

Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Opportunities in Rural and Urban Spaces: A Case of Bihar (India)

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Abstract

Livelihood sustainability has become a critical concern in development discourse, particularly in Bihar, where socio-economic vulnerability coincides with rapid population growth. Bihar, the third most populous state of India, accommodates about 10.4% of the national population, with nearly 88.7% residing in rural areas (Census 2011). Agriculture continues to be the backbone of the rural economy, engaging around 70% of the workforce, yet its contribution to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) declined to nearly 19% by 2020–21. This structural imbalance has intensified livelihood insecurity, resulting in widespread seasonal and permanent migration, with almost 30% of households relying on remittances. Urban livelihoods in Bihar reflect a contrasting but equally fragile scenario. Despite low urbanization (11.3%), cities such as Patna, Muzaffarpur, and Bhagalpur are witnessing rapid in-migration. Employment, however, is overwhelmingly informal, accounting for over 80% of urban jobs. Weak industrial growth and limited expansion of the service sector have led to high unemployment, especially among educated youth, with rates exceeding 13%, above the national average. At the same time, Bihar has shown promising livelihood innovations. The Jeevika initiative under the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Mission has mobilized more than 10 million women through self-help groups, enhancing incomes, financial inclusion, and empowerment. Agricultural diversification into maize, litchi, makhana, and dairy, along with the state's rich cultural and religious heritage, offers potential for sustainable rural and tourism-based livelihoods. Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, this paper analyses livelihood assets, vulnerabilities, and strategies across rural and urban Bihar. It argues that integrated planning, skill development, and promotion of inclusive and green employment can convert existing vulnerabilities into long-term opportunities, making sustainable livelihoods central to inclusive growth and socio-economic stability in Bihar.

Keywords: Sustainable Livelihoods, Rural–Urban Linkages, Migration and Remittances, Informal Economy, Bihar Development

1. Introduction

Livelihood sustainability has become a critical theme in development discourse, particularly in the context of economically lagging regions such as Bihar. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities required to sustain a means of living; it is considered sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses, maintain or enhance capabilities and assets, and provide opportunities for future generations without undermining the natural resource base (Chambers & Conway, 1992). In Bihar, livelihood practices are strongly influenced by historical underdevelopment, agrarian dependence, frequent natural hazards, and increasing rural–urban disparities. Despite having abundant human resources and rich cultural heritage, the state continues to face structural challenges such as poverty, unemployment, low industrialization, and high out-migration.

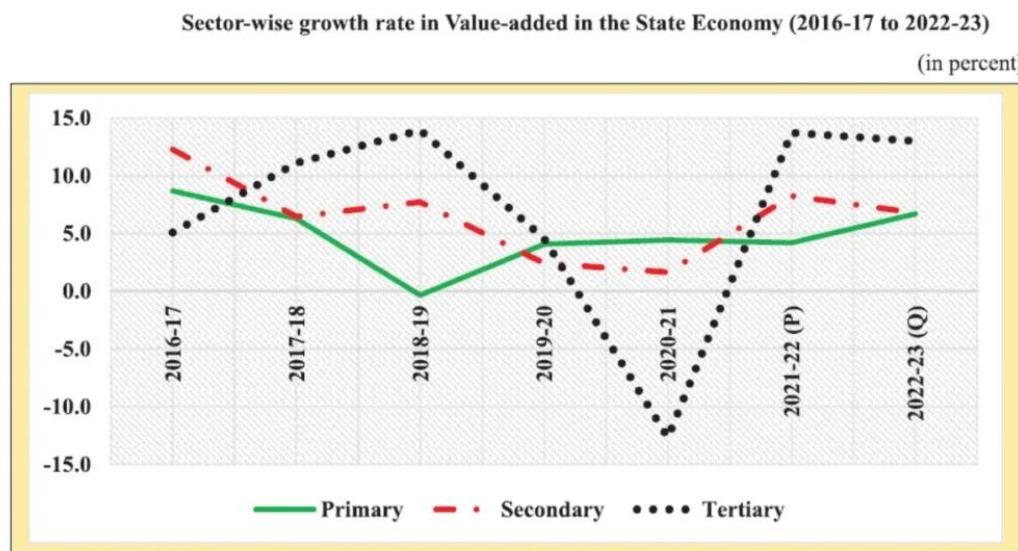
Bihar is the third most populous state in India, with a population of 104.1 million (Census, 2011), of which 88.7% live in rural areas. Agriculture remains the backbone of Bihar's rural economy, employing nearly 70% of the workforce. However, its share in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has declined to around 19% in 2020–21 (Government of Bihar, 2022), indicating the state's inability to transform its workforce into secondary and tertiary sectors. Small and fragmented landholdings, seasonal unemployment, declining soil fertility, and frequent floods and droughts make rural livelihoods highly vulnerable. Consequently, migration has emerged as a dominant livelihood strategy, with more than 30% of households dependent on remittances for survival and socio-economic security.

