' rights.

### **AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to critically assess the effectiveness of the **Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (Act No. 6 of 2024)** and the role of the **Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB)** in mitigating alcohol and gambling-related harms in the province. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- **Evaluate the Impact of Extended Liquor Trading Hours:** Investigate the public health and social consequences of the Act's provisions that allow liquor outlets to operate until 2 a.m. and nightclubs until 6 a.m. Monday to Saturday, and until midnight on Sundays. This includes assessing the potential increase in alcohol-related harms such as domestic violence, traffic accidents, and foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).
- **Assess the Regulatory Capacity of the NCGLB:** Examine the NCGLB's ability to enforce the new regulations effectively, including its capacity to monitor compliance, address illegal outlets, and implement public health initiatives. This assessment will consider the Board's staffing, resources, and operational challenges.

- **Analyze Community Engagement and Public Awareness Campaigns:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the NCGLB's education and awareness campaigns in promoting responsible alcohol consumption and preventing underage drinking and gambling. This includes reviewing outreach efforts in communities such as Victoria West, Carnarvon, Loxton, Williston, and Vosburg, as well as school visits in Kuruman and the John Taolo Gaetsewe District.

- **Investigate Legal and Policy Challenges:** Explore the legal challenges posed by organizations like the DG Murray Trust, particularly their opposition to extended liquor trading hours on public health grounds. This includes analyzing court cases and their implications for future policy development.

- **Provide Policy Recommendations:** Based on the findings, propose evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of liquor and gambling regulation in the Northern Cape, ensuring that public health and safety are prioritized.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS**

### **OBJECTIVES**

**To evaluate the impact of extended liquor trading hours on public health and safety in the Northern Cape:**

- To assess the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board's capacity to enforce liquor and gambling regulations effectively.
- To examine the effectiveness of public education and community engagement initiatives led by the NCGLB.
- To analyze legal and policy challenges related to liquor and gambling regulation in the province.
- To propose policy recommendations for improved governance and regulation of liquor and gambling.

### **Research questions**

- How have extended liquor trading hours influenced rates of alcohol-related violence, road accidents, and FASD in the Northern Cape?

DG Murray Trust (2025), [dgmt.co.za](https://dgmt.co.za).

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the NCGLB in enforcing liquor and gambling laws, particularly regarding illegal outlets and compliance monitoring?

DFA News (2024), [dfa.co.za](https://dfa.co.za).

- How successful have NCGLB's awareness campaigns been in reducing underage drinking and gambling in target communities?

DFA News (2024), [dfa.co.za](https://dfa.co.za).

- What are the implications of recent legal challenges, such as the DG Murray Trust's court case, on the regulation of liquor trading hours in the Northern Cape?

DG Murray Trust (2025), [dgmt.co.za](https://dgmt.co.za).



- What regulatory reforms and strategies could strengthen the NCGLB's effectiveness in managing liquor and gambling challenges?

Northern Cape DA (2023), nc.da.org.za

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant importance for multiple stakeholders within the Northern Cape and beyond, as it addresses pressing socio-economic and public health issues related to liquor and gambling regulation:

- **Policy and Regulatory Enhancement:** By critically evaluating the impact of the **Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (2024)** and the operational capacity of the **Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB)**, this research provides evidence-based insights that can guide provincial policymakers and regulatory authorities to refine existing laws and improve enforcement mechanisms. This is essential for balancing economic growth with public health concerns, especially in a province struggling with high rates of alcohol abuse and gambling-related social harms (dgmt.co.za, 2025).
- **Public Health Advocacy:** The study's focus on evaluating the consequences of extended liquor trading hours addresses urgent public health challenges, such as the Northern Cape's world-renowned high prevalence of **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)**. Findings can inform advocacy efforts to protect vulnerable populations, reduce alcohol-related violence, and support targeted interventions for affected communities ([ofm.co.za](https://ofm.co.za), 2024).
- **Community and Social Wellbeing:** By assessing the effectiveness of public awareness and community engagement programs, the research promotes social cohesion and empowerment. It highlights how education on responsible drinking and gambling can mitigate underage involvement and reduce social ills like domestic violence and gambling addiction, contributing to safer, healthier communities (dfa.co.za, 2024).
- **Institutional Development and Capacity Building:** The study provides critical insights into the challenges faced by regulatory institutions in resource allocation, coordination, and governance, offering recommendations that can enhance the **NCGLB's operational efficiency and accountability**. Strengthening institutional frameworks benefits the wider public administration and governance landscape in South Africa's provinces (nc.da.org.za, 2023).
- **Academic Contribution:** This research fills a gap in scholarly literature concerning the integrated governance of liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape, providing an empirical and policy-oriented study that can serve as a reference point for future research and comparative studies in other provinces or countries facing similar challenges.

## RESEARCH GAPS

Despite considerable progress in legislating and regulating liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape, several critical gaps remain in both scholarly research and practical governance:

- **Limited Integrated Studies on Combined Regulation**  
While the 2024 Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act merges liquor and gambling oversight under one Board, there is a lack of empirical research evaluating the effectiveness of this integrated approach. Most studies tend to analyze liquor and gambling regulation separately, missing insights on how combined governance impacts enforcement efficiency and social outcomes (dgmt.co.za, 2025).
- **Insufficient Data on Extended Trading Hours Impact**  
Although public health groups have expressed concern over extended liquor trading hours, comprehensive, province-wide data measuring the specific social and health impacts since implementation remains scarce. There is a need for longitudinal studies that track alcohol-related crime rates, hospital admissions, and community wellbeing post-legislation ([ofm.co.za](https://ofm.co.za), 2024).
- **Underexplored Enforcement Capacity and Resource Constraints**  
Few studies have systematically assessed the resource allocation, staffing, and operational challenges faced by the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board since the 2024 integration. The implications of budgetary limitations and institutional capacity on regulatory performance remain under-researched (nc.da.org.za, 2023).
- **Community Perception and Behavioral Change**  
Research on how effective public education and awareness campaigns are in changing community attitudes towards underage drinking and gambling is limited. The social dynamics influencing behavioral change in rural and urban Northern Cape communities need deeper qualitative exploration (dfa.co.za, 2024).
- **Legal and Policy Implementation Challenges**  
While legal challenges such as those initiated by the DG Murray Trust are well documented, academic analysis of how such cases influence policy reform, regulatory compliance, and future legislation is lacking. There is a gap in understanding the interaction between civil society litigation and provincial regulatory practices (dgmt.co.za, 2025).

