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Empowering Women in Green Enterprises: The Impact of MSP on Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Socio-Economic Challenges

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Abstract

Purpose: Green enterprises in agriculture are key catalysts of sustainable development by diminishing environmental challenges, conserving biodiversity and securing the food supply.

Research Problem: The potential of MSP to encourage women entrepreneurs in green farming is underexplored while it is designed to reduce financial uncertainties of agriculture. Additionally, socio-economic barriers at the systemic level are hindering the active involvement of women in green enterprises. The purpose of this study is to fill these gaps through its investigation into the link between MSP awareness, socio-economic difficulties, and women's promotion of sustainable agriculture on the entrepreneurial level.

Methodology: A quantitative cross sectional design is adopted, where 150 women engaged in agriculture are surveyed across a range of socio economic regions. Demographic diversity variables of age, education, and income were ensured by use of stratified random sampling. Data on demographic profiles, MSP awareness, socio economic barriers and perceptions regarding MSP role in fostering entrepreneurship was obtained through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing were used using SPSS and R in order to extract the significant insights from them.

Key Findings: It furthermore show that MSP awareness significantly increases women participation in green farming enterprise ($\beta = 0.52$, $p<0.001$). Implicit in the benefits of MSP were reduced financial uncertainties and women understood these benefits more and were thus more willing to adopt sustainable practices. Financial constraints (-0.38, $p = 0.002$), lower education (-0.25, $p = 0.010$) were the main barriers to entrepreneurial engagement. Socio-cultural norms and restricted land ownership further exacerbated this challenge. A mean Likert score of 4.0 indicated that socio-cultural barriers were a pervasive challenge that needed to have institutional and community based support systems. Microfinance, technical training and a collective platform for women to share problems were offered through self help groups (SHGs) which have been a great success in addressing these barriers. Green enterprises had greater participation, especially among women aged 26–40 and higher education levels. They are important targets of policy intervention and capacity building programs.

Conclusion: The findings in this research reveal the potential for women to be drivers of sustainable agricultural practice with green enterprises. Addressing socio economic barriers and enhancing MSP use, governments and stakeholders can promote and enable women to drive their transition to environmentally sustainable and economically resilient agricultural systems. The impact of MSP and region specific dynamics should be evaluated in longitudinal studies in order to design more effective policy interventions for the future.

Keywords: Green Enterprises, Sustainable Agriculture, Women Empowerment, Minimum Support Price, Socio-Economic Challenges, Policy Solutions

1. Introduction

Green enterprises, particularly in agriculture, have come to be recognised as key abstainers in the service of sustainable development. These businesses combine environmentally friendly practices to innovative agricultural practices as they help to mitigate climate change, preserve biodiversity and provide food security. It is women--who comprise more than half of all the farmers across the world--that are in the best position to drive the shift to green farming. Nonetheless, these people have special socio-economic problems, for example, they don't have enough access to financial resources, do not own the land and are not well-trained by qualified technologists. Getting women involved in green enterprises not only supports sustainability but gives them a chance to save off the abused condition for women, to empower them and give them a way out of the economic backwardness and participation in the local economy. Yet, there is shortage of evidence on the extent to which existing socio-economic barriers have restricted the wide participation of women in green entrepreneurship. Combating financial risks and increasing engagement in agriculture, policymakers have instituted such mechanisms as the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Price guarantees provided by MSP can therefore reduce uncertainties in venture in green farming, and consequently a conducive environment for the women entrepreneurs market women in the green farming business.

This study aims to:

1. Examine how MSP influences women's agricultural participation and entrepreneurship.
2. Analyze the role of MSP in promoting green farming enterprises led by women.
3. Investigate socio-economic challenges that hinder women from participating in green entrepreneurship.

Agriculture is part of the socio-economic disparities, gender biases and unequal access to resources that women experience. They can't innovate as the overwhelming challenges limit their ability to

develop and sustain green enterprises. MSP has been designed to stabilize agricultural markets, however, its impact in reducing the number of women running agribusinesses in Kenya has received limited attention. Studies of how MSP interacts with socio-economic factors to influence women's participation in green farming in existing literature are scant.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Women in Green Enterprises

The participation of women in green enterprises has become an important area to inject sustainable agricultural development. A study has shown that empowering women to use environmentally sustainable practices to enhance food security also benefited local economies (Ahamed et al., 2021). For example, Japanese and Bangladeshi research looking at the adoption of green farming practices by women revealed that women engaging in such practices produced higher yields compared to those contributing to environmental conservation, in spite of doing both. Indeed, however, these initiatives are often hindered by a lack of institutional support which curtails their capacity to scale. Secondly, women's understanding of biodiversity and resource management further links them to the role of women in sustainable agriculture. The study by Nyundo (2017) on women seaweed farmers in Kenya shows how women led green enterprises did well when backed by community based organizations, and government programs. These initiatives provided women the opportunity to innovate in the use of organic methods, and reduce reliance on chemical inputs. However, social and cultural norms and resource constraints are commonly limiting for the long term sustainability of these enterprises, and therefore targeted interventions are required in order to support women entrepreneurs in this sector.

