



## REVIEW ARTICLE ON MEGA EVENTS OF BIHAR

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### Abstract

Mega-events are those events which draw many people and huge resources for a relatively small area and for a short period of time. These happenings could be religious, sports, political or other types of events. There are some established events at various scale which can be termed as Global, National, State, Region or a District level happening. Mega-events bring resources in the form of preparation for the occasion which boosts up the infrastructure development. During the event it's the spendings of the traveller which brings money to the region. There is direct benefit for the tourism sector when tourist come and spend their money. Marginalised neighbourhoods are rejuvenated and the property value increases. It improves the quality of life, and it creates a mood of happiness among the residents. Mega events at regional level have been identified and its physical impact has been recorded. Events changes the culture of the place and changes the behaviour of the people. Behaviour of an individual is influenced by the culture of the place.

**Key Words:** Mega-events, Physical impact, Economy, Regional Growth

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## 1. Introduction

Mega-events are a large cultural, religious or sports events that attract an international audience, ambulatory in nature and has a large-scale economic impact. India is a religious country and religious tourism (*Teerth Yatra*) has been practised since a long time (circa). Kumbh Mela which is organised once in 12 years at Sangam, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh attracts more than ten million devotees in a month time. Here we define mega-event in terms of scale. An event of regional level will be discussed here which are culturally significant.

The state of Bihar is associated with both Buddhism and Jainism. Gautam Buddha attained the knowledge at Bodh Gaya and twenty fourth Tirthankara of Jain Lord Mahavira was born here. Ashoka the great once ruled the country from Afghanistan in the West to Indonesia in the East. Buddhism spread to South -East Asia under his patronage. University of Nalanda and Vikramshila were the seats of learning. Bihar has Buddhist, Jainism and Ramayan Circuit.

Mega events are identified based on popularity among the masses, the crowd it pulls, media coverage, State sponsorship, Experts opinion and historic significance.

Identified Mega-events of Bihar

1. *Prakash Parwa*, Patna
2. Sonapur Fair, Saran District
3. *Shrawani Mela*, Sultanganj, Bhagalpur
4. *Malmas Mela*, Rajgir, Nalanda
5. Annual Chhath Festival at all locations of Bihar
6. *Pitripaksh Fair*, Gaya
7. Urs of Makhdum Saheb in Maner Sharif
8. Singheshwar Sthan Fair, Madhepura
9. Urs Festival, Biharsharief
10. Vaishali Fair, Vaishali (celebrated by Jains)
11. Sitamarhi Fair, Sitamarhi

12. Baunsi Fair, Banka

13. Simaria Ghat *Kalp was Mela* (Begusarai)

## 2. Methodology

The criteria used to identify the scale of event is listed below.

- Cultural Significance
- No of visitors
- Duration of event
- Frequency of event
- International audience
- Peoples' participation
- Publicity
- Sponsorship

## 3. Mega Events give an opportunity for Urban Regeneration.

Urban Regeneration is the planning tool for environmental improvement to generate the positive externalities and minimise the negative externalities (Aqilah & Abidin, 2022). Urban regeneration increases both the property value and the rental value of the property. It also elevates the quality of life which ultimately affects the happiness and contentment level of an individual. Urban renewal project contributes to better quality of life and drive social and economic renewal of urban communities. It rejuvenates the marginalised neighbourhoods and declining urban spaces (Romanelli et al., 2022).

## 4. Infrastructure Development Cost

Physical and Social Infrastructure facilities are created for the attendees. The money infused for development creates job for the community at the local level and it stimulates the multiplier effect. Infrastructure development increases the property value, and the construction industry further grows.