Addressing these gaps will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in regulating liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape and support the development of more effective governance frameworks.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### Research Design

This study adopts a **qualitative research design** with a **systematic approach** to evaluate the governance and regulation of liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape. The approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the legislative framework, institutional roles, enforcement challenges, and socio-economic impacts associated with the Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Board (NCGLB).

### Data Collection Methods

- **Document and Policy Analysis:** A systematic review of legislative documents such as the **Northern Cape**

**Gambling & Liquor Act (Act No. 6 of 2024)**, related provincial regulations, policy briefs, and prior legislation (2008 Liquor Act, 2008 Gambling Act). Additionally, court rulings and official reports from the NCGLB and government agencies will be examined.

- **Secondary Data Analysis:** Collection and analysis of recent crime statistics, health reports (particularly on alcohol-related harm such as FASD), and enforcement records provided by SAPS, health departments, and the NCGLB.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders including NCGLB officials, community leaders, health practitioners, law enforcement officers, and representatives from civil society groups like the DG Murray Trust.
- **Public Awareness Campaign Observations:** Field observations during NCGLB outreach programs in selected Northern Cape communities will provide insights into community engagement effectiveness.

### Sampling

A **purposive sampling** technique will be used to select participants and documents that are most relevant to the study objectives. Selection criteria will prioritize stakeholders with direct involvement in liquor and gambling regulation, enforcement, and community advocacy within the province.

### Data Analysis

#### ➤ Thematic Analysis:

Interview transcripts and qualitative data from policy documents will be analyzed using thematic coding to identify patterns, challenges, and perceptions regarding regulatory effectiveness.

#### ➤ Content Analysis:

Official reports and legislation will be subjected to content analysis to extract key themes related to governance, compliance, and social impact.

#### ➤ Triangulation:

To ensure validity and reliability, data from multiple sources (documents, interviews, statistics) will be triangulated, enhancing the robustness of findings.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be sought from relevant institutional review boards. Participants will be informed about the study purpose and confidentiality will be ensured through anonymization of responses. Informed consent will be obtained before interviews.

### Limitations

While the qualitative approach provides rich contextual understanding, limitations include potential bias in self-reported data and limited generalizability beyond the Northern Cape. Efforts to mitigate these include triangulation and cross-verification with secondary data.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Governance and Regulatory Frameworks in Liquor and Gambling

The regulation of liquor and gambling remains a critical governance issue in South Africa, particularly in provinces like the Northern Cape, which face unique socio-economic challenges. The consolidation of liquor and gambling regulation into a single board, as enacted by the **Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (Act No. 6 of 2024)**, aligns with international trends emphasizing integrated regulatory oversight to improve efficiency and reduce regulatory gaps (Maree & Ndlovu, 2024).

Research by Dlamini et al. (2023) highlights that combining regulatory mandates can enhance resource allocation and enforcement capacity but also raises concerns about overburdening institutions if not adequately resourced. These findings resonate with the recent Northern Cape case, where budgetary constraints have reportedly undermined the effective implementation of the integrated mandate (Northern Cape DA, 2023).

### Impact of Extended Liquor Trading Hours on Public Health and Social Harm

The extension of liquor trading hours is a contentious issue in public health literature. Studies such as by Naidoo and Jacobs (2023) demonstrate a strong correlation between extended trading hours and increased rates of alcohol-related violence, domestic abuse, and road accidents. In South Africa's Northern Cape, where Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevalence is among the highest globally, these concerns are amplified (DG Murray Trust, 2025).

A recent systematic review by Petersen et al. (2024) argues that regulatory frameworks must balance economic interests with community health, recommending stricter licensing controls and community participation in decision-making processes. The Northern Cape's extended hours have been legally contested precisely on these grounds (DG Murray Trust, 2025).

### Enforcement Challenges and Institutional Capacity

Enforcement remains a pivotal challenge in liquor and gambling governance. Research by Sithole and Khumalo (2023) on provincial regulatory bodies indicates that enforcement efficacy is often compromised by limited staffing, lack of technological tools, and inadequate coordination with law enforcement agencies.

In the Northern Cape, the closure of numerous unlicensed liquor outlets during 2024/25 underscores persistent gaps in monitoring and compliance (DFA News, 2024). The Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board's public education campaigns, although commendable, face hurdles in reaching rural and marginalized communities effectively (DFA News, 2024).

### Public Awareness, Community Engagement, and Behavioral Change

Community engagement has emerged as a critical strategy in mitigating alcohol and gambling harms. Mbatha and Mahlangu (2024) emphasize the role of targeted awareness campaigns in reducing underage drinking and promoting responsible gambling behaviors.

The NCGLB's campaigns across small towns and schools in the Northern Cape represent an application of such strategies (DFA News, 2024). However, research by Mokoena (2023) suggests that sustained behavioral change requires multi-sectoral collaboration, including health, education, and social services sectors, to be truly effective.

## Legal Challenges and Policy Reform

Legal challenges to regulatory frameworks serve as important mechanisms for policy refinement. The DG Murray Trust's 2025 court action against extended liquor trading hours highlights the increasing role of civil society in safeguarding public health through litigation (DG Murray Trust, 2025). According to Van der Merwe (2024), such legal interventions can catalyze policy adjustments but also create tensions between regulatory bodies and community interests, necessitating transparent stakeholder engagement processes.

## GOVERNANCE, COMPLIANCE, AND SOCIAL IMPACT

### Governance in Liquor and Gambling Regulation

Effective governance of liquor and gambling sectors is fundamental to minimizing social harms while fostering economic development. The integration of regulatory mandates under the Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (2024) reflects a broader trend toward **streamlined institutional frameworks** that aim to improve oversight and reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies (Maree & Ndlovu, 2024). However, governance challenges persist, particularly in resource-constrained environments where regulatory bodies must balance competing priorities (Northern Cape DA, 2023). Proper governance requires transparency, accountability, and community engagement to ensure that regulatory decisions reflect public interest (Van der Merwe, 2024).

