

**Beauty Parlour Industry and Women's Employment in Bihar: Opportunities,
Challenges and Prospects for Economic Empowerment**

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Abstract

Women's employment, skill development and entrepreneurship are important components of inclusive economic growth in Bihar. In a labour market where women's participation is strongly associated with self-employment and household-based economic activities, skill-oriented service enterprises can provide new opportunities for livelihood and economic empowerment. The present study examines the role and prospects of the beauty parlour industry in promoting women's employment, self-employment and economic empowerment in Bihar. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach and is based primarily on secondary data obtained from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2023–24, along with relevant government reports and documents on employment, skill development and women's entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, compared with 66.6 percent at the all-India level, while only 5.5 percent were engaged in regular wage or salaried employment. Further, 39.8 percent of female workers in Bihar were helpers in household enterprises, highlighting the importance of small-scale and household-based activities. The challenges related to finance, skill gaps, competition, social security and enterprise formalisation need attention. The study concludes that appropriate skill development, institutional credit and government support can strengthen the beauty parlour sector as an avenue for women's employment and inclusive growth in Bihar.

Keywords: *Beauty Parlour Industry; Women's Employment; Self-Employment; Women's Economic Empowerment*

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1. Introduction

Employment generation, skill development and women's economic participation are important components of inclusive economic development. In Bihar, the structure of employment indicates a strong dependence on self-employment and informal economic activities, particularly among women. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2023–24, 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, compared with 66.6 percent at the all-India level, while only 5.5 percent were engaged in regular wage or salaried employment. Further, 39.8 percent of female workers in Bihar were helpers in household enterprises, highlighting the significant role of household-based and small-scale economic activities in women's livelihoods. This employment pattern suggests the need to identify accessible, skill-oriented and sustainable avenues through which women can participate

more actively in economic activities. In this context, the beauty parlour industry has considerable potential as an avenue for women's employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. Beauty and wellness services require specialised vocational skills in areas such as hair care, skin care, make-up, manicure and pedicure, while small beauty parlour enterprises can often be established with comparatively limited investment. The PLFS data further show that 78.8 percent of female workers engaged in non-agricultural activities in Bihar were associated with proprietary and partnership enterprises, compared with 61.2 percent in India, demonstrating the importance of small and privately operated enterprises in women's employment. The beauty parlour sector can contribute not only to employment generation but also to income generation, financial independence, entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment. Women who establish their own parlours can generate personal income, contribute to household expenditure and create employment opportunities for other trained women. At the same time, challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate advanced training, competition, changing customer preferences, social security and formalisation can constrain the growth of such enterprises. Therefore, the present study examines the role and prospects of the beauty parlour industry in promoting women's employment and economic empowerment in Bihar, while also considering the role of skill development and government initiatives such as Skill India, PMKVY, PMMY/MUDRA and JEEViKA in strengthening women's entrepreneurship and sustainable self-employment.

2. Review of Literature

Rowe, R. (2026) reviewed study critically reinterprets the role of Black women in modernist art by foregrounding their presence as active contributors rather than passive muses. It highlights how Black women models in Jacob Epstein's work were central to shaping modernist aesthetics, yet remained largely invisible in historical and scholarly narratives. The literature reveals that modernism's engagement with African and diasporic cultures was deeply entangled with colonial power relations, often appropriating Black bodies as artistic inspiration while marginalizing their identities. At the same time, the study uncovers spaces of Black modernism in interwar London, where Black women participated as performers, models, and cultural agents.

Sun, Y. (2026) highlighted that migrant identity is no longer understood as a linear process of assimilation but as fluid, negotiated, and context-dependent. Scholars emphasize the role of gendered labour, particularly emotional and aesthetic labour, in shaping migrant women's identities within service sectors like the beauty industry. Existing studies reveal a duality where beauty work offers opportunities for economic mobility and self-transformation while simultaneously reinforcing class hierarchies, precarity, and social exclusion.

Paramshivaiah & Sampath Kumar (2025) studied that rural women entrepreneurship is driven by multiple motivational factors such as the desire for economic independence, utilization of skills, and the need to improve socio-economic status. The literature emphasizes that women increasingly engage in diverse activities, including beauty parlours and small businesses, as viable livelihood options. However, findings indicate that entrepreneurial growth is constrained by various barriers, particularly economic, psychological, and social factors.