Project	Cost
1. Road	Rs 25 Crore/ km
2. Building	Rs 1200- Rs 2600 / sq ft of built-up area
3. Fly over	Rs 200 Crore/ km

## 5. Case Study:

Mega Event	Month of Occurrence
1. Shrawani Mela (Sultanganj, Bhagalpur)	July- Aug
2. Sonapur Cattle Fair (Sonapur, Saran)	Dec
3. Rajgir Fair (Nalanda)	Variable
4. Simariya Ghat Fair (Begusarai)	October
5. Thawe Mela (Gopalganj)	July- Aug
6. Urs Festival (Biharsharief)	Variable
7. Pitrapaksh Mela (Gaya)	September
8. The Singheshwar Sthan Mela (Madhepura)	March

### 5.1 Prakash Parw, (Festival of Light) Patna (2017)

To commemorate the 350<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Guru Govind Singh Maharaj, the tenth guru of Sikh community, *Prakash Parwa* was celebrated from 30<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2016 to 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017 at Patna. Bihar Government had expected over five lakhs devotees flocking across the world (A. Kumar, 2017). The preparation for this event started a few years earlier to this event. State Government of Bihar was directly involved in preparation of this mega-event. Main function was held at Patna Saheb Gurudwara, which is a congested area in the old

city of Patna. Patna Saheb railway station was renovated, and façade improvement consultancy was done by Department of Architecture and Planning, NIT Patna. A flyover was constructed to link the road leading to gurudwara with the bypass road, so the connection of Gurudwara from South was eased. Residential accommodation in gurudwara was fully renovated and new parking lot was created in the basement. To accommodate large number of devotees, a temporary tent city was constructed which had all the facilities for safe accommodation. Whole city was kept clean, and filth was removed at regular intervals.

