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AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF BANNING WEE-HOUR EXPRESS BUS OPERATIONS

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Public express buses operating during the wee-hours (24:00 to 06:00) has been associated with drivers fatigue leading to major crashes. In the interest of passenger safety, banning of the operation during that period could be an alternative for preventing fatal crashes. However, would banning offer a good solution to road safety? This paper highlighted the role of an impact assessment as a tool for decision making at policy level. Data collection involved profiling the existing operation scenarios, crashes involving public express buses, and profiling of stakeholders and public views were conducted. Then, a qualitative impact assessment using all information gathered during the profiling stage to describe the possible impacts was conducted. The outcomes of the impact assessment had shown that banning wee-hour operations are not likely to resolve the issues of driver fatigue, and has the possibility of worsening the situation if fundamental issues like the availability of resting and sleeping places, salary scheme and method of payment to drivers are not improved. The banning is also likely to have impact on the modal shift as 62% of passengers would still prefer to travel at night but using other mode of transportation which could be more dangerous. It is also not a feasible solution for sustainability of express bus operations in this country especially for those operating long journeys. Banning the wee-hour operation could compromises the overall road safety agenda in the country and it is not a possibly alternative to be considered at present.