Urban livelihoods in Bihar present a contrasting but equally complex scenario. Bihar remains one of the least urbanized states in India, with only 11.3% of its population living in urban areas. Yet, cities such as Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur, and Muzaffarpur are witnessing rapid rural–urban migration, resulting in increasing pressure on urban infrastructure and services. Employment is predominantly informal, with over 80% of urban workers engaged in unorganized sectors such as street vending, construction, rickshaw pulling, and small-scale trade. The absence of large-scale industries, inadequate investment, and limited growth of the service sector have restricted employment opportunities, particularly for the educated youth. The unemployment rate in urban Bihar was recorded above 13% in 2020–21, higher than the national average (PLFS, 2021).

Despite these challenges, Bihar has demonstrated significant potential for livelihood diversification and innovation. Initiatives like the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project (Jeevika) have mobilized over 10 million rural women through self-help groups, improving financial inclusion, income generation, and social empowerment. Agricultural diversification into high-value crops such as maize, litchi, makhana, and dairy farming has opened new avenues for rural livelihoods. Additionally, Bihar's rich cultural, religious, and historical heritage – including sites like Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, Rajgir, and Vikramshila – offers immense potential for sustainable tourism-based employment.

Given this background, the present study aims to analyse sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities in rural and urban spaces of Bihar using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF). It examines livelihood assets, vulnerability context, strategies, and institutional interventions while exploring the role of migration, informal economy, rural enterprises, and tourism. The paper argues that while Bihar's livelihood structure is deeply rooted in agriculture and migration, there is substantial scope to transform these vulnerabilities into opportunities through integrated rural–urban planning, skill

development, promotion of green jobs, and strengthening of local economies. Ensuring sustainable and inclusive livelihoods is not only vital for poverty reduction but also critical for achieving long-term economic stability and social equity in Bihar.



Note : For 2021-22, the figures are Provisional estimates (P) and for 2022-23 Quick estimates (Q).

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, GoB

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of sustainable livelihoods, introduced by Chambers and Conway (1992), emphasizes the importance of capabilities, assets, and activities that help individuals maintain and improve their living conditions, even in the face of shocks and stress. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DFID, 1999) further explains how human, natural, social, physical, and financial capital shape livelihood outcomes. In Bihar, studies by Jha and Singh (2019) and Sharma (2012) reveal that rural livelihoods are heavily dependent on agriculture, yet declining productivity, small landholdings, floods, and droughts make them highly vulnerable. Migration has emerged as a key livelihood strategy; Deshingkar and Farrington (2009) note that remittances sustain nearly one-third of rural households in Bihar. Urban livelihood studies by Papola (2013) and Kumar & Prasad (2021) highlight the dominance of the informal sector in cities like Patna and Bhagalpur, where limited industrialization and poor infrastructure result in insecure employment. Meanwhile, livelihood diversification through dairy, horticulture, makhana, litchi cultivation, and self-help groups under the Jeevika project has shown positive results in empowering rural women and increasing incomes (NABARD, 2018; Government of Bihar, 2022). However, there remains a gap in literature that comparatively analyzes rural and urban livelihoods in Bihar using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, particularly with respect to migration, informal economies, and climate vulnerability.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the nature of livelihood patterns in rural and urban areas of Bihar, with emphasis on agriculture, informal employment, and non-farm economic activities.
2. To assess livelihood assets, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) in the context of Bihar's socio-economic and environmental conditions.

3. To evaluate the role of migration, government schemes, and emerging opportunities in promoting sustainable and inclusive livelihoods in Bihar.