Kloß (2025) reconceptualized hair as more than a symbolic or aesthetic element, emphasizing its role as a sensory and material extension of the body. It demonstrates that in Hindu Suriname, hair functions as a medium of interaction between bodies, energies, and environments. Practices such as cutting, tying, and ritual shaving are not merely cultural symbols but are active processes that regulate bodily boundaries, sensitivity, and transactional exchanges. The literature highlights that long, loose hair enhances openness and receptivity to subtle energies, while shaving and grooming practices reduce such exposure and establish separation, particularly during rites of passage like birth and death.

Nkoana et al. (2024) stated that workers in beauty salons are significantly exposed to hazardous chemicals, which adversely affect their health and safety. The literature reveals that despite frequent use of chemical-based products, workers possess limited knowledge regarding chemical safety, proper handling, and protective measures. The findings indicate high prevalence of respiratory issues, skin irritation, headaches, and eye problems, demonstrating the occupational risks involved.

3. Need for Study

The need for the present study arises from the high dependence of women in Bihar on self-employment and household-based economic activities. According to PLFS 2023–24, 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, compared with 66.6 percent in India, while only 5.5 percent were engaged in regular wage or salaried employment. In this context, the beauty parlour industry offers an important opportunity for women's skill development, self-employment, income generation and entrepreneurship with relatively limited investment. However, issues related to finance, training, competition, social security and enterprise formalisation require attention. Therefore, the study is needed to assess the potential of the beauty parlour sector as an avenue for women's employment and economic empowerment in Bihar.

4. Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the role and prospects of the beauty parlour industry in promoting women's employment, self-employment, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in Bihar.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the employment pattern of women in Bihar, with particular emphasis on self-employment, regular wage/salaried employment and casual labour.
- To assess the potential of the beauty parlour industry as a source of women's employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- To examine the contribution of beauty parlours to women's economic empowerment, particularly through income generation, financial independence and employment creation.
- To identify the major challenges and support requirements of women engaged in beauty parlour enterprises, including skill development, access to finance, competition, social security and government support.

5. Research Methodology

The present study follows a descriptive and analytical approach and is based mainly on secondary data. The study uses data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2023–24, particularly for analysing employment status, self-employment, enterprise structure, employment conditions and earnings of male and female workers in Bihar and India. In addition, the study draws upon the Economic Survey of Bihar and relevant government reports and documents on skill development, employment, women's entrepreneurship and welfare schemes available in the paper. The collected information is analysed through percentage distribution and comparative analysis to examine the employment potential of the beauty parlour sector for women in Bihar.

6. Government Initiatives for Skill Development, Employment and Labour Welfare

The economic prosperity of a nation largely depends on the skill level of its workforce and its ability to meet the changing and industry-specific demands for labour. To address the growing requirements of the economy, the State Government has undertaken several initiatives to enhance the skills and employability of its workforce. Various skill development programmes have been implemented to

equip workers, particularly young people, with relevant technical and vocational competencies. These initiatives aim to improve employment opportunities, increase productivity, and strengthen the overall quality of the labour force. Regular recruitment drives and employment initiatives are also undertaken to create quality employment opportunities within the state. The State Government has also taken significant measures to eradicate child labour and ensure the rehabilitation and reintegration of children engaged in labour into the mainstream of society. These efforts include awareness programmes, rehabilitation measures, educational support, and welfare interventions. Collectively, these initiatives reflect the government's commitment to promoting skill development, employment generation, labour welfare, women's empowerment, and social inclusion.