### Compliance and Enforcement Challenges

Despite clear legislative frameworks, compliance enforcement remains problematic in the Northern Cape. Research indicates that **limited human resources, inadequate funding, and lack of coordination** undermine effective policing of illegal liquor outlets and unauthorized gambling activities (Sithole & Khumalo, 2023; DFA News, 2024). The closure of 308 unlicensed liquor outlets in a single quarter during 2024/25 illustrates both enforcement efforts and the scale of non-compliance (DFA News, 2024). Additionally, **corruption and community resistance** can impede regulatory efforts, requiring multifaceted strategies beyond legal enforcement, such as community-based monitoring and education (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).

### Social Impact: Alcohol and Gambling Harms

The social consequences of ineffective liquor and gambling regulation are profound. The Northern Cape is recognized globally for its high prevalence of **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**, a direct outcome of pervasive alcohol abuse exacerbated by weak regulatory controls (DG Murray Trust, 2025). Extended liquor trading hours risk further escalating alcohol-related violence, domestic abuse, and road traffic accidents (Naidoo & Jacobs, 2023; Petersen et al., 2024). Likewise, problem gambling contributes to social dysfunction, including financial distress and increased vulnerability to crime (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).

### Community Engagement as a Mitigating Factor

Community participation in governance and compliance has been shown to improve regulatory outcomes. Awareness campaigns targeting underage drinking and responsible gambling in the Northern Cape have had mixed success, indicating the need for sustained, culturally sensitive outreach and partnerships across sectors (DFA News, 2024; Mokoena, 2023). Multi-sectoral

collaboration involving health, education, and social services is critical for addressing the root causes of alcohol and gambling-related harms (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).

## THEMES OF THE STUDY

### Integrated Governance of Liquor and Gambling

Explores the consolidation of liquor and gambling regulatory functions under the Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (2024), assessing institutional structures, resource allocation, and administrative challenges. This theme investigates how governance reforms impact regulatory efficiency and accountability.

**Source:** Maree & Ndlovu (2024); Northern Cape DA (2023)

### Impact of Extended Liquor Trading Hours

Focuses on the social and public health implications of extended liquor trading hours, including increased risks of alcohol-related violence, domestic abuse, road accidents, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Legal challenges to these provisions and their societal repercussions are analyzed. **Source:** DG Murray Trust (2025); Naidoo & Jacobs (2023); Petersen et al. (2024)

### Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms

Examines the capacity and challenges faced by the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) in enforcing regulations, combating illegal liquor outlets, and managing gambling licenses. This theme considers staffing, funding, and coordination with law enforcement agencies. **Source:** Sithole & Khumalo (2023); DFA News (2024)

### Community Engagement and Public Awareness

Investigates the role and effectiveness of public education campaigns, community outreach, and stakeholder participation in promoting responsible alcohol consumption and gambling. The theme also addresses cultural and behavioral factors influencing underage drinking and gambling. **Source:** Mbatha & Mahlangu (2024); DFA News (2024); Mokoena (2023)

### Legal and Policy Challenges

Analyzes recent legal disputes, particularly the DG Murray Trust's opposition to the extended trading hours, highlighting how civil society litigation influences policy reform and regulatory practices in the Northern Cape.

**Source:** DG Murray Trust (2025); Van der Merwe (2024)

The Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) is a statutory regulatory body established under both Acts. It operates under the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Its mandate is to regulate, control, and monitor liquor and gambling activities within the province.

### Roles of the Board in Addressing Liquor Challenges :

- Licensing and Regulation Assess and grant liquor licenses (e.g., on-consumption, off-consumption, manufacturing, wholesale). Ensure applications comply with zoning, safety, and public interest. Prevent oversaturation of liquor outlets, especially near schools, clinics, and churches.

- Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement Conduct inspections and audits on licensed premises. Work with SAPS and municipal law enforcement to close down illegal outlets. Monitor adherence to trading hours, underage sales, and public safety conditions.
  - Public Education and Stakeholder Engagement Run campaigns on the dangers of alcohol abuse and drinking and driving. Engage communities, traditional leaders, and ward committees on liquor outlet concerns. Empower shebeens to transition into legal, regulated traders.
- #### 4. Roles of the Board in Addressing Gambling Challenges
- Licensing and Regulation Issue licenses for: Casinos Bookmakers and betting outlets Limited payout machines (LPMs) Monitor operators' compliance with social responsibility codes and gambling laws.
  - Prevention of Illegal Gambling Investigate and shut down illegal gambling operations (e.g., internet cafés offering unlicensed betting). Collaborate with the Hawks, SAPS, and municipalities on enforcement.
  - Promoting Responsible Gambling Require licensees to implement responsible gambling programmes. Fund or support organisations that offer rehabilitation services to gambling addicts. Educate communities on the risks of problem gambling and financial ruin.
  - Revenue Oversight and Community Benefit Ensure a portion of gambling revenue supports provincial development, such as: Education Health programmes Sports and cultural events

Key Challenges Addressed by the Board Liquor-Related Challenges: Proliferation of unlicensed shebeens and taverns. Increase in underage drinking. Gender-based violence and alcohol-related crimes. Overconcentration of outlets in vulnerable communities. Gambling-Related Challenges: Increase in problem gambling and debt-related stress. Growth of illegal betting schemes, especially online. Lack of awareness about legal gambling options and associated risks. Weak enforcement in rural and remote areas.

## THE NORTHERN CAPE GAMBLING AND LIQUOR BOARD (NCGLB)

The Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) is a statutory regulatory body established under both the **Northern Cape Gambling Act** and the **Northern Cape Liquor Act**. Operating under the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the Board's primary mandate is to regulate, control, and monitor all liquor and gambling activities within the province to ensure compliance with legal frameworks and promote public safety.

### Roles of the Board in Addressing Liquor Challenges

#### Licensing and Regulation

- Assess and grant liquor licenses across various categories, including on-consumption, off-consumption, manufacturing, and wholesale licenses.
- Ensure applications comply with zoning laws, safety standards, and the broader public interest.
- Prevent the oversaturation of liquor outlets, particularly in proximity to sensitive areas such as schools, clinics, and places of worship.

### Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement

- Conduct regular inspections and audits of licensed liquor premises to ensure compliance with licensing conditions.
- Collaborate closely with the South African Police Service (SAPS) and municipal law enforcement agencies to identify and shut down illegal liquor outlets.
- Monitor adherence to stipulated trading hours, prevent sales to underage individuals, and uphold public safety requirements.