DATA SOURCE & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach based on both qualitative and quantitative data to examine sustainable livelihoods in rural and urban Bihar. The research primarily relies on secondary data sourced from the Census of India, Bihar Economic Survey, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), NSSO reports, Government publications, and scholarly articles. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) is used as the conceptual tool to analyze livelihood assets (human, natural, social, physical, and financial capital), vulnerability factors (poverty, migration, climate hazards), and coping strategies adopted by households. A comparative analysis is conducted between rural and urban livelihood structures, focusing on agriculture, informal employment, migration, and government interventions such as Jeevika, MGNREGA, and DAY-NULM. The study area includes the state of Bihar, with specific reference to districts like Patna, Bhagalpur, and Muzaffarpur to understand varied livelihood dynamics. Data is interpreted through qualitative content analysis and simple statistical interpretation to derive meaningful conclusions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF), developed by DFID (1999), which provides a holistic understanding of how individuals and communities sustain their livelihoods amidst vulnerabilities. The framework focuses on five types of livelihood assets—human capital (skills, education, health), natural capital (land, water, climate), physical capital (infrastructure, housing, transport), financial capital (income, savings, credit), and social capital (networks, community support, institutions). These assets are influenced by the vulnerability context, which includes poverty, climate-induced disasters, unemployment, migration, and socio-economic inequalities—factors highly prevalent in Bihar. People adopt various livelihood strategies, such as farming, wage labour, migration, self-employment, and small businesses, to sustain their living. These strategies are further shaped by policies, institutions, and government programmes like MGNREGA, NRLM (Jeevika), DAY-NULM, and agricultural reforms. Through this framework, the paper analyses how rural and urban households in Bihar utilize available assets, cope with risks, and seek sustainable livelihood opportunities.

RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN BIHAR

Rural livelihoods in Bihar are predominantly agrarian, with nearly 70% of the population dependent on agriculture and allied activities for survival. However, agriculture in the state is characterized by small and fragmented landholdings, low productivity, over-dependence on monsoon rainfall, and recurrent natural hazards such as floods in North Bihar and droughts in South Bihar. The contribution of agriculture to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has declined to around 19% (2020–21), creating a mismatch between the agricultural workforce and its economic output. Many households rely on subsistence farming, sharecropping, cattle rearing, fishing, dairy, and seasonal wage labour under schemes like MGNREGA to supplement income. Additionally, agricultural diversification in crops such as maize, litchi, makhana, and vegetables, along with fisheries and dairy cooperatives, has provided new livelihood avenues in districts like Muzaffarpur, Madhubani, and Begusarai. Rural poverty, lack of irrigation, inadequate market infrastructure, and limited access to credit push a large section of the rural workforce

towards migration to states like Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The success of the Jeevika (Bihar Rural Livelihoods Mission) has been a transformative model, mobilizing millions of women through self-help groups (SHGs), promoting microfinance, entrepreneurship, and social empowerment. Despite these developments, rural livelihoods in Bihar remain vulnerable, requiring stronger agricultural reforms, skill development, and rural non-farm employment opportunities.

Table 1: Rural Livelihoods in Bihar – Key Indicators

Indicator / Aspect	Data / Evidence	Source
Population dependent on agriculture	~70% of rural population	NITI Aayog / Economic Survey of Bihar (2023)
Agriculture shares in GSDP	19% (2020–21)	Bihar Economic Survey 2022–23
Average landholding size	0.39 hectares (very small & fragmented)	Agriculture Census 2015–16
Rainfed agriculture	60% farmland dependent on monsoon	ICAR & Dept. of Agriculture
Major natural hazards	Floods: 68% of North Bihar area prone to floods Drought: South Bihar frequently affected	NDMA, Water Resources Dept. Bihar
Households earning through wage labour (MGNREGA)	73 lakh households employed (2022–23)	Ministry of Rural Development
Major diversified crops	Maize: 3rd largest producer in India Litchi: Bihar produces 40% of India's total Makhana: 70% of world production	ICAR, NABARD
Livestock & dairy contribution	11 million tonnes milk per year	BAHS Report, Govt. of Bihar
Districts with diversification success	Muzaffarpur (Litchi), Madhubani (Fishery), Begusarai (Dairy & Maize)	Bihar Agriculture Dept.
Rural poverty rate	33.7% (highest in India)	NITI Aayog, MPI Report 2023
Rural migration rate	29 migrants per 1,000 population	NSSO Migration Report 2019
Women involved in Jeevika (NRLM SHGs)	1.10 crore+ women in 10 lakh SHGs	Bihar Rural Livelihoods Mission (BRLPS), 2024
Credit disbursed under SHGs (Jeevika)	₹14,000 crore+	BRLPS / NABARD

URBAN LIVELIHOODS IN BIHAR

Urban livelihoods in Bihar present a complex scenario marked by rapid population growth, limited industrialization, and dominance of the informal sector. Despite being one of the least urbanized states in