7. Pattern of Employment in Bihar

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2024, employment in Bihar is characterised by a high dependence on self-employment and casual labour, reflecting the predominance of the informal sector. The PLFS classifies employment into three major categories: self-employed, regular wage/salaried employees, and casual labour. Self-employment includes own-account workers, employers, and helpers in household enterprises. In Bihar, 61.2 percent of male workers were self-employed, while 28.5 percent were engaged as casual labour. Only 10.3 percent of male workers were regular wage or salaried employees, which was considerably lower than the all-India average. This indicates that a substantial proportion of male workers in Bihar remain engaged in informal and relatively insecure employment. The employment pattern of female workers was even more strongly concentrated in self-employment. About 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, of whom 39.8 percent worked as helpers in household enterprises. The share of self-employed female workers was substantially higher than the national average. Further, 10.8 percent of female workers were engaged as casual labour, while only 5.5 percent were employed in regular wage or salaried jobs. This highlights the need for greater opportunities for formal employment, skill development, social security, and improved working conditions, particularly for women and other vulnerable sections of the workforce.

Table 01: Percentage Distribution of Male Workers by Employment Status in Selected States, 2023–24

State	Own-account worker / Employer	Helper in household enterprise	All Self-employed	Regular Wage/Salary Earner	Casual Labour	All
Andhra Pradesh	42.0	5.2	49.7	26.5	23.8	100
Assam	46.5	5.7	53.3	19.9	26.8	100
Bihar	50.3	10.4	61.2	10.3	28.5	100
Chhattisgarh	42.5	15.4	61.3	21.0	17.8	100
Gujarat	38.9	10.6	50.1	37.9	12.1	100
Haryana	36.8	6.4	44.3	42.1	13.6	100
Jharkhand	42.3	10.8	53.8	17.5	28.7	100
Karnataka	41.7	8.2	50.3	27.3	22.4	100
Kerala	37.9	1.1	43.8	33.3	22.9	100
Madhya Pradesh	44.3	17.2	63.3	17.6	19.1	100
Maharashtra	36.6	7.8	45.7	34.9	19.5	100
Odisha	43.6	10.1	55.8	17.1	27.1	100
Punjab	36.6	8.0	45.6	34.0	20.4	100
Rajasthan	46.9	11.9	60.4	26.4	13.2	100
Tamil Nadu	29.0	2.9	34.3	40.0	25.6	100
Telangana	46.8	6.2	53.4	30.4	16.2	100
Uttar Pradesh	50.2	14.4	66.2	15.5	18.3	100
West Bengal	42.2	5.7	49.6	22.8	27.6	100
India	42.8	9.3	53.7	25.4	20.9	100

Note: The figures cover both rural and urban areas.

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2024.

Table 01 presents the percentage distribution of male workers according to their employment status in selected states of India during 2023–24. At the all-India level, 53.7 percent of male workers were self-employed, while 25.4 percent were regular wage or salaried employees and 20.9 percent were engaged as casual labour. Within self-employment, 42.8 percent were own-account workers or employers and 9.3 percent were helpers in household enterprises. The data indicate that self-employment remained the dominant form of employment among male workers in India, although a considerable proportion had access to regular wage or salaried employment. The employment situation in Bihar shows a stronger dependence on self-employment and casual labour compared with the national average. About 61.2 percent of male workers in Bihar were self-employed, which was 7.5 percentage points higher than the all-India figure of 53.7 percent. Among them, 50.3 percent were own-account workers or employers and 10.4 percent were helpers in household enterprises. Bihar also recorded a relatively high share of casual labour at 28.5 percent, compared with 20.9 percent for India as a whole. This indicates the significant role of informal and less-secure employment in the state's labour market. In contrast, only 10.3 percent of male workers in Bihar were regular wage or salaried employees, compared with 25.4 percent at the all-India level. Thus, Bihar had a much lower proportion of workers in relatively stable wage and salaried employment. The table further shows that Bihar's share of regular employment was among the lowest among the selected states, while its dependence on casual labour was relatively high.

Table 02: Percentage Distribution of Female Workers by Employment Status in Selected States, 2023–24

