

EXPLORING SAFETY RISKS AND REPORTING BARRIERS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN NIGHT-TIME PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Alponsu, R.K.N.M.

Second Year Undergraduate of Criminology
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Sri Jayewardenepura,
Sri Lanka
shani.alponsu@gmail.com

In recent years, the demand for part-time employment among university students in Sri Lanka has increased as they attempt to balance financial needs with academic responsibilities. Night-time employment is particularly common, but it exposes students to significant risks, both during travel and at workplaces with inadequate safety measures. Despite rising concerns, limited research has examined these safety challenges and reporting barriers in the Sri Lankan context. This study aims to explore the safety risks faced by university students engaged in night-time part-time employment, identify the factors influencing their reporting behaviour, and recommend effective interventions to improve their well-being. Using purposive sampling, data were collected from 120 undergraduate students of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura currently employed within the Colombo District. Responses were obtained through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, allowing both quantitative and qualitative insights. Findings reveal that 75% of participants experienced safety-related issues, varying by job type. For example, 18% of students in restaurants and cafés reported verbal harassment, 31% of delivery workers encountered road violence and accidents, 15% of call centre employees endured verbal abuse, 24% of private tutors reported theft, and 12% of data entry workers faced threats from employers. Despite the prevalence of such incidents, 66.7% of affected students did not report their experiences, citing lack of trust in authorities, employer discouragement, fear of reputational damage, and perceptions that incidents were not serious enough. The study emphasizes the need for stronger safety measures, awareness initiatives, and accessible reporting systems to protect students in night-time employment.

Keywords: *Night-time Employment, Safety Risks, Undergraduates, Underreporting, Victims*