India (only 11.3% urban population), cities like Patna, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, and Bhagalpur are experiencing rising rural–urban migration due to agrarian distress and lack of rural employment. However, urban areas offer mostly informal and unregulated livelihood opportunities, with more than 80% of workers engaged in activities such as street vending, rickshaw pulling, construction work, small retail shops, domestic services, and daily wage labour. The absence of large industries, underdeveloped service sectors, weak infrastructure, and inadequate investment restrict formal employment growth. Youth unemployment is particularly high, with urban unemployment rates exceeding 13%, higher than the national average (PLFS 2020–21). Slums and informal settlements are expanding due to high housing demand and low-income levels, leading to poor access to water, sanitation, healthcare, and education. Schemes like PMAY-Urban, DAY-NULM, Smart City Mission, and Skill India have been introduced to enhance urban employment, entrepreneurship, and infrastructure, but their coverage and effectiveness remain limited. Thus, urban livelihoods in Bihar are characterized by economic insecurity, low wages, and lack of social protection, yet they serve as crucial spaces for income diversification, migration-based earnings, and emerging service-based economies.

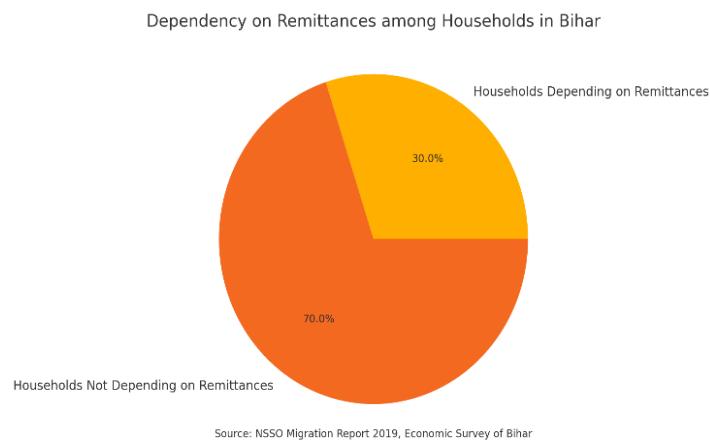
Table 2: Urban Livelihoods in Bihar – Key Indicators

Indicator / Aspect	Data / Statistics	Source
Urban population of Bihar	11.3% (least urbanized major state in India)	Census 2011 / NITI Aayog
Major urban centres	Patna, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Bhagalpur	Census & Bihar Economic Survey
Workers in informal sector	80–85% of urban workforce	Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2020–21
Common informal occupations	Street vending, rickshaw pulling, construction, small shops, domestic work, daily wage labour	PLFS / NULM
Urban unemployment rate	13.5% (higher than national average of 8.7%)	PLFS 2020–21
Urban poverty rate	15.6%	NITI Aayog, Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023
Growth in slum population	32–35% of urban residents live in slums (Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur highest)	Census & HUDCO
Housing shortage in urban Bihar	~3.4 lakh units	Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs
Major urban livelihood schemes	PMAY-Urban, DAY-NULM, Smart City Mission, PM SVANidhi, Skill India	MoHUA / Govt. of Bihar
Migration to urban areas	High rural-to-urban migration due to lack of rural jobs & agrarian crisis	NSSO Migration Report 2019

Contribution of urban Bihar to GSDP	45–50%	Bihar Economic Survey 2023
Formal industries present	Minimal – Food processing, leather, textile, small manufacturing	DIC Bihar

MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES AS A LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY

Migration has become one of the most significant livelihood strategies in Bihar, driven by limited agricultural productivity, unemployment, poverty, and recurrent natural disasters like floods and droughts. A large proportion of rural households send male members to metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, Ludhiana, and Kolkata, as well as to states like Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat for seasonal or long-term employment. These migrants are primarily engaged in low-paid informal jobs such as construction labour, factory work, rickshaw pulling, security services, and domestic work. According to various studies, nearly 30% of households in Bihar rely on remittances as a major or supplementary income source, helping them meet daily consumption needs, education expenses, healthcare, and housing improvements. Migration not only reduces pressure on local labour markets but also acts as a coping mechanism against rural livelihood vulnerability. However, it also brings socio-economic challenges including family separation, exploitation of migrant workers, lack of social security, and feminization of agriculture, where women manage households and farms in the absence of male members. Despite these issues, remittances play a crucial role in strengthening household resilience and contribute significantly to Bihar's rural economy, making migration a vital component of its livelihood system.



CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN BIHAR

Sustainable livelihoods in Bihar face multiple challenges arising from socio-economic, environmental, and institutional constraints. The dominance of small and fragmented landholdings, low agricultural productivity, inadequate irrigation, and over-dependence on monsoon rainfall make rural livelihoods highly vulnerable. Frequent natural disasters, particularly floods in North Bihar and droughts in South Bihar, cause severe crop losses, displacement, and economic instability. In urban areas, limited industrialization, high unemployment, overcrowding, and the expansion of informal settlements contribute to insecure livelihoods and poor living conditions. The lack of skill development, low literacy rates, especially among women, and inadequate access to healthcare and education further restrict livelihood

opportunities. Weak infrastructure such as roads, electricity, storage facilities, and market linkages hinders both agricultural and non-agricultural growth. Additionally, bureaucratic delays, corruption, and poor implementation of government schemes like MGNREGA, PMAY, and DAY-NULM reduce the impact of livelihood support programmes. Social issues such as caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, and limited access to credit and land further marginalize vulnerable communities. Together, these challenges create a cycle of poverty, migration, and economic insecurity, making it difficult to achieve sustainable and inclusive livelihoods in Bihar.

Table 3 -Poverty & Economic Hardship

Indicator	Data	Source
Rural Poverty Rate	33.7%	NITI Aayog Multidimensional Poverty Index (2023)
Urban Poverty Rate	15.6%	NITI Aayog MPI (2023)
Bihar Rank in Poverty (India)	Highest number of poor households	NITI Aayog
Per Capita Income of Bihar	₹54,383 (2022–23) (India average: ₹1,70,620)	RBI / Bihar Economic Survey

Table 4- Inadequate Infrastructure

Indicator	Status	Source
Rural households with pucca roads	54%	Ministry of Rural Development (PMGSY Report 2023)
Households with electricity access	77% rural, 97% urban	NSO & Saubhagya Scheme Report (2022)
Functional piped water supply in rural areas	18% households only	Jal Jeevan Mission (2023)
Internet Connectivity (Rural Bihar)	28% households	NFHS-5 (2019–21)

Table 5- Limited Access to Education & Healthcare

Indicator	Data	Source
Literacy Rate (Overall)	61.8% (National avg: 74%)	Census 2011 / Projected 2023
Female Literacy	51.5%	Census 2011
Primary Healthcare Centers Shortfall	32% deficiency in PHCs	Ministry of Health (RHS 2022)
Doctor-Patient Ratio	1:28,000 (Bihar)	NITI Aayog Health Index

Table 6- Environmental Degradation

Indicator	Value	Source
Area affected by annual floods	68% of North Bihar	NDMA
Groundwater Over-exploited Blocks	11 out of 534 blocks	Central Ground Water Board
Deforestation Rate (last 10 years)	~8% decrease	FSI Report 2021
Soil Erosion-prone districts	12 districts severely affected	ICAR Research

Table 7 - Dependence on Traditional Practices

Indicator	Status	Source
Average Landholding Size	0.39 hectares	Agriculture Census 2015–16
Households using modern irrigation (tube wells/drip)	41% only	Bihar Agriculture Department
Tractors per 1,000 farmers	13 (very low)	Ministry of Agriculture
Farmers using chemical-free or scientific methods	<10%	ICAR–KVK Report

Table 8 -Climate Change & Livelihood Risk

Climate Issue	Data	Source
Average annual flood damage	₹4000+ crore per year	Bihar Disaster Management Dept
Drought frequency (South Bihar)	Once every 2–3 years	IMD & ICAR
Temperature rise in last 50 years	0.9°C increase	IMD Climate Report
Crop loss due to floods/droughts	23–30% of annual production	ICAR & State Agriculture Dept

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES IN BIHAR

The Government of India and the Government of Bihar have launched several initiatives to strengthen livelihood security, enhance income opportunities, and reduce poverty in both rural and urban areas. One of the most successful initiatives is the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project (Jeevika) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), which has mobilized over 10 million rural women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs), improving access to microfinance, entrepreneurship, dairy cooperatives, and social empowerment. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural households, acting as a safety net during non-agricultural seasons. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana (PMKSY), PM-Kisan, and Soil Health Card Scheme aim to enhance agricultural productivity, irrigation facilities, and income stability for farmers. In urban areas, programmes like the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM) support skill development, self-employment, and micro-enterprises for the urban poor. Housing schemes such as PM Awas Yojana (Urban & Rural) provide affordable housing to economically weaker sections. Additionally, initiatives like the Skill India Mission, Start-up India, Mudra Yojana, and

Stand-up India aim to promote entrepreneurship and job creation for youth. Despite these schemes, issues such as fund delays, bureaucratic hurdles, low awareness, and regional disparities often limit their effectiveness. Strengthening implementation, transparency, and beneficiary participation is essential to ensure these programmes contribute effectively to sustainable livelihoods.