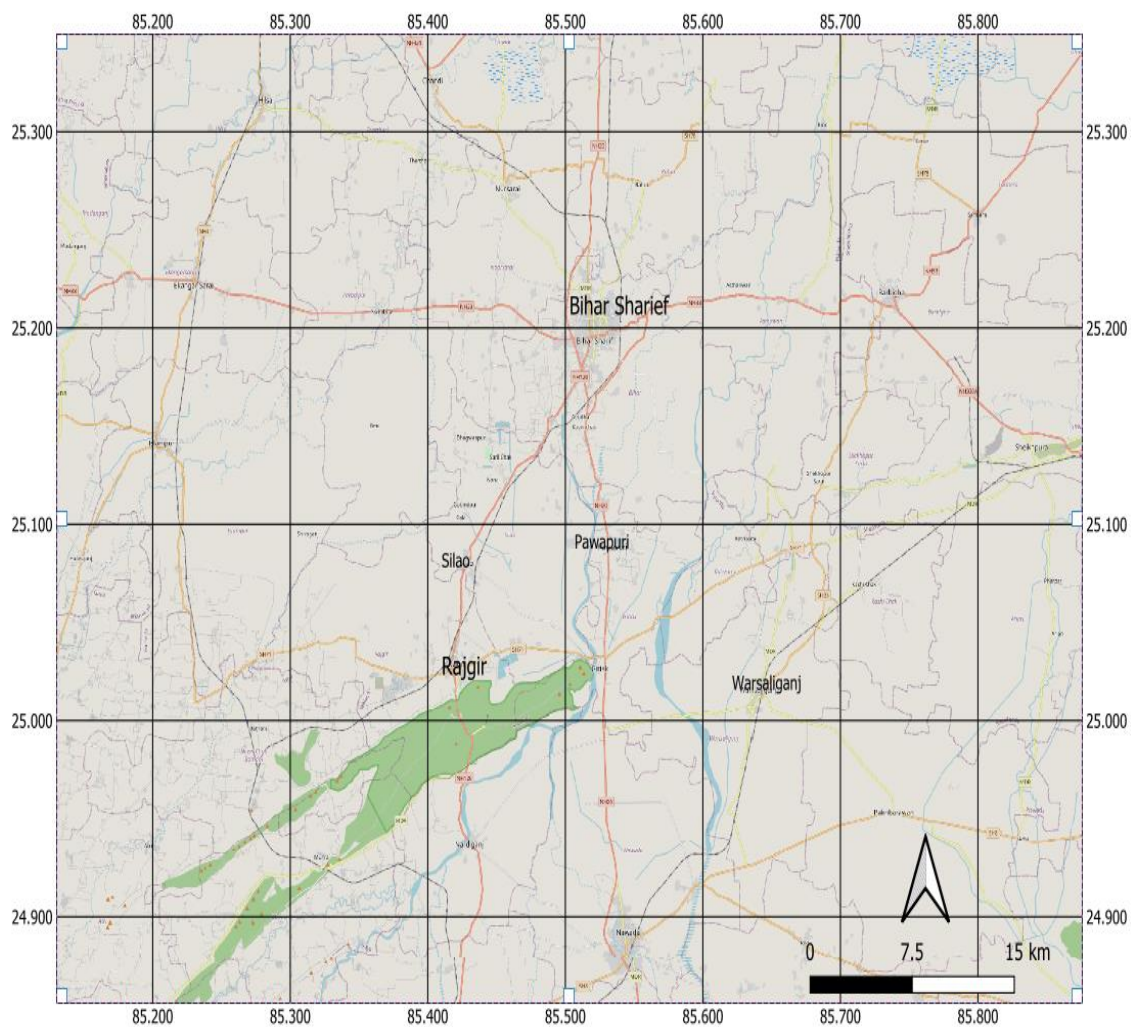


**Figure 1** Location map of Takth Sri Harmandir Saheb in Patna  
Source: Author

### 5.2 Rajgir Fair

Rajgir fair is held once every three years in the month of *Malmas* at *Kila Maidan Mela* ground, Rajgir. This mela is very famous in the region with the merchandise sell ranging from household item

to furniture and furnishing item. The focus of Rajgir fair is theatre shows. These are the live-night shows which draws a huge crowd and are enjoyed by all age group.