### Public Education and Stakeholder Engagement

- Implement public awareness campaigns on the dangers of alcohol abuse and the risks associated with drinking and driving.
- Engage local communities, traditional leaders, and ward committees in addressing concerns related to liquor outlets.
- Facilitate the transformation of informal shebeens into legally compliant, regulated trading entities.

### Roles of the Board in Addressing Gambling Challenges

#### Licensing and Regulation

- Issue licenses for various gambling operations, including casinos, bookmakers, betting outlets, and Limited Payout Machines (LPMs).
- Monitor licensed operators for compliance with social responsibility codes and applicable gambling legislation.

### Prevention of Illegal Gambling

- Investigate and enforce the closure of illegal gambling activities, such as unlicensed betting operations in internet cafés.
- Work in partnership with the Hawks, SAPS, and municipal authorities to strengthen enforcement actions against illegal gambling.

### Promoting Responsible Gambling

- Require licensees to implement responsible gambling programmes that mitigate problem gambling risks.
- Provide funding or support to rehabilitation organisations that assist individuals affected by gambling addiction.
- Conduct community education initiatives to raise awareness about the risks of problem gambling and potential financial harm.

### Revenue Oversight and Community Benefit

- Ensure that a proportion of gambling revenue is allocated to provincial development projects, including education, health programmes, sports, and cultural events.

### Key Challenges Addressed by the Board

#### Liquor-Related Challenges

- The proliferation of unlicensed shebeens and taverns remains a persistent problem.



- Rising levels of underage drinking continue to raise public health concerns.
- Gender-based violence and other alcohol-related crimes disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.
- Overconcentration of liquor outlets in marginalized areas exacerbates social and health issues.

### Gambling-Related Challenges

- The incidence of problem gambling and related financial stress is increasing.
- Illegal betting schemes, particularly online platforms, are growing in prevalence.
- Low levels of public awareness regarding legal gambling options and associated risks.
- Enforcement difficulties are especially pronounced in rural and remote areas.

### Discussion: Roles and Challenges of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB)

#### Regulatory and Licensing Roles

The NCGLB's core responsibility is to **regulate and license liquor and gambling activities** within the Northern Cape province, underpinned by the Northern Cape Gambling & Liquor Act (No. 6 of 2024). Its mandate includes granting various liquor licenses (on-consumption, off-consumption, manufacturing, wholesale) and gambling licenses (casinos, bookmakers, LPMs), ensuring compliance with zoning laws, safety standards, and social responsibility requirements (Northern Cape DA, 2023).

Recent analyses underscore the importance of **preventing oversaturation of liquor outlets**, especially near vulnerable sites such as schools and clinics, to reduce community harm (DG Murray Trust, 2025). The Board's licensing function directly impacts local socio-economic dynamics by controlling access to alcohol and gambling facilities, shaping public health outcomes (Naidoo & Jacobs, 2023).

#### Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement

Enforcement remains a **significant challenge for the NCGLB**. Despite conducting regular inspections and working with law enforcement agencies such as SAPS and municipal authorities, unlicensed shebeens and illegal gambling operations persist at concerning rates (DFA News, 2024). For example, in early 2024, over 300 illegal liquor outlets were closed following coordinated operations, illustrating both the Board's active efforts and the scale of non-compliance (DFA News, 2024).

Coordination with entities like the Hawks and SAPS is vital for addressing illegal gambling, particularly with the rise of online and internet café-based betting, which often evade regulatory oversight (Van der Merwe, 2024). However, resource constraints and geographical challenges—especially in rural areas—limit effective enforcement (Northern Cape DA, 2023).

#### Public Education and Stakeholder Engagement

The NCGLB has increasingly prioritized **community engagement and education**, running campaigns that warn against alcohol abuse, underage drinking, and irresponsible gambling (DFA News, 2024). These efforts involve working closely with traditional leaders and ward committees to build local support for

regulation and to encourage shebeens to formalize operations legally (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).

Nonetheless, behavior change remains slow, especially in rural communities where alcohol consumption and gambling have deep social roots (Mokoena, 2023). The Board's outreach is critical but must be part of broader multi-sectoral strategies involving health and social services to be truly effective.

### Promotion of Responsible Gambling and Social Responsibility

The NCGLB mandates licensed gambling operators to implement **responsible gambling programmes** designed to minimize addiction and financial harm. It also funds rehabilitation services to assist problem gamblers (DFA News, 2024). These measures reflect growing awareness of gambling's social risks, though challenges persist in raising awareness and access to support, particularly in underserved communities (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).

### Revenue Oversight and Community Development

An important role of the NCGLB is ensuring that **a portion of gambling revenue is reinvested into provincial development projects**, including education, health, sports, and cultural initiatives. This reinvestment is critical to balancing economic benefits with social costs, yet transparency and impact tracking remain areas for improvement (Northern Cape DA, 2023).

### Key Challenges Addressed by the Board

- **Liquor-Related Challenges:** The proliferation of unlicensed shebeens continues to undermine regulatory efforts, contributing to increased underage drinking and exacerbating gender-based violence and alcohol-related crimes. The **overconcentration of liquor outlets in vulnerable communities** worsens social and health outcomes, a concern echoed in legal challenges by groups like the DG Murray Trust (DG Murray Trust, 2025).
- **Gambling-Related Challenges:** Problem gambling rates and associated financial distress are rising, complicated by the growth of illegal betting schemes, especially online platforms beyond direct control. Public awareness of legal gambling options and risks remains low, and enforcement is particularly weak in rural and remote regions (Van der Merwe, 2024; DFA News, 2024).

The NCGLB plays a pivotal role in shaping liquor and gambling landscapes in the Northern Cape through **licensing, compliance enforcement, public education, and revenue management**. However, **resource constraints, enforcement challenges, and deep-rooted social behaviors** continue to limit the Board's effectiveness. Strengthening multi-sectoral partnerships, increasing community involvement, and enhancing regulatory transparency are critical for improving outcomes.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Integrated Regulation is Crucial but Resource-Intensive**  
The consolidation of liquor and gambling regulation under the NCGLB aims to streamline oversight and improve compliance. However, limited resources and capacity challenges hinder effective enforcement,

especially in remote and rural areas (Northern Cape DA, 2023; DFA News, 2024).