State	Own-account Worker / Employer	Helper in Household Enterprise	All Self-employed	Regular Wage/Salary Earner	Casual Labour	All
Andhra Pradesh	19.7	27.1	48.0	20.4	31.7	100
Assam	51.0	20.7	72.0	20.2	7.8	100
Bihar	43.3	39.8	83.7	5.5	10.8	100
Chhattisgarh	9.3	55.6	67.4	12.1	20.5	100
Gujarat	37.6	30.8	69.2	20.2	10.6	100
Haryana	35.0	24.2	59.5	34.0	6.5	100
Jharkhand	34.5	48.2	83.5	10.6	5.9	100
Karnataka	21.2	29.3	50.8	25.5	23.7	100
Kerala	20.8	10.1	33.9	49.7	16.4	100
Madhya Pradesh	26.2	50.7	78.3	8.6	13.1	100
Maharashtra	18.3	29.7	49.9	25.8	24.3	100
Odisha	30.5	42.4	74.2	11.1	14.7	100
Punjab	40.6	11.9	53.7	37.6	8.7	100
Rajasthan	29.1	48.9	78.4	10.4	11.3	100
Tamil Nadu	25.1	12.5	39.3	31.9	28.8	100
Telangana	24.6	24.6	49.4	19.8	30.8	100
Uttar Pradesh	46.4	41.0	88.2	7.9	3.8	100
West Bengal	50.7	20.2	71.6	18.4	10.0	100
India	33.2	32.3	66.6	18.5	14.9	100

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2024.

Table 02 presents the percentage distribution of female workers by employment status in selected states of India during 2023–24. At the all-India level, 66.6 percent of female workers were self-employed, making self-employment the dominant employment status among women. Of the total female workforce, 33.2 percent were own-account workers or employers, while 32.3 percent were

helpers in household enterprises. In comparison, 18.5 percent of female workers were regular wage or salaried employees and 14.9 percent were engaged as casual labour. The relatively high share of self-employment indicates the important role of household-based and informal economic activities in providing employment to women in India. The employment pattern in Bihar is considerably different from the national average. As many as 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, which was 17.1 percentage points higher than the all-India average of 66.6 percent. Within this category, 43.3 percent were own-account workers or employers, while a substantial 39.8 percent were helpers in household enterprises. The latter figure is particularly significant because it indicates the strong dependence of women's employment on family-based and household economic activities. Bihar's share of female self-employment was also among the highest among the states presented in the table, comparable with Uttar Pradesh (88.2 percent) and Jharkhand (83.5 percent). In contrast, only 5.5 percent of female workers in Bihar were engaged in regular wage or salaried employment, compared with 18.5 percent at the all-India level. Similarly, 10.8 percent of female workers in Bihar were casual labourers, lower than the national average of 14.9 percent. Thus, the employment structure of women in Bihar is heavily concentrated in self-employment, particularly household-based activities, while participation in regular wage and salaried employment remains limited. This pattern highlights the need for greater opportunities for skill development, formal employment, entrepreneurship, access to credit, market linkages, and social security, which can help women move towards more stable and productive employment.

Table 03: Percentage of Persons Engaged in Non-Agriculture by Type of Enterprise in Bihar and India, 2023–24

Type of Enterprise	Male Bihar	Male India	Female Bihar	Female India	All Bihar	All India
Proprietary and Partnership	90.8	76.8	78.8	61.2	89.4	73.2
Govt./Local Bodies/Public Sector Enterprises	5.4	8.2	16.3	18.8	6.7	10.6
Autonomous Bodies	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2
Public/Private Limited Company	2.1	12.1	0.6	8.5	1.9	11.3
Cooperative Societies	0.0	0.2	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.2
Trust/Others Non-Profit Institute	0.2	0.9	0.1	2.5	0.2	1.3
Employer's Household	1.2	0.9	2.9	7.6	1.4	2.4
Others	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2024.

Table 03 presents the distribution of persons engaged in non-agricultural activities by type of enterprise in Bihar and India during 2023–24. The data show that proprietary and partnership enterprises were the dominant source of non-agricultural employment in both Bihar and India. In Bihar, 89.4 percent of all workers engaged in non-agricultural activities were employed in proprietary and partnership enterprises, compared with 73.2 percent at the all-India level. The dominance of this category was particularly pronounced among male workers, with 90.8 percent in Bihar compared with 76.8 percent in India. Among female workers, 78.8 percent in Bihar were engaged in proprietary and partnership enterprises, substantially higher than the corresponding national share of 61.2 percent. The contribution of government/local bodies and public sector enterprises was relatively limited in Bihar, accounting for 6.7 percent of total non-agricultural employment compared with 10.6 percent for India. However, the share was higher among female workers in Bihar (16.3 percent), although still below the national figure of 18.8 percent. Similarly, employment in public/private limited companies was much lower in Bihar, accounting for only 1.9 percent of total employment, compared with 11.3 percent at the national level. Among males, the corresponding figures were 2.1 percent in

Bihar and 12.1 percent in India, while among females they were 0.6 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively.