**Figure 2** Location of Rajgir, in Bihar, India  
Source: Author

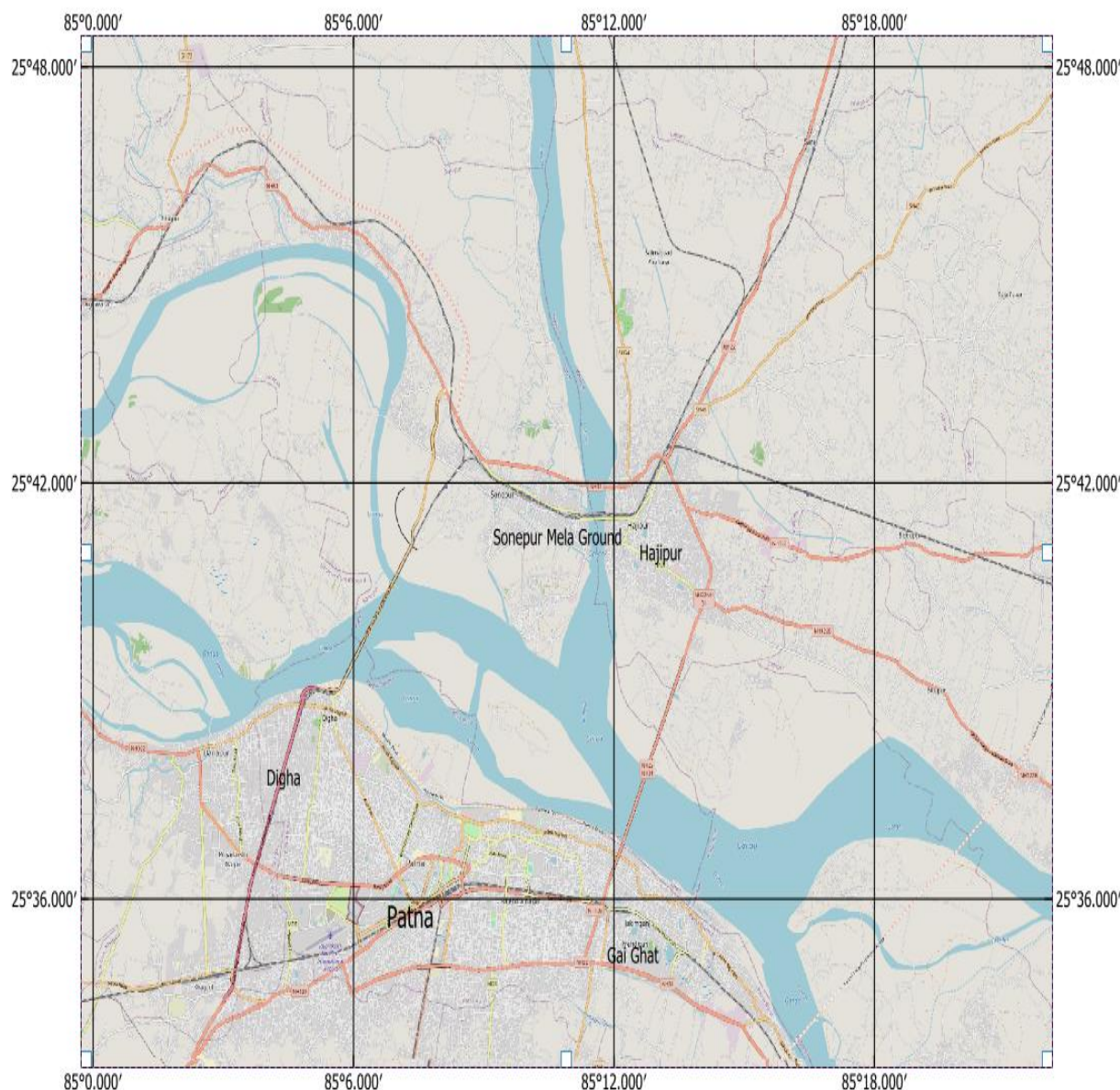


**Figure 3** Rajgir Mela ground shown in green  
Source: Development Plan for Rajgir, MURP 2023, NIT Patna

### 5.3 Sonapur Fair (Saran District)

Sonapur fair was traditionally an animal market fair where trade in birds and animals were done. Earlier the fair was held in Hajipur and the puja was held at Harihar Nath at Sonapur. The sale of animals and birds is prohibited as per laws, so this fair is now converted to merchandise and fun fair. In 2022 only dogs were available for sale. As per