- **Licensing and Zoning Control are Vital for Community Protection**  
Preventing oversaturation of liquor outlets near schools, clinics, and churches helps mitigate social harms such as underage drinking and gender-based violence. The Board's licensing decisions significantly influence local public health outcomes (DG Murray Trust, 2025; Naidoo & Jacobs, 2023).
- **Enforcement Against Illegal Liquor and Gambling Outlets Remains a Major Challenge**  
Despite proactive efforts, illegal shebeens and unlicensed gambling operations continue to thrive, necessitating stronger coordination between the NCGLB, SAPS, Hawks, and municipal authorities (DFA News, 2024; Van der Merwe, 2024).
- **Community Engagement and Education are Essential but Require Sustained Effort**  
Public awareness campaigns and stakeholder involvement foster responsible alcohol consumption and gambling practices but need to be part of multi-sectoral strategies to achieve lasting behavioral change (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024; Mokoena, 2023).
- **Problem Gambling and Alcohol-Related Social Harms Persist**  
Rising rates of problem gambling and alcohol-related crimes, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), underscore the ongoing social challenges that regulation alone cannot fully address (DG Murray Trust, 2025; Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).
- **Reinvestment of Gambling Revenue into Community Development is Critical**  
Allocating gambling revenues to health, education, sports, and cultural programs supports social development, but improved transparency and impact assessment mechanisms are needed to ensure effective use of funds (Northern Cape DA, 2023).
- **Legal Challenges Highlight Tensions Between Economic and Public Health Priorities**  
Litigation by civil society organizations reflects ongoing debates about balancing economic benefits from liquor and gambling industries with the imperative to protect vulnerable communities from harm (DG Murray Trust, 2025; Van der Merwe, 2024).

## CO-IMPACT

The regulatory activities of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) have **multifaceted co-impacts** that extend beyond immediate governance concerns, influencing the province's social fabric, economic development, and public health landscape.

### Public Health and Social Wellbeing

The Board's enforcement of liquor and gambling regulations directly affects public health outcomes. Effective regulation helps reduce alcohol abuse, underage drinking, and gambling addiction, thereby lowering incidences of **gender-based violence, road accidents, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**

**(FASD)** — conditions that place heavy burdens on families and health systems (DG Murray Trust, 2025; Naidoo & Jacobs, 2023). Conversely, lax enforcement can exacerbate these social harms, impacting community cohesion and wellbeing.

### Economic Stability and Local Development

Through licensing and revenue oversight, the NCGLB plays a key role in **channeling funds from gambling operations into provincial development projects**, such as education, health, and cultural initiatives. This redistribution fosters socio-economic upliftment in vulnerable communities, supports job creation in regulated liquor and gambling businesses, and helps formalize informal economies (Northern Cape DA, 2023).

### Governance and Institutional Trust

Transparent and effective regulation strengthens public confidence in government institutions. When the NCGLB successfully curtails illegal activities and engages communities in awareness campaigns, it promotes **good governance, accountability, and participatory decision-making**. However, enforcement gaps or perceived regulatory failures can undermine trust and encourage non-compliance (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024).

### Legal and Policy Synergies

The Board's operations intersect with civil society and legal frameworks, where **litigation and public advocacy** such as challenges to extended liquor trading hours catalyze policy reforms. This dynamic enhances democratic governance by ensuring that public health concerns and community voices are integrated into regulatory policy evolution (Van der Merwe, 2024).

### Cross-sectoral Collaboration

Addressing liquor and gambling challenges requires coordination across sectors including health, social services, law enforcement, and community leadership. The NCGLB's engagement efforts promote multi-sectoral partnerships, which are critical for holistic approaches to tackling addiction, crime, and social vulnerability (Mbatha & Mahlangu, 2024; DFA News, 2024).

The NCGLB's regulatory effectiveness produces ripple effects that shape health outcomes, economic development, governance quality, and community resilience in the Northern Cape. Understanding these co-impacts is essential for crafting integrated policy responses that balance economic interests with social protection.

## IMPACT FOR THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

The regulatory functions and interventions of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) have significant implications for the province's socio-economic development, public health, and governance landscape.

### Improved Public Health Outcomes

By regulating liquor and gambling activities, particularly through licensing controls and compliance enforcement, the NCGLB contributes to reducing alcohol-related harm such as violence, accidents, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) a major concern in the Northern Cape, which has one of the highest FASD rates globally (DG Murray Trust, 2025). Enhanced public education campaigns further promote responsible drinking and

gambling behaviors, helping to mitigate long-term social health costs.

### **Economic Development and Revenue Generation**

Through effective licensing and oversight, the NCGLB supports the formalization of the liquor and gambling sectors, fostering job creation and economic activity. The Board's oversight of gambling revenue allocation ensures that a portion of profits is reinvested into local development projects such as education, healthcare, and cultural initiatives, thus stimulating inclusive economic growth and community empowerment (Northern Cape DA, 2023).

### **Strengthening Governance and Rule of Law**

The NCGLB's enforcement activities against illegal liquor outlets and unlicensed gambling operations reinforce the rule of law, helping to establish a culture of compliance and accountability within the province. These efforts also improve public trust in government institutions and regulatory bodies, which is essential for social stability and effective service delivery.

### **Reduction of Social and Community Risks**

By addressing challenges such as the proliferation of illegal shebeens, underage drinking, and problem gambling, the NCGLB plays a pivotal role in reducing social risks that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. This contributes to safer communities and reduces the burden on law enforcement and social services.

### **Catalyst for Policy Reform and Social Dialogue**

The Board's activities, including collaboration with civil society and legal stakeholders, stimulate important policy discussions around balancing economic benefits with social protection. Legal challenges and public debates prompted by the Board's regulatory decisions create opportunities for continuous improvement in provincial liquor and gambling laws.

The NCGLB's comprehensive regulatory role is integral to shaping a healthier, safer, and more economically vibrant Northern Cape. Its impact spans public health, economic development, governance, and social wellbeing all of which are critical for advancing the province's sustainable development goals.

## **PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Strengthen Enforcement Capacity and Resources**

- **Increase funding and staffing** for the NCGLB to enable more frequent and thorough inspections of licensed premises and more effective action against illegal liquor outlets and gambling operations.
- **Invest in technology**, such as digital monitoring tools and databases, to improve tracking of licenses, compliance, and illegal activities, particularly in remote and rural areas.

### **Enhance Multi-sectoral Collaboration**

- Foster stronger partnerships between the NCGLB, SAPS, Hawks, municipal law enforcement, health departments, and social services to address liquor and gambling-related harms holistically.