Table 04: Employment Conditions of Regular Wage/Salary Employees in Usual Status (ps+ss) in Non-Agriculture Sector for Bihar and India, 2023–24

Gender	Employment Condition	Bihar (%)	India (%)
Male	With no written job contract	66.8	58.2
	Not eligible for paid leave	61.6	47.8
	Without any specified social security benefits	61.1	51.8
	Not eligible for paid leave, without written job contract and without any specified social security benefits	56.7	40.1
Female	With no written job contract	49.5	57.3
	Not eligible for paid leave	48.3	45.9
	Without any specified social security benefits	48.9	58.0
	Not eligible for paid leave, without written job contract and without any specified social security benefits	29.3	38.3
All	With no written job contract	63.9	58.0
	Not eligible for paid leave	59.4	47.3
	Without any specified social security benefits	59.1	53.4
	Not eligible for paid leave, without written job contract and without any specified social security benefits	52.2	39.6

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2024.

Table 04 presents the employment conditions of regular wage/salaried employees engaged in the non-agricultural sector in Bihar and India during 2023–24. The data indicate that a considerable proportion of regular employees in Bihar worked under conditions that lacked important employment protections. Among male workers in Bihar, 66.8 percent had no written job contract, compared with 58.2 percent at the all-India level. Similarly, 61.6 percent of male employees in Bihar were not eligible for paid leave and 61.1 percent did not receive any specified social security benefits. Moreover, 56.7 percent faced all three conditions simultaneously no written contract, no paid leave, and no specified social security benefits compared with 40.1 percent in India. The situation of female employees presents a somewhat different pattern. In Bihar, 49.5 percent of female regular employees had no written job contract, while 48.3 percent were not eligible for paid leave and 48.9 percent did not have specified social security benefits. The proportion facing all three disadvantages simultaneously was 29.3 percent in Bihar, lower than the corresponding national figure of 38.3 percent. When both male and female employees are considered together, 63.9 percent of regular employees in Bihar had no written job contract, compared with 58.0 percent in India, while 59.4 percent were not eligible for paid leave and 59.1 percent lacked specified social security benefits.

Table 05: Average Per Day Earnings of Casual Labour in Selected States, 2023–24

State	Rural Male (₹)	Rural Female (₹)	Urban Male (₹)	Urban Female (₹)
Andhra Pradesh	584	353	616	382
Assam	445	276	503	323
Bihar	420	339	449	369
Chhattisgarh	299	196	355	237
Gujarat	350	278	458	313
Haryana	485	384	513	428
Jharkhand	390	321	410	373
Karnataka	505	303	567	343
Kerala	872	423	917	527
Madhya Pradesh	364	277	402	301
Maharashtra	389	245	525	285

Odisha	368	240	421	326
Punjab	439	325	457	368
Rajasthan	429	336	463	329
Tamil Nadu	616	295	676	388
Telangana	548	342	687	459
Uttar Pradesh	413	296	446	355
West Bengal	378	276	422	305
India	435	290	529	354

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), 2024.

Table 05 presents the average per day earnings of casual labour in selected states of India during 2023–24, separately for rural and urban areas and for male and female workers. At the all-India level, rural male casual labourers earned an average of ₹435 per day, while rural female workers earned ₹290. In urban areas, the corresponding average earnings increased to ₹529 for males and ₹354 for females. Thus, casual labourers generally earned higher wages in urban areas than in rural areas, while male workers received higher average earnings than female workers in both locations. In Bihar, the average daily earnings of rural male casual labourers were ₹420, slightly below the national average of ₹435. Rural female casual labourers earned ₹339, which was higher than the national average of ₹290. In urban Bihar, male casual labourers earned ₹449 per day, compared with ₹529 for India, whereas female workers earned ₹369, compared with ₹354 at the national level. The figures therefore indicate a noticeable gender wage gap in Bihar, although the gap was smaller among urban workers than among rural workers. In rural Bihar, the difference between male and female earnings was ₹81 per day, while in urban areas it was ₹80. Bihar's casual labour earnings remain below the national average for male workers, particularly in urban areas, whereas female casual labour earnings are comparatively higher than the national average. The table also shows considerable interstate variation, with Kerala recording the highest earnings among the selected states for both rural and urban male workers.