records the number of visitors in the fair was 5.8 lakh in the year 2005(India, 2005). Since it is a day fair and only theatre goers utilise night for the shows, night stay is seldom required. For foreign visitors Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) temporary 'Swiss Cottage' is made for their comfortable stay. Twenty number of Swiss Cottage was made in 2022(Sopam, 2022).



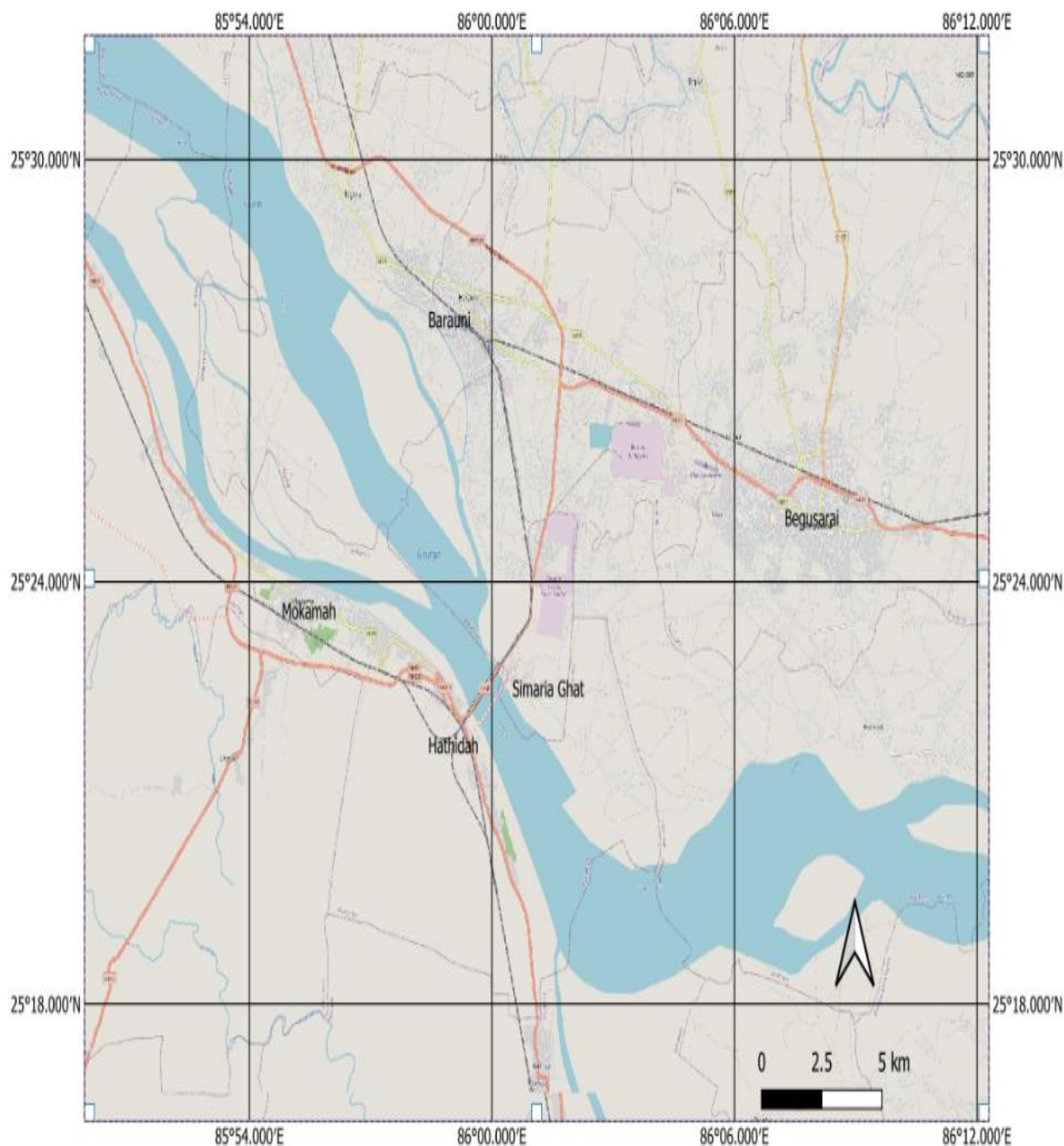
**Figure 4** Location of Sonapur Mela Ground

