



## Women-Led Community Nurseries for Rural Agri-Entrepreneurship: A Review

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Community nurseries run by women have become a game-changing strategy for supporting sustainable agricultural development, empowering women, and encouraging rural agri-entrepreneurship. In order to investigate how women-led community nurseries might improve social justice, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability in rural areas, this review article compiles current studies from reputable publications. Based on a comprehensive evaluation of 78 peer-reviewed publications from 2010 to 2025, this study investigates the socioeconomic effects, difficulties, prospects, and policy ramifications of nurseries run by women. While addressing obstacles such as restricted access to resources, gender biases, and market connections, key results emphasize their benefits to revenue production, community resilience, and biodiversity conservation. To increase the scalability and impact of these businesses, the analysis suggests creative approaches including technology integration and cooperative structures. This study offers a thorough framework for future research and policy development, making it unique in its emphasis on the convergence of gender, agriculture, and entrepreneurship via the lens of community nurseries.

### Introduction

In agricultural systems, rural women are essential because they make major contributions to environmental sustainability, economic growth, and food security. Despite their contributions, rural women often encounter structural obstacles that limit their economic agency, such as ingrained gender stereotypes and restricted access to markets, finance, and land. A viable strategy for encouraging agri-entrepreneurship among rural women is the establishment of women-led community nurseries, which include the group production and sale of seedlings, saplings, and value-added agricultural goods. These nurseries encourage social empowerment and environmental care in addition to offering financial possibilities. The purpose of this review study is to:

- Compile data about the socioeconomic effects of community nurseries run by women.
- Determine the obstacles and chances influencing their achievement.
- Examine how technology and legislation might help these businesses grow.
- Provide a foundation for further studies and initiatives that will assist women in agribusiness

### Conceptual Framework

Women-led community nurseries are cooperative or collective enterprises where women manage the production, propagation, and sale of plant seedlings, often focusing on native or high-value species. These nurseries align with the principles of agri-entrepreneurship, which integrates agricultural innovation with business acumen to create sustainable livelihoods. The conceptual framework for this review is grounded in three pillars:

1. **Economic Empowerment:** Community nurseries provide women with income-generating opportunities, enabling financial independence and household stability.
2. **Social Empowerment:** By fostering collective action and leadership, nurseries enhance women's social capital and agency within their communities.
3. **Environmental Sustainability:** Nurseries contribute to biodiversity conservation, reforestation, and climate-resilient agriculture by promoting native species and sustainable practices.

## Socio-Economic Impacts

### Economic Contributions

Women-led community nurseries significantly contribute to rural economies by generating income and creating employment opportunities. A study in Bangladesh highlighted how nurseries enabled women to earn stable incomes through the sale of vegetable seedlings, such as Bt brinjal, improving household financial security. In India, women-led nurseries have been linked to increased household income and reduced poverty, with 51% of rural entrepreneurs registered under Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) being women. These enterprises also stimulate local economies by supplying seedlings to farmers, reducing input costs, and enhancing agricultural productivity.

### Social Empowerment

Community nurseries foster social empowerment by providing platforms for women to develop leadership skills, build networks, and challenge gender norms. Research from Croatia demonstrated that women-led social enterprises, including nurseries, enhanced women's confidence and decision-making roles within their communities. In Nigeria, women involved in nursery enterprises reported improved socio-economic well-being and greater participation in community decision-making. These findings underscore the role of nurseries in dismantling patriarchal barriers and promoting gender equity.

### Community Development

By supplying high-quality seedlings, women-led nurseries support community-level agricultural development. A study in Ghana found that nurseries improved access to planting materials, enabling farmers to diversify crops and enhance food security. Additionally, nurseries serve as hubs for knowledge transfer, where women share agricultural innovations and sustainable practices with their communities.

## Challenges

### Resource Constraints

Access to land, credit, and inputs remains a significant barrier for women-led nurseries. A bibliometric review of 728 papers revealed that systemic biases and limited resource access hinder women's entrepreneurial success in agriculture. In India, rural women entrepreneurs reported insufficient capital and lack of access to modern technology as major constraints.

### Gender-Based Barriers

Societal stereotypes and gender norms often restrict women's participation in agri-entrepreneurship. Research in Morocco highlighted how patriarchal traditions limit women's access to formal institutions, such as banks and cooperatives. Similarly, in Nigeria, women nursery operators faced challenges related to work-life balance and male backlash.

### Market and Infrastructure Limitations

Limited market linkages and inadequate infrastructure, such as transportation and storage facilities, impede the scalability of women-led nurseries. A study in Ethiopia noted that poor market access reduced the profitability of women-led agricultural enterprises. In India, infrastructural deficiencies were identified as a key barrier to rural entrepreneurship.

## Opportunities

### Technological Innovations

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and agricultural innovations offer significant opportunities for women-led nurseries. In Bangladesh, GIS-based technologies

have been used to assess farmers' creditworthiness, enabling women to access finance for nursery enterprises. Machine learning models, such as logistic regression and clustering, have also been applied to optimize business decisions in women's entrepreneurship.

### Cooperative Models

Cooperatives and self-help groups (SHGs) enhance the scalability of women-led nurseries by pooling resources and sharing risks. In Tamil Nadu, India, SHGs have enabled women to establish micro-entrepreneurships, including nurseries, leading to economic independence and community development. Similarly, in Greece, women-led cooperatives in the agri-food sector have revitalized local economies.

### Policy Support

Government policies and subsidies can bolster women-led nurseries. In Slovenia, women farmers benefited from agri-environment-climate schemes (AECS), which supported sustainable nursery practices. In India, government initiatives, such as MSME registration and training programs, have encouraged rural women's entrepreneurship.

### Conclusion

Community nurseries run by women are an effective way to empower women, encourage rural agribusiness, and advance sustainable development. This study summarizes the findings from 78 peer-reviewed research and emphasizes how they support social justice, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability. Opportunities for expansion include cooperative models and technical advancements, despite obstacles including gender prejudice and budget limitations. To remove obstacles and grow these businesses via focused interventions, policymakers, academics, and practitioners must work together. This analysis highlights the transformational potential of women-led nurseries in altering rural economies and communities, laying the groundwork for future research and policy.

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