Table 9 -Major Livelihood Schemes in Rural Bihar

Scheme	Objective	Beneficiaries / Coverage	Key Impact (Bihar)
MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)	100 days guaranteed wage employment	73 lakh households (2023)	₹6,300 crore wages disbursed; rural employment & asset creation
JEEViKA (NRLM – Bihar Rural Livelihoods Mission)	Women SHGs, microfinance & entrepreneurship	1.10 crore women, 10+ lakh SHGs	₹14,000 crore credit linkage; dairy, agriculture, small enterprises
PM-KISAN	₹6,000/year income support to farmers	84 lakh registered farmers	₹6,900 crore transferred (up to 2023)
PMKSY (Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana)	Improve irrigation & water-use efficiency	Covers 38 districts	2.8 lakh hectares brought under irrigation
Soil Health Card Scheme	Improve soil fertility & scientific farming	1.16 crore farmers given cards	Reduced fertilizer misuse & improved yields

Table 10 - Urban Livelihood & Employment Schemes

Scheme	Purpose	Coverage in Bihar	Key Outcomes
DAY-NULM (National Urban Livelihood Mission)	Skill training & self-employment for urban poor	142 towns in Bihar	2.5 lakh+ urban youth trained; self-employment loans provided
PM SVANidhi	Loans to street vendors	2.8 lakh applications; 1.9 lakh sanctioned	Formal credit access & digital transactions
PMAY-Urban	Affordable housing	8.5 lakh houses sanctioned	4.2 lakh completed (2023)
Smart Cities Mission	Urban infrastructure & governance	Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Bihar Sharif	Sewerage, e-governance, urban mobility projects

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE LIVELIHOODS IN BIHAR

Despite structural challenges, Bihar has immense potential to develop sustainable and inclusive livelihood opportunities by leveraging its demographic strength, agricultural base, cultural heritage, and emerging non-farm sectors. Agricultural diversification into high-value crops such as litchi, makhana, maize, vegetables, honey, and organic farming can create profitable rural enterprises. The promotion of dairy, fisheries, poultry, and agro-processing industries can enhance income security and generate local employment. Jeevika's self-help group model shows how women's entrepreneurship, microfinance, and collective marketing can transform rural livelihoods. In urban areas, expanding skill-based employment, digital services, local start-ups, and MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) can reduce dependence on informal labour. Bihar's rich cultural and religious heritage—such as Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, Rajgir, Sultanganj, and Vikramshila—provides immense scope for eco-tourism, heritage tourism, and rural tourism, which can generate jobs in hospitality, handicrafts, transport, and local markets. Furthermore, investments in renewable energy, green jobs, flood-resilient agriculture, rural infrastructure, and digital connectivity offer new livelihood possibilities. If supported with strong policy implementation, education, skill training, and rural-urban integration, these opportunities can transform Bihar from a migration-dependent economy to a self-reliant and sustainable system of livelihoods.

Conclusion

Sustainable livelihoods in Bihar reflect a complex interplay of agricultural dependency, rural poverty, informal urban employment, and migration-driven income strategies. Despite being one of India's least urbanized and economically backward states, Bihar possesses significant potential for inclusive development through its rich human resources, fertile plains, cultural heritage, and emerging livelihood innovations. The rural economy remains largely agrarian but constrained by small landholdings, natural disasters, and low productivity, leading to seasonal migration. Urban centres, though expanding, are unable to provide sufficient formal employment, resulting in overdependence on informal work and inadequate infrastructure. Government interventions like Jeevika, MGNREGA, DAY-NULM, and PM-Kisan have contributed to livelihood support, but their impact is limited by weak implementation and socio-economic disparities. To move toward sustainable and resilient livelihoods, Bihar must focus on agricultural diversification, rural non-farm enterprises, skill development, promotion of MSMEs, sustainable tourism, renewable energy, and better integration of rural and urban economies. Strengthening education, women's participation, governance transparency, and social protection will be crucial in transforming vulnerabilities into opportunities. Thus, sustainable livelihoods are not merely an economic necessity but a pathway to inclusive growth, social equity, and long-term stability in Bihar.

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