Source: Author

### 5.4 Kalp Was (Simariya Ghat Fair)

Simariya Ghat fare is held at Simariya Ghat in Begusarai district near the Rajendra Bridge on Ganga. This festival is held in the month of *Kartik* every year for 10 days. It is believed that Lord Rama while returning from Janakpur after marrying Ma Sita stayed at this ghat for over night.

People stay here for 10 days in makeshift hut. They take bath in Ganga in morning and do *bhajan* throughout the day. They believe that *moksha* (salvation) is achieved after doing this. It is a common belief that if a married lady takes a holy dip in Ganga at Simariya Ghat she is blessed with a baby boy.



**Figure 5** Location of Simariya Ghat  
Source: Author

**5.5 Pitripaksh Mela, Gaya**

Gaya witness a huge rush during Pitripaksh mela when *pind- dan* is performed for the departed soul. Eight lakh devotees performed pind dan in 2022 which was held during September. Tent city was created and accommodation and food was offered

free of charge to selected devotees. Traffic management is important issues during mela. Solid waste management is another issue that has to be addressed. Need for accommodation for such large crowd is an issue.

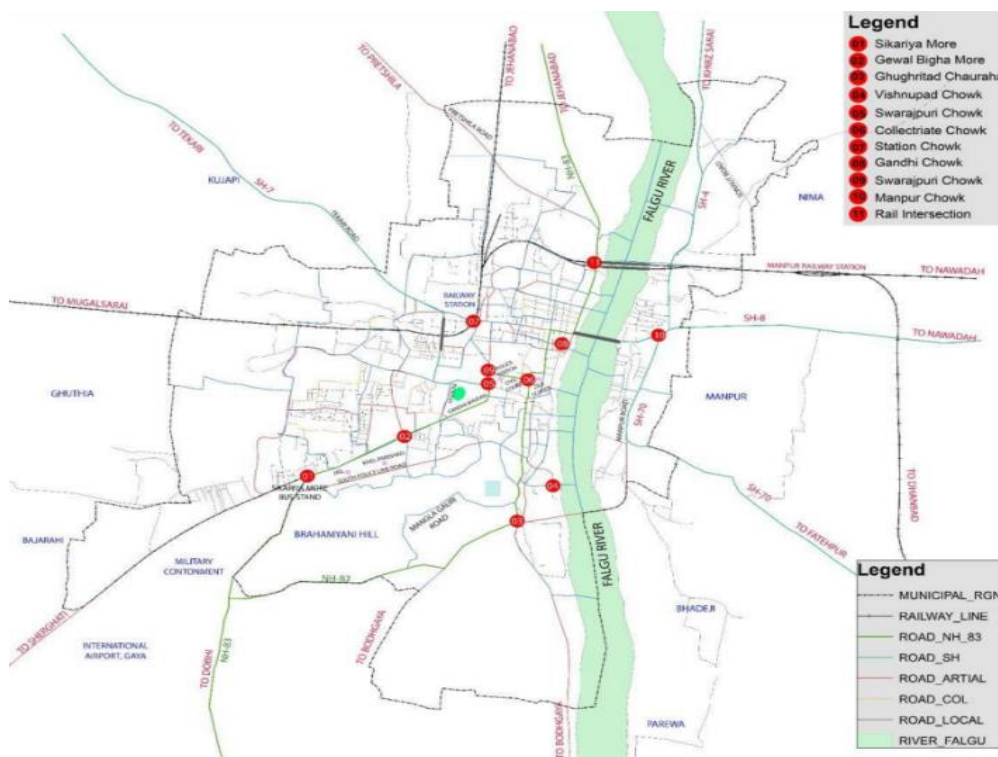


Figure 6 Traffic nodes of Gaya

Source: Author

6.0 Physical Impact Assessment

6.1 Traffic Impact Assessment

Mega events draw a huge crowd in terms of people and the vehicle. Both Public and Private transport witness huge rushes. Train tickets for confirmed

berths are difficult to get. A road traffic impact assessment study was done for the Rajgir fair. Since a fair generates a significant traffic load so a Traffic Impact Assessment is essential for the understanding of Physical Impact Assessment.

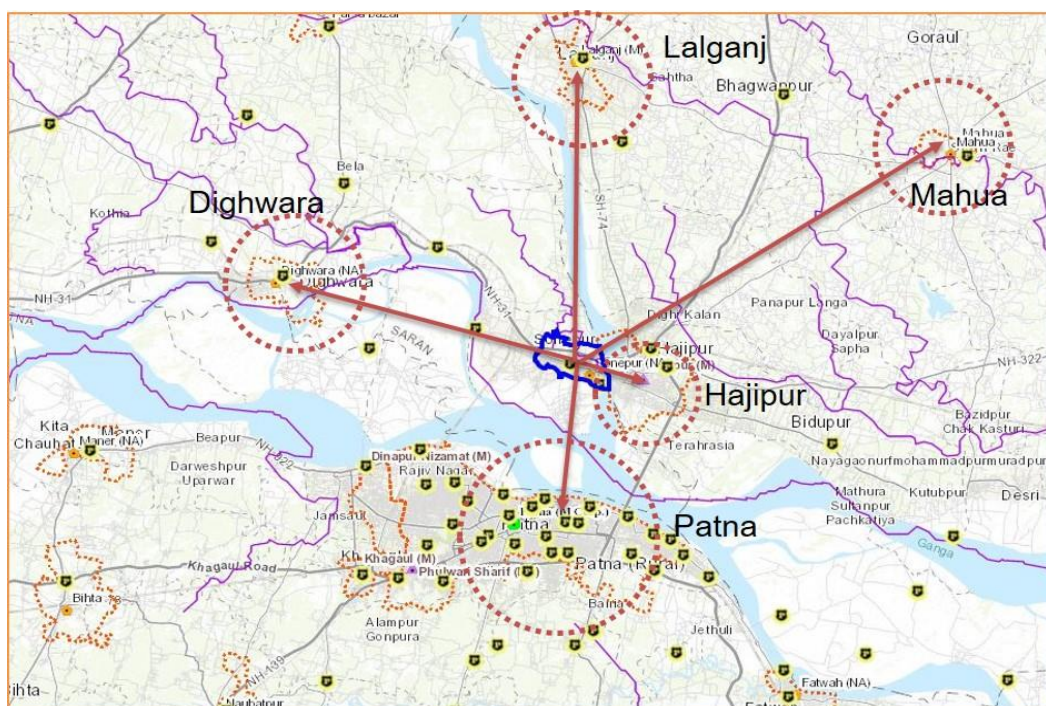
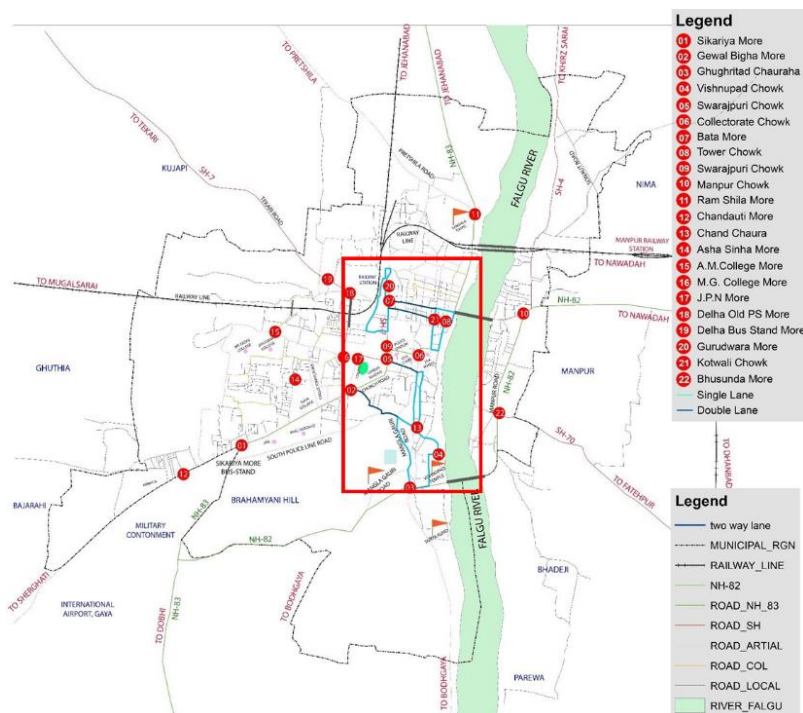