8. Women's Employment and Empowerment through the Beauty Parlour Sector

8.1 Women's Participation and Employment Opportunities in the Beauty Parlour Sector

The beauty parlour sector has emerged as an important avenue for women's employment, particularly in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. It provides opportunities for women to work as beauticians, make-up artists, hair-care professionals and other beauty and wellness service providers. The sector is particularly relevant in the context of Bihar, where female employment is strongly concentrated in self-employment and household-based activities. According to the PLFS 2023–24, 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, compared with 66.6 percent at the all-India level, indicating considerable scope for women-oriented micro-enterprises and self-employment. Skill development in areas such as hair care, skin care, make-up, manicure, pedicure and other beauty services can improve employability and facilitate self-employment. The sector can also provide livelihood opportunities for women from rural and semi-urban areas where formal employment opportunities are comparatively limited.

8.2 Beauty Parlours, Income Generation and Women's Economic Empowerment

Beauty parlours can contribute to women's economic empowerment by providing opportunities for independent income generation and entrepreneurship. Women who establish their own beauty parlours can generate personal income, contribute to household expenditure and gradually develop financial independence. The sector also has the potential to create additional employment by enabling successful parlour owners to employ other trained women. Apart from income generation, running a beauty parlour can strengthen women's entrepreneurial abilities, including financial management, customer relations, marketing, decision-making and business management.

7.3 Challenges and Government Support for Women Entrepreneurs

Despite its potential, women engaged in the beauty parlour sector may face challenges related to access to finance, skill development, competition, changing customer preferences, social security and formalisation of enterprises. Family responsibilities and social constraints may also influence women's ability to establish and expand their businesses. Limited access to institutional credit and advanced training can further restrict the growth of small beauty and wellness enterprises. Government initiatives related to skill development, vocational training, entrepreneurship and access to credit can play an important role in addressing these challenges. Programmes such as Skill India, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY/MUDRA) and women-oriented livelihood initiatives such as JEEViKA can support skill acquisition, entrepreneurship and access to financial resources.

9. Role of Beauty Parlours in Women's Employment and Inclusive Growth

9.1 Employment Generation and Local Economic Development

The beauty parlour sector contributes to employment generation by creating both direct and indirect livelihood opportunities. Apart from beauticians and parlour owners, related activities such as beauty product sales, cosmetics, training and personal-care services can generate additional economic opportunities. The expansion of beauty parlours can therefore contribute to the development of local service-sector activities.

9.2 Women's Self-Employment and Inclusive Growth

Beauty parlours provide a practical avenue for women's self-employment and micro-entrepreneurship. By enabling women to establish and operate small enterprises, the sector can increase female participation in economic activities, improve household income and promote greater financial independence. Therefore, the development of the beauty parlour sector can contribute to women's empowerment as well as inclusive economic growth in Bihar.

10. Conclusion

The study highlights that the beauty parlour sector can play an important role in promoting women's employment, self-employment and economic empowerment in Bihar. The analysis of PLFS 2023–24 data shows that 83.7 percent of female workers in Bihar were self-employed, compared with 66.6 percent at the all-India level, while only 5.5 percent were engaged in regular wage or salaried employment. This employment structure indicates considerable scope for women-oriented micro-enterprises such as beauty parlours, which require vocational skills and can be established with comparatively limited investment. The sector can therefore provide opportunities for women. The findings further show that 39.8 percent of female workers in Bihar were helpers in household enterprises, reflecting the important role of family-based economic activities in women's employment. Similarly, 78.8 percent of female workers engaged in non-agricultural activities in Bihar were associated with proprietary and partnership enterprises, compared with 61.2 percent in India. The sector can contribute to household income, financial independence, entrepreneurial skills and local service-sector development.

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