2.2 Socio-Economic Challenges

Socioeconomic terms and challenges involved that impede the participation of women in green entrepreneurship are many. The key barriers that we faced were lack of education, lack of finance,

lack of technological resources (Hordofa & Badore, 2024). A study that Hordofa and Badore (2024) conducted in Ethiopia showed that rural women in agriculture were more adversely affected by low levels of literacy and restricted access to credit. Not only are these factors are what keeps people from becoming entrepreneurs, but they prevent people from being able to use sustainable farming practices. Like Kumbhar (2013), I also find that the women entrepreneurs in rural India face equally critical issues in land ownership laws that discriminate against women and in gender biases of the financial institutions. The study pointed to the strong need for policies that address these structural inequities in order for women to be able to participate in green farming enterprises. Ersoy et al. (2022) also chipped at this discourse by investigating the use of information technology and means of knowledge sharing to overcome these barriers. The women were found to be better equipped to adopt new, innovative, sustainable agriculture when given technological tools and training. However, there are some studies showing the resilience of the women entrepreneurs. Singh (2012) discovered that SHGs (self help groups) in Himachal Pradesh offered women a space in which collectively address their socio economic barriers. Through microfinance and skill development, these groups helped women build green enterprises that combined saving our environment with a livelihood.

2.3 Role of MSP in Agriculture

Far and away, Minimum Support Price (MSP) has bee widely acknowledged as a convenient and effective mechanism for stabilizing agricultural markets and minimize farming financial risks (Adefare et al., 2024). While its role in promoting women entrepreneurship remains underexplored. According to Adefare et al. (2024), farm safety net (MSP) allows for a call to invest in sustainable agricultural practices by women farmers. MSP guarantees the minimum prices on produce, which makes market fluctuations less of a gamble for women, who are able to try out, and learn, green farming practices. Furthermore, Bhardwaj et al. (2012) stressed that through policies such as MSP, together with training and institutional support, they can make women active players in agriculture entrepreneurship. The study found that if women are helped to adopt organic

farming methods and diversify their income sources through allied activities low in labour, such as beekeeping and agro tourism, they are more likely to adopt such measures. However, the efficacy of MSP to enhance the status of women farmers depends on how accessible, or known, the policy is to women farmers. Goyal and Parkash (2011) also noticed that many women in rural areas do not have the right kind of knowledge about MSP and the benefits of it. The existence of this gap further underscores the need for targeting awareness campaigns and training programs for ensuring that MSP's intended beneficiaries reach the programme.

2.4 Hypotheses Development

Based on the review of existing literature, the following hypotheses have been developed to guide the research:

H1: MSP has a significant positive impact on women's participation in green farming enterprises (Adefare et al., 2024; Bhardwaj et al., 2012).

H2: Socio-economic challenges, such as lack of access to finance and education, negatively influence women's ability to engage in green farming (Hordofa & Badore, 2024; Kumbhar, 2013).

H3: Women perceive MSP as a critical factor in promoting agricultural entrepreneurship (Goyal & Parkash, 2011; Singh, 2012).

H4: Demographic factors (e.g., age, education, income) significantly affect women's engagement in green enterprises (Nyundo, 2017; Ersoy et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Using quantitative cross sectional designs, this study examines the socio economic dimension of promotion of green enterprises by women, in a context where the impact of MSP is analysed on their agricultural entrepreneurship. In order to gain comprehensive insights the study was hybridized by both primary and secondary data. The use of mixed methods adds nuance to a depiction of the connection between demographic features, socio-economic problems, and MSP.

3.2 Study Area and Sample

For the purposes of the research, selected regions with diverse socio economic conditions are considered, and research is based on women engaged in agriculture. The sample regions are agricultural regions and regions that have used MSP.

- **Target Population**: Women involved in agriculture and green enterprises.
- **Sampling Method**: Stratified random sampling ensures representation across demographic variables such as age, education, and income.
- **Sample Size**: 150 respondents are selected to provide statistically significant results, balancing regional and demographic diversity.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Survey Instrument

It consist of designing a structured questionnaire for collecting both demographic and perceptual data out of which the following sections are integrated.:

1. **Demographic Data**: Includes variables such as age, education level, income, landholding size, and family structure.

2. **Likert-Scale Questions**:
    - Perceptions of MSP's impact on entrepreneurship (e.g., "MSP helps women mitigate financial risks in agriculture").
    - Socio-economic barriers such as financial access, land ownership, and cultural constraints.
    - Role of institutional support in fostering green enterprises.
    - Environmental sustainability awareness.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data is subject to advanced statistical techniques. The following tools and methods are employed:

1. **Descriptive Statistics**: Summarize demographic profiles of respondents, presenting data as frequencies, means, and standard deviations.