Figure 7 Growth poles around Sonapur

Source: Author

Similar rush is seen on Hajipur- Sonapur route during Sonapur Mela. A new bridge is constructed over Gandak to ease the traffic. This is currently a two-lane bridge, but it is upgraded to four lane bridge. A four-lane new bridge parallel to Gandhi Setu is constructed to ease the traffic of North-South Bihar. Now Patna will have five bridges over Ganga connecting it with North Bihar (J. P. Setu, Digha- 2 lane), (Gandhi Setu- 4 lane operational,

four more lane under construction), (Kachhi Dargah- Bidupur – 6 lane), (Rajendra Setu, Mokama- 2 lane), (Bakhtiyarpur- Tajpur- 4 lane). These bridges will cater to at least three fairs- Sonapur Mela, Rajgir Mela and Simaria Ghat Mela. These bridges will not only ensure smooth movement of traffic between North- South Bihar but also reduce the physical distance between the two banks of the river.



**Figure 8** Congestion nodes in Gaya during fair period

Source: Author

## 6.2 Water Security

Sufficient rainfall clubbed with Himalayan perennial river and flat topography possesses no threat to water availability in North Bihar, but South Bihar is facing severe shortage of water due to excessive ground water exhaustion. Ganga water is utilised for supplying water to Nawada, Bihar Sharief and Gaya district for domestic use. This will ensure tap water supply to every household under *har ghar jal nal Yojna*. Water distribution network - Ganga Water Lift Project is an initiative by the Government of Bihar State under *Har Ghar Ganga jal Scheme*. It is also known as *Ganga jal Uddhvah Yojana*. The total cost of the project is Rs. 2836.00 crores. It is a 150 km long stretch starting from the source Hathidah Ghat and water treatment plant in Motneja in Nawada District followed by connection up to Rajgir, Nawada, Gaya and Bodh Gaya. In Rajgir, 7,85,000 litre RCC tank is constructed at Ghora Katora. The tank is used to store and supply water to 8031 households (B. Das et al., 2022).

This water will be used for supply to mela also. As per report by Bihar State Disaster Management Authority, five number of bore wells with motor pumps were installed with 76 number of standposts and 250 handpumps in Sonapur Mela in the year 2013.