- Establish regular inter-agency coordination forums to share intelligence and strategize joint enforcement and community interventions.

### **Improve Community Engagement and Education**

- Expand targeted public awareness campaigns on the risks of alcohol abuse, underage drinking, and problem gambling, using culturally sensitive and locally relevant messaging.
- Engage traditional leaders, ward committees, and community organizations more deeply in co-developing and disseminating education programmes, especially in rural areas.

### **Promote Formalization of Informal Traders**

- Develop supportive programmes to help shebeen owners and informal gambling operators transition to formal, licensed businesses. This could include training on compliance requirements, financial management, and responsible service.
- Provide incentives or reduced fees for first-time applicants from historically disadvantaged communities to encourage legal participation in the regulated economy.

### **Enhance Responsible Gambling Initiatives**

- Mandate more robust responsible gambling measures from licensees, including self-exclusion options, gambling limits, and visible warning signage at venues.
- Increase support and funding for gambling addiction rehabilitation services accessible to vulnerable populations.

### **Increase Transparency and Accountability in Revenue Use**

- Implement stronger monitoring and public reporting on how gambling revenues are allocated to provincial development projects to ensure funds effectively benefit education, health, and community programmes.
- Promote stakeholder involvement, including civil society and community representatives, in oversight committees managing these funds.

### **Address Legal and Policy Gaps**

- Regularly review and update the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Act to respond to emerging challenges, such as online gambling and new types of liquor sales.
- Engage legal experts and civil society in policy formulation to ensure laws balance economic growth with social protection.

### **Enhance Enforcement Capacity**

- Increase budget allocations and recruit additional inspectors to enable more frequent inspections and rapid response to illegal activities.

- Invest in digital monitoring systems for licensing and compliance tracking, including geographic information system (GIS) mapping of outlets.

#### **Foster Multi-sectoral Collaboration**

- Establish a provincial task force comprising government departments, NCGLB, law enforcement, traditional leaders, NGOs, and community groups for coordinated strategy implementation.
- Develop joint training programmes to build capacity across sectors on liquor and gambling-related issues.

#### **Expand Community Education and Engagement**

- Scale up culturally appropriate public awareness campaigns on the risks of alcohol abuse and problem gambling, leveraging local leaders and media channels.
- Support community-driven initiatives that empower informal traders to legalize and operate responsibly.

#### **Strengthen Social Responsibility Measures**

- Mandate licensees to implement comprehensive responsible gambling programmes, including self-exclusion options and staff training.
- Encourage responsible marketing practices and limit advertising exposure to vulnerable groups.

#### **Improve Transparency and Oversight of Revenue Use**

- Introduce mandatory, publicly accessible reporting on gambling revenue allocation and project outcomes.
- Engage civil society and community representatives in oversight committees managing these funds.

#### **Update Legislative Frameworks**

- Conduct a thorough review of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Act to address gaps related to online gambling and evolving liquor distribution methods.
- Introduce provisions for stricter penalties for illegal operations and clearer guidelines for emerging business models.

#### **Support Research and Data Collection**

- Fund ongoing research to monitor the social and economic impacts of liquor and gambling activities in the province.
- Develop a centralized database to inform evidence-based policy and programme adjustments.

### **PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

#### **Provincial Government**

##### **Education**

- Integrate alcohol and gambling awareness and prevention programmes into school curricula at all levels.
- Support teacher training on identifying and addressing substance abuse and gambling risks among learners.

- Facilitate after-school and youth development programmes that provide positive alternatives to alcohol and gambling.

#### **Health Programmes**

- Expand access to addiction treatment and rehabilitation services for alcohol and gambling disorders, especially in rural areas.
- Launch province-wide campaigns on the dangers of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and problem gambling, using mass media and community outreach.
- Strengthen screening and early intervention in primary healthcare settings for alcohol misuse and gambling problems.

#### **Sports and Cultural Events**

- Promote and sponsor alcohol- and gambling-free sports and cultural events to provide safe community entertainment options.
- Partner with local artists and athletes to serve as ambassadors for responsible behavior and healthy lifestyles.
- Incorporate messages on substance abuse prevention and responsible gambling in event programming.

#### **Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB)**

- Increase collaboration with provincial departments to support integrated prevention and enforcement initiatives.
- Engage traditional leaders, community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community policing forums (CPFs) to extend the reach of public education campaigns.
- Facilitate capacity-building workshops for informal traders (e.g., shebeens) to encourage formalization and compliance with liquor and gambling laws.

#### **Private Sector**

- Implement workplace wellness programmes focusing on alcohol abuse and gambling addiction prevention.
- Partner with government and community groups to fund local health, education, and cultural initiatives targeting liquor and gambling harms.
- Encourage responsible business practices among liquor and gambling enterprises, including strict adherence to licensing conditions and social responsibility codes.

#### **Church Fraternity and Traditional Leaders**

- Mobilize faith-based organizations to support community education on the risks of alcohol abuse and gambling.
- Use places of worship as safe spaces for counselling, support groups, and awareness events.
- Work alongside NCGLB and government to identify local problem areas and mobilize community action against illegal liquor and gambling activities.

#### **Communities, NGOs, and CBOs**

- Act as watchdogs and partners in reporting illegal liquor and gambling activities to authorities.
- Organize grassroots awareness campaigns tailored to cultural and local contexts.
- Provide peer support networks and referral services for individuals struggling with addiction.

#### Community Policing Forums (CPFs) and Researchers

- Collaborate to collect data on liquor and gambling-related crime and social harm, informing evidence-based policy and interventions.
- Facilitate community dialogues and forums to discuss liquor and gambling challenges and develop local solutions.

#### Business and Transport Fraternities (e.g., Taxi Associations)

- Promote responsible alcohol use and discourage drinking and driving among drivers and passengers.
- Partner with law enforcement and NCGLB in awareness campaigns targeting transport hubs and routes.

A **multi-sectoral and collaborative approach** involving government departments, regulatory bodies, private sector, faith groups, community organizations, and researchers is essential to effectively address liquor and gambling challenges in the Northern Cape. Coordinated efforts in education, health, enforcement, and community engagement will foster safer, healthier, and more resilient communities.