2. **Regression Analysis**:
    - To test **H1**, MSP's impact on green farming enterprises is measured.
    - To test **H2**, the relationship between socio-economic barriers and entrepreneurial participation is analyzed.

3. **Chi-square Test**: Evaluate women's perceptions of MSP's role (H3).

4. **ANOVA**: Examine the influence of demographic variables (H4) on participation in green enterprises.

5. **Software Tools**: SPSS and R are used for data entry, cleaning, and statistical analysis.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical research standards by ensuring:

- **Informed Consent**: All respondents are briefed on the purpose of the study and provide written consent.
- **Confidentiality**: Data is anonymized to protect the identities of respondents.
- **Voluntary Participation**: Respondents are free to withdraw at any stage without repercussions.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	37	24.7%
	26-40	55	36.7%
	41-60	45	30.0%
	60+	13	8.7%
Education	No formal education	22	14.7%
	Primary	52	34.7%

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	Secondary	53	35.3%
	Higher	23	15.3%
Income Level	Low	74	49.3%
	Medium	54	36.0%
	High	22	14.7%
Land Ownership	Yes	61	40.7%
	No	89	59.3%
Awareness of MSP	Yes	77	51.3%
	No	73	48.7%

A demographic profile offers important information on the characteristics of the women who are active in green enterprise. The respondents majority are found in the 26–40 years (36.7%) and 41–60 years (30%). These age ranges correspond to the most active participants in agricultural activities which implies a relatively good proportion of women in their productive years working in green farming. Certainly note worthy is that education levels are skewed heavily towards primary (34.7%) and secondary (35.3%) education with only 15.3% having attained higher education. This mirrors a potential barrier given the fact, that one has higher chances to possess a better entrepreneurial capacity and get more resources for the business when one has a higher education attainment. Nearly half of the respondents (49.3%) represent the low income category amongst which we can identify financial constraints as a big challenge. Additionally, land ownership—essential for green entrepreneurship—is available to less than 40.7 percent of respondents and unavailable to 59.3 percent. This inequality signals barriers to innovation and sustainable practices that are deeply systematic. MSP is relatively Awareness-balanced 51.3% is aware and 48.7% is unaware, indicating the necessity of targeted outreach and education.

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4.2 Likert Scale Analysis

Fifteen statements were given to respondents to rate their agreement with 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). They are related to MSP's impact, socio-economic barriers and adoption of green farming practices.

Table 2: Likert Scale Summary (Question-wise)

Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean	Std. Dev.
MSP helps women mitigate financial risks	10%	8%	17%	40%	25%	3.8	0.9
MSP reduces uncertainties in agriculture	7%	11%	16%	45%	21%	3.6	1.0
Financial access is critical for women entrepreneurs	5%	9%	20%	42%	24%	3.7	0.8
Lack of land ownership affects women's ability to innovate	6%	10%	22%	38%	24%	3.6	0.9

MSP encourages sustainable agricultural practices	7%	9%	19%	44%	21%	3.6	0.8
Awareness of MSP among women is limited	15%	20%	23%	27%	15%	3.0	1.2
Green farming practices increase income stability	4%	6%	18%	47%	25%	3.9	0.7
Socio-cultural barriers are a significant hurdle	3%	7%	15%	48%	27%	4.0	0.8
Women lack adequate technical training	5%	8%	19%	42%	26%	3.8	0.9
MSP is perceived as a mechanism for fostering women entrepreneurs	6%	9%	20%	43%	22%	3.7	0.9
Demographic factors significantly affect participation in green enterprises	5%	10%	22%	40%	23%	3.6	1.0

Access to information technology facilitates entrepreneurship	3%	8%	18%	46%	25%	3.9	0.7
MSP-backed incentives encourage organic farming	7%	10%	19%	45%	19%	3.6	0.8
Women face challenges in obtaining institutional support	9%	12%	23%	38%	18%	3.5	0.9
MSP benefits are not accessible to marginalized groups	10%	15%	22%	34%	19%	3.4	1.0

Likert scale analysis showed nuanced perceptions of MSP, socio-economic barriers and green farming practices. Most responded that MSP mitigates financial risks (agreement of 65%, mean score 3.8). The implication of this is that although a number of women remain uncertain or disagree, this suggests that MSP provides a safety net, but some uncertainty or disagreement with the safety net implies variability in either its reach or effectiveness. Similarly, 66% of respondents consider MSP as the means for advancing sustainable agriculture and, thereby, supporting the possibility for green farming to be promoted. Yet after they agreed that women have enough financial resources, only 58 percent agreed that women have enough financial resources, indicating gaps in access to credit. It was found that 62 percent agree that limited land ownership is a major impediment, agreeing that women's ability to innovate is hampered by structural inequalities in land allocation. A key hurdle was socio cultural barriers, in which the mean score of 4.0 suggests that agreement on their persistence was widespread. These results highlight the critical importance

of financial inclusion, land access and cultural transformation interventions to enable green enterprise.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: MSP Positively Impacts Women's Participation in Green Farming Enterprises

Null Hypothesis (H_0): MSP has no significant impact on women's participation in green farming enterprises.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): MSP positively impacts women's participation in green farming enterprises.