## 6.3 Pollution

Air and noise pollution is the threat to the mela goers. Dusty ground creates a lot of dust particle that float in air. Water is used to be sprinkled in morning and evening by tractor operated water

tanks for the dust to settle down. Recently the usage of fibre carpet has been able to reduce the SPM in the air. Usage of high decibel Public Announcement System in Fair creates a massive sound pollution. The average level of sound recorded by author in Sonapur fair was 86 dB(A) in the year 2022. Theatre are the night shows which create a high level of sound pollution during night.



Mega Event	$L_{eq}$ , dB(A)
1. Shravani Mela (Sultanganj, Bhagalpur)	82
2. Sonepur Cattle Fair (Sonepur, Saran)	86
3. Rajgir Fair (Nalanda)	84
4. Simariya Ghat Fair (Begusarai)	80
5. Thawe Mela (Gopalganj)	83
6. Urs Festival (Biharsharief)	80
7. Pitrapaksh Mela (Gaya)	78
8. The Singheshwar Sthan Mela (Madhepura)	80

#### 6.4 Electricity

Uninterrupted supply of electricity is maintained in the mela premise by North Bihar Power Distribution Corporation Limited (NBPDC) in the North Bihar and South Bihar Power Distribution Corporation Limited (SBPDCL) in the South Bihar. The electricity consumption of mela was 10 Megawatt with a peak of 15 Megawatt during 2013 at Sonepur Mela. In case of any failure of Electric supply, for emergency 15 generators of 125KVA each was kept in standby (Sinha & Bijete, 2013).

#### 6.5 Urban Imageability

Chhath is an important four-day festival celebrated in Bihar. Main puja is performed around water body, generally the pond, lakes, and river. River front development has been done in Patna along river Ganga as a part of Namami Ganga Project. A pedestrian pathway is constructed from Collectorate Ghat to Patna City which has brought Ganga close to the city. Earlier it was a backyard with narrow lanes leading to limited ghat facility. Ghats are made for a wider stretch and public conveniences are added. This has made the Chhath festival a mesmerising experience for the people of Patna (S. Kumar et al., 2023). Heavy metal pollution to the Ganga is avoided by creating a separate pool for idol immersion at Baharwa Ghat in Patna (B. K. Das et al., 2020).

#### 6.6 Central Government Initiatives

Certain programs are initiated by the Central and State Government as a mechanism to fund certain cultural and Historic sites. One Such program by Central Government of India is Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojna, 'HRIDAY'. Its main objective is to 'Preserve and revitalise soul of the heritage city to reflect the city's unique character by encouraging aesthetically appealing, accessible, informative & secured environment' (Guidelines for HRIDAY: Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojna, 2015). It was a 100% Central Government Scheme with 12 heritage cities selected initially. From Bihar it was Gaya. Gaya is famous for Vishnupad temple and Pitripaksh Mela. An allotment of 34.69 Crore Rupees was made for

Gaya in which the development work of Brahmsat, Vaitarni Sarovar, development of Vishnupad Temple complex, Akshayvat complex and construction of connecting pathway from Mahabodhi Temple to Durgeshwari Hill was carried out. Rupees 4.29 Crore was sanctioned under the centrally sponsored National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) for Gaya district. This was specially for creation of basic facilities at Vishnupad temple. Another Rs 33.17 crore was sanctioned under *Swadesh Darshan Scheme* (2015) for creating jobs and boosting tourism industry.

We observe that the Central Assistance is for those sites which are mythologically important and hold significant level of position in community's affair.

#### 7.0 Conclusion

Master plan of towns and cities must include the planning considerations keeping in mind the mela crowd and facilities. Bihar State Disaster Management Authority (BSDMA) has prepared several reports for curb of disasters. The vehicle ownership has increased many folds thereby creating congestion of road. During mela periods the traffic volume increases four to five times on the road leading to mela areas. Suspended particulate matter (SPM2.5 and SPM10) are the main cause of air pollution. Loud noise from Public Announcement (PA) system are sources of noise pollution. Accommodation for overnight travellers is the issue which must be addressed in Pitripaksh Mela, at Gaya. Solid waste generated at mela ground must be cleaned at regular interval.

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