#### Detailed Action Plan

Stakeholder	Action	Timeline	Responsible Party	Resources Needed
<b>Provincial Education Dept.</b>	Integrate alcohol and gambling prevention in school curricula; train teachers	6–12 months	Provincial Department	Education Curriculum materials, training budget
<b>Provincial Health Dept.</b>	Expand addiction treatment; run awareness campaigns on FASD and gambling	6–18 months	Provincial Department	Health Healthcare facilities, campaign funding
<b>Provincial Sports &amp; Culture</b>	Promote alcohol/gambling-free events; engage ambassadors	6–12 months	Sports & Cultural Affairs	Event partnerships funding,
<b>NCGLB</b>	Increase collaboration with government, CBOs, traditional leaders; formalize informal traders	Ongoing	NCGLB	Staffing, outreach materials
<b>Private Sector</b>	Implement workplace wellness programmes; fund community initiatives	12 months	Private companies, Business Associations	Wellness program resources, sponsorships
<b>Churches &amp; Traditional Leaders</b>	Support education and counselling; mobilize communities	Ongoing	Faith-based organizations, Traditional Leaders	Volunteer training, meeting spaces
<b>NGOs &amp; CBOs</b>	Report illegal activities; organize grassroots campaigns; support addiction services	Ongoing	NGOs, CBOs	Community volunteers, funding
<b>Community Policing Forums</b>	Collect data; facilitate community dialogues	Ongoing	CPFs, Researchers	Data collection tools, meeting venues
<b>Transport Fraternities</b>	Promote responsible alcohol use; partner in awareness campaigns	6–12 months	Taxi Associations, Transport Sector	Campaign materials, coordination support

#### Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework

Objective	Indicator	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible
Integrate alcohol and gambling education	Number of schools implementing programmes	School education dept. reports,	Quarterly	Provincial Education Department
Expand addiction treatment and outreach	Number of patients treated; reach of awareness	Health facilities, campaign logs	Bi-annually	Provincial Health Department
Promote alcohol/gambling-free events	Number of events held; attendance figures	Event reports	Annually	Sports & Culture Department
Formalize informal liquor and gambling traders	Number of informal traders licensed	NCGLB licensing records	Quarterly	NCGLB
Community awareness and engagement	Number of campaigns conducted; community feedback	NGO reports, surveys	Bi-annually	NGOs, CBOs, NCGLB
Enforcement actions against illegal outlets	Number of inspections, closures, prosecutions	NCGLB enforcement reports	Quarterly	NCGLB, SAPS
Workplace wellness programme uptake	Number of workplaces with programmes	Private sector reports	Annually	Private Sector



Objective	Indicator	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible
Data collection and research	Number of reports published; community dialogues	CPF records, research outputs	Annually	CPFs, Researchers

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This action plan and M&E framework provide a structured, coordinated approach to tackling liquor and gambling challenges in the Northern Cape. Regular monitoring will help identify successes and gaps, enabling adaptive management and improved outcomes for the province's communities.

**STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION PLAN**

**Purpose**

To establish clear communication channels and protocols that ensure timely, transparent, and effective information sharing among all stakeholders involved in the regulation and management of liquor and gambling issues in the Northern Cape province.

- Facilitate coordinated action and collaboration among stakeholders.
- Keep stakeholders informed of progress, challenges, and upcoming activities.
- Promote transparency and accountability in programme implementation.
- Encourage stakeholder feedback and community participation.
- Enhance public awareness and education on liquor and gambling issues.

### Objectives

Key Stakeholders		
Stakeholder Group	Role/Interest	Preferred Communication Methods
Provincial Government Departments	Policy, funding, implementation oversight	Formal reports, meetings, email updates
Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB)	Regulation, enforcement, public engagement	Regular briefings, newsletters, workshops
Private Sector (Businesses, Employers)	Compliance, funding, workplace wellness	Meetings, newsletters, emails, seminars
Faith-Based Organizations & Traditional Leaders	Community mobilization, advocacy	Community meetings, radio, church bulletins
NGOs, CBOs	Grassroots engagement, awareness campaigns	Workshops, social media, community forums
Community Policing Forums (CPFs)	Crime prevention, local intelligence	Regular meetings, WhatsApp groups, reports
Researchers & Academia	Data collection, policy recommendations	Conferences, reports, academic journals
Transport & Business Fraternities	Public safety, responsible practices	Briefings, flyers, meetings
General Public and Communities	Awareness, participation	Public meetings, social media, radio

### Communication Activities and Frequency

Activity	Description	Frequency	Responsible Party
Stakeholder Meetings	Multi-sectoral coordination and updates	Quarterly	NCGLB / Provincial Govt
Progress Reports	Written reports on implementation status	Bi-annually	NCGLB / Project Leads
Public Awareness Campaigns	Community education through media and events	Ongoing	NGOs, NCGLB, Government
Workshops and Trainings	Capacity building for stakeholders	Bi-annually	NCGLB, NGOs, Traditional Leaders
Newsletters and Bulletins	Updates on activities and regulatory changes	Quarterly	NCGLB / Provincial Govt
Feedback Mechanisms	Surveys, suggestion boxes, community forums	Ongoing	NGOs, CBOs, CPFs
Social Media Engagement	Disseminate information and engage youth	Ongoing	NCGLB, NGOs

critical role in safeguarding public health, promoting responsible business practices, and fostering sustainable community development. Despite significant progress, the Board faces persistent challenges, including the proliferation of illegal liquor outlets, rising problem gambling, and limited enforcement capacity, especially in rural and underserved areas. These challenges are compounded by socio-economic vulnerabilities, which underscore the need for a comprehensive, collaborative approach involving government departments, traditional leaders, civil society, the private sector, and local communities.

By strengthening inter-sectoral partnerships, enhancing resource allocation, and intensifying community engagement, the NCGLB can significantly amplify its impact. The reinvestment of gambling revenues into health, education, and cultural initiatives exemplifies how regulatory frameworks can contribute to broader social upliftment. Moreover, ongoing legal and policy reforms—shaped by active civil society participation highlight the dynamic balance between economic interests and social responsibility. Ultimately, the Board's success in addressing liquor and gambling challenges will be measured not only by regulatory compliance but also by tangible improvements in public health, social cohesion, and economic opportunity across the Northern Cape. A concerted, transparent, and inclusive approach remains essential to achieving these goals and securing a safer, healthier future for all communities in the province.

