



Enhancing Livelihoods and Promoting Well-being

According to Chambers and Conway (1992), a sustainable livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets—both material and social—and activities necessary for securing a means of living. It remains sustainable when individuals and communities can withstand and recover from shocks and stresses, enhance their resources and skills, and ensure livelihood opportunities for future generations. Sustainable livelihoods go beyond mere income generation, encompassing access to essential resources, markets, education, healthcare, and social support systems that contribute to long-term economic security and overall well-being. The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) emphasizes resilience, diversification, and empowerment, enabling individuals and communities to navigate economic and environmental challenges effectively.

In developing countries, numerous challenges hinder the attainment of sustainable livelihoods and well-being. A major issue is the predominance of informal employment, which offers little to no job security, fair wages, or social protection. Access to essential opportunities—such as education, skill development, healthcare, and technology—remains highly unequal across gender, socio-religious groups, and geographic regions. Women, Dalits, tribal communities, and other marginalized groups often face systemic barriers in obtaining education, employment, land, and financial resources, limiting their economic mobility. Rural populations grapple with inadequate job opportunities, poor infrastructure, and restricted market access, leading to large-scale migration to urban areas, where informal labor and slum conditions prevail.

Although India has a young workforce, the mismatch between industry requirements and available skills results in underemployment and economic instability. Additionally, small entrepreneurs and farmers often struggle with limited access to affordable credit, insurance, and essential financial services, hindering business growth and economic resilience. While the rapid expansion of digitalization has created new livelihood opportunities, many rural and underprivileged populations remain excluded due to inadequate internet access, low digital literacy, and a lack of necessary skills to participate in the digital economy.

Environmental factors also pose a significant threat to livelihoods, particularly in agriculture-dependent regions. Erratic monsoons, droughts, floods, and declining soil fertility endanger agricultural productivity, while rising air and water pollution further compromise public health and overall well-being. Although government interventions have reduced healthcare expenses in some areas, access to quality healthcare remains a challenge for many. To address these pressing issues, paper contributors are encouraged to explore diverse perspectives and case studies under the following indicative sub-themes:

Key issues for consideration under this theme include:

- ◉ Informal Employment and Livelihood Security – Examining the vulnerabilities and social protection mechanisms for informal workers.

- ⦿ Entrepreneurship and Microfinance – Assessing the role of small businesses and financial services in improving economic stability.
- ⦿ Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods – Understanding how climate change and new farming techniques impact rural livelihoods. Equally interesting is to understand the determinants of rural livelihoods and their impact on earnings of workers
- ⦿ Gender and Social Dimensions of Livelihood Opportunities – Analyzing the barriers and enablers for marginalized communities.
- ⦿ Impact of Digital Platforms, E-Commerce, and Remote Work – Evaluating the role of technology in expanding economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas.
- ⦿ Financial Inclusion and Economic Mobility – Exploring how microfinance, digital banking, and credit access enhance financial resilience.
- ⦿ Education, Vocational Training, and Employment – Studying the impact of skill development initiatives on long-term livelihood security.
- ⦿ Migration and Urban Livelihoods – Investigating the livelihood challenges and opportunities in urban informal economies.
- ⦿ Workplace Security, Mental Health, and Well-being – Examining the intersection of job security, workplace stress, and overall well-being.
- ⦿ Impact of Ayushman Bharat on Healthcare Accessibility – Assessing how government health schemes alleviate the financial burden on vulnerable populations.
- ⦿ Effectiveness of Welfare Schemes in Reducing Poverty – Evaluating government interventions in improving livelihoods and well-being.
- ⦿ Climate Change and Livelihood Resilience – Exploring adaptive strategies to enhance economic resilience amid environmental changes.