

## iPhone 17 frenzy hits India: Buyers queue overnight, scuffles break out at Apple Stores



### Sociological Analysis of iPhone 17 Frenzy in India

#### **Paper 1 Linkages (Theoretical & Conceptual)**

##### **1. Consumerism & Modernity**

- **Baudrillard (Sign Value & Hyperreality):** iPhone isn't just a phone, it's a *status symbol*. People queue not only for utility, but for the symbolic value (prestige, identity).
- **Veblen (Conspicuous Consumption):** Buyers demonstrate wealth by flaunting ability to afford the latest iPhone. The overnight queues & scuffles reflect *competitive display of status*.
- **Durkheim (Collective Effervescence):** The frenzy outside Apple Stores creates a sense of ritual-like solidarity, where individuals feel part of a collective passion.

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##### **2. Class, Stratification & Identity**

- **Bourdieu (Cultural Capital):** Owning the latest iPhone = form of symbolic capital that signals one's class position, taste, and access to global modernity.
- **Weber (Status Consumption):** Distinction between groups → early buyers claim higher status by being "first movers".

- **Marxist View:** Commodity fetishism → people attribute magical value to commodities (iPhone), masking the exploitative labor and profit relations behind production.

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### 3. Globalization & Cultural Homogenization

- **Ritzer's McDonaldization:** Apple launches are standardized, creating predictable global consumer rituals.
- **Appadurai's Global Cultural Flows:** *iPhone* = *global cultural artifact* that shapes aspirations in India, signaling global connectivity and modern lifestyles.
- **Risk Society (Ulrich Beck)**

Modernity creates **new global risks** embedded in consumption:

- **Health risks:** Sleep deprivation, scuffles, injuries while queuing overnight.
- **Economic risks:** Over-spending, indebtedness (EMIs/loans for aspirational purchase).
- **Psychological risks:** Anxiety, exclusion, FOMO (*fear of missing out*).
- **Ecological risks:** E-waste, resource depletion, carbon footprint from constant upgrades.
  - Beck shows how “manufactured risks” are by-products of modern consumer culture — here, Apple's marketing creates *artificial necessity*, fueling risky behavior in pursuit of prestige.

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### Paper 2 Linkages (Indian Society & Contemporary Issues)

#### 1. Middle Class Aspirations

- Expansion of India's urban middle class fuels demand for luxury tech. Owning iPhone = aspirational marker of “arrival” in consumer society.
- **André Beteille's Inequality in India:** Even as inequality persists, the middle class adopts consumption symbols to differentiate themselves.

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#### 2. Youth Culture & Modernization

- Indian youth equate iPhone ownership with being modern, global, and fashionable.
- **M.N. Srinivas's Westernisation:** Global brands like Apple shape Indian consumption patterns and social prestige.

### 3. Social Tensions

- **Scuffles at stores → Anomie (Durkheim):** Breakdown of norms in the frenzy reflects material desire overpowering social order.
- **Exclusionary Nature:** High price creates symbolic boundaries → those who can't afford feel excluded from "modernity club".

### Conclusion

The iPhone 17 frenzy is a vivid example of how **consumerism, status display, and globalization** intersect with modern risks. While it symbolizes aspiration and cultural capital, it also creates new vulnerabilities — debt, exclusion, stress, and ecological concerns — echoing Beck's notion of a **risk society**, where modern progress produces its own hazards. Thus, what appears as a celebration of technology also reflects the **contradictions of late modern consumer culture in India**.



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