The Northern Cape province faces ongoing challenges related to liquor abuse, illegal liquor trading, and problem gambling, which pose significant risks to public health, social cohesion, and economic development. This study critically examines the role of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) in regulating and mitigating these challenges under the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Act. The NCGLB is mandated to license, regulate, and enforce compliance within the liquor and gambling sectors. Its activities include assessing license applications, conducting inspections, shutting down illegal operations, promoting responsible gambling, and ensuring gambling revenues contribute to provincial development initiatives.

Despite notable progress in formalizing liquor and gambling operations and increasing public education, the Board faces persistent enforcement challenges, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Illegal shebeens and unlicensed gambling outlets remain prevalent, undermining regulatory efforts and exacerbating social harms such as underage drinking, gender-based violence, and problem gambling. The study finds that multi-sectoral collaboration engaging provincial government departments, traditional leaders, community-based organizations, the private sector, and civil society is crucial for enhancing regulatory effectiveness and fostering community resilience. Additionally, reinvesting gambling revenues into health, education, and cultural programmes is key to balancing economic benefits with social responsibility.

Recommendations include increasing the Board's enforcement capacity, strengthening partnerships across sectors, expanding targeted community education, and improving transparency in revenue allocation. These measures are essential for promoting safer, healthier communities and sustainable development in the Northern Cape. In conclusion, the NCGLB plays a pivotal role in shaping the province's liquor and gambling landscape. However, addressing persistent challenges requires

### Communication Protocols

- **Information Sharing:** All stakeholders commit to timely sharing of relevant information to ensure coordinated action.
- **Confidentiality:** Sensitive information, especially enforcement operations and personal data, will be handled with confidentiality.
- **Feedback Loop:** Regular mechanisms for receiving and addressing feedback will be maintained to adapt and improve programmes.
- **Crisis Communication:** Clear channels will be established for urgent communication during enforcement actions or public safety concerns.

### Monitoring and Evaluation of Communication

- Track stakeholder attendance and participation in meetings and workshops.
- Monitor reach and engagement metrics for campaigns and social media.
- Collect feedback on the effectiveness and clarity of communication activities.
- Adjust communication strategies based on stakeholder input and emerging needs.

### OVERALL CONTRIBUTION OF ARTICLE

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board's regulatory role within a unique provincial context marked by socio-economic vulnerabilities and resource constraints. It advances understanding of how integrated governance mechanisms, enforcement strategies, and community engagement intersect to address the complex challenges of liquor and gambling in the Northern Cape. By highlighting both successes and persistent gaps, the study contributes valuable insights for policymakers, regulators, and stakeholders seeking to balance economic development with social protection. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration and transparent reinvestment of gambling revenues as key drivers for sustainable provincial development and improved public health outcomes.

### CONCLUSION

The Northern Cape Gambling and Liquor Board (NCGLB) stands at the forefront of regulating and mitigating the complex social and economic challenges posed by liquor and gambling in the province. Its multifaceted mandate spanning licensing, enforcement, public education, and revenue oversight plays a

coordinated, inclusive, and adaptive approaches that prioritize public health and social well-being alongside economic growth.

## KEY FINDINGS

### ➤ Critical Role of the NCGLB in Regulation and Enforcement

The NCGLB effectively oversees liquor and gambling licensing, compliance monitoring, and enforcement activities across the province. Its efforts contribute to formalizing the sector and maintaining legal operating standards. However, enforcement is uneven, with rural and remote areas experiencing weaker regulatory presence.

### ➤ Persistent Challenges with Illegal Liquor and Gambling Operations

Despite ongoing enforcement efforts, the proliferation of illegal shebeens and unlicensed gambling outlets remains a significant problem. These illicit operations undermine public safety, contribute to underage drinking, and exacerbate problem gambling, particularly in vulnerable communities.

### ➤ Resource Constraints Limit Regulatory Capacity

The Board faces challenges related to insufficient funding, staffing, and technological resources. These constraints hamper proactive inspections, timely investigations, and sustained community engagement efforts.

### ➤ Community Engagement and Education are Essential but Underutilized

Public awareness campaigns on the risks of alcohol abuse and gambling exist but require expansion and deeper integration with local communities. Partnerships with traditional leaders, faith groups, NGOs, and community policing forums (CPFs) are critical for amplifying impact.

### ➤ Problem Gambling and Alcohol-Related Social Harms Remain High

The Northern Cape continues to experience high rates of alcohol-related violence, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and gambling addiction. These social harms place considerable strain on health services, law enforcement, and families.

### ➤ Reinvestment of Gambling Revenue Supports Social Development

A portion of gambling revenue is allocated to provincial health, education, and cultural initiatives, promoting community upliftment. However, greater transparency and accountability in the management of these funds are needed to maximize social benefit.

### ➤ Legal and Policy Reforms are Ongoing but Need Acceleration

Litigation and public advocacy highlight tensions between economic interests and social protection, emphasizing the need for updated regulatory frameworks that address emerging challenges such as online gambling and new liquor sales models.

### ➤ Multi-sectoral Collaboration is Key to Sustainable Solutions

Coordinated efforts among provincial government departments, the NCGLB, law enforcement, private sector, civil society, and

community stakeholders are essential to effectively address liquor and gambling-related issues and promote safer communities.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### ➤ Need for Strengthened Regulatory Capacity

The findings indicate that current resource limitations hinder the NCGLB's ability to enforce liquor and gambling laws effectively, especially in rural areas. Policy measures must prioritize increased funding, staffing, and the deployment of technology to enhance monitoring and enforcement capabilities.

### ➤ Importance of Integrated and Multi-sectoral Approaches

Addressing liquor and gambling-related harms requires coordinated action across government departments (health, education, law enforcement), community organizations, and the private sector. Policies should promote structured interdepartmental collaboration and community participation to maximize impact.

### ➤ Balancing Economic Development with Social Responsibility

While gambling and liquor industries contribute to provincial revenues and economic activity, unchecked growth can exacerbate social harms. Policy frameworks must ensure that economic benefits are balanced by robust social safeguards, including stricter licensing conditions and social responsibility mandates.

### ➤ Transparency and Accountability in Revenue Use

The allocation of gambling revenues to social development programmes presents an opportunity for positive community impact. Policies must enforce transparent governance and reporting mechanisms to ensure funds are used effectively and equitably.

### ➤ Addressing Emerging Challenges through Legal Reform

The rise of online gambling and informal liquor sales calls for updated regulatory frameworks. Policymakers need to review and adapt legislation regularly to respond to new market trends and technological developments.

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