Table 3: MSP Positively Impacts Women's Participation in Green Farming Enterprises

Variable	β Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value	Significance
MSP Awareness	0.52	0.08	0.001	Highly Significant

A statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) β coefficient of 0.52 and statistically significant R 2 of 0.37 were found for the regression analysis of MSP awareness and women's participation. This shows that MSP can lead to women to adopt sustainable practices through reduction on uncertainties on the money side. The challenge however, is to increase awareness and access of MSP benefits to marginalized groups in particular.

Hypothesis 2: Socio-Economic Barriers Negatively Influence Participation

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Socio-economic barriers do not significantly influence women's participation in green farming enterprises.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Socio-economic barriers negatively influence women's participation in green farming enterprises.

Table 4; Socio-Economic Barriers Negatively Influence Participation

Variable	β Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value	Significance
Financial Access	-0.38	0.07	0.002	Significant
Education Level	-0.25	0.06	0.010	Significant

Financial access and education were key socio-econoimc barriers that predicted reduced participation in green enterprises. Note however that the negative β coefficients (financial access, education -0.38 and - 0.25 respectively) highlight that women with deprived resources are more likely to not to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Direct and indirect impact of the World Bank loan was the primary finding of these efforts which suggests the need for targeted interventions like the microfinance scheme and capacity building programs.

Hypothesis 3: Women Perceive MSP as a Critical Factor for Entrepreneurship

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Women do not perceive MSP as a critical factor for fostering entrepreneurship.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Women perceive MSP as a critical factor for fostering entrepreneurship.

Table 5: Women Perceive MSP as a Critical Factor for Entrepreneurship

Perception	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)

MSP Risk Mitigation	65.3%	21.3%	13.4%
Eco-Friendly Practice Support	58.7%	25.3%	16.0%

Chi square tests yielded a majority (65%) of respondents believing MSP important to risk mitigation and eco friendly practices. However, awareness differs among regions and demographics with consequences for better tailored awareness campaigns.

Hypothesis 4: Demographic Factors Significantly Influence Participation

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Demographic factors do not significantly influence women's participation in green farming enterprises.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Demographic factors significantly influence women's participation in green farming enterprises.

Table 6: Demographic Factors Significantly Influence Participation

Factor	F-value	p-value	Significance
Age	5.67	0.004	Significant
Education	6.34	0.002	Significant

Their ANOVA results suggest that age, and education, are significant factors in determining participation in green enterprises. Women of 26–40 age and educated women were more likely to practice sustainable agricultural practices. All of these insights suggest that policy efforts should target these demographic groups.

5. Discussion

This study finds that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) plays a multifaceted role in promoting women's participation in green farming enterprises and addressing key socio economic challenges. MSP is shown to be an important policy mechanism: it enables women farmers with their finances and encourage sustainable agricultural practices. The literature shows that MSP works to counteract hazards brought on by indefinite market situations so that women are able to test organic ways and other green ways. For example, Adefare et al. (2024) mentioned that MSP can decrease financial uncertainties, which is also found in this study's finding that most of the women believed MSP is a kind of risk. In the lead up, it also identifies knowledge gaps, as nearly half of the respondents were unaware of MSP benefits. This emphasizes the need for targeted awareness campaigns and training programs to close this knowledge gap and improve accessibility of policy to marginalized women.

Continuing barriers that prevent women setting and sustaining green business enterprises, socio-economic barriers up include such as limited financial quotas, the restrictions of land ownership, as well as cultural limitations. Like Ethiopia, Hordofa and Badore (2024) also faced similar struggle in Ethiopia that the literacy level in many cases is low to the high level of access to credit is not there equally for women in agriculture. These results also indicate that financial access and education are important predictors of participation in green farming with negative β coefficients (-0.38 and -0.25 respectively). The structure of these types of inequities are then highlighted by these findings, suggesting that efforts to redress these structural inequities through microfinance schemes, educational programs, and gender sensitive land policies are prerequisite to the creation of an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem for women. Further insight is given into the profiles of women engaged in green farming through a demographic analysis. Changes over time refer to the gradual increase of women aged 26–40 and women with higher education level in participation. The ages are significant ($p = 0.004$, $F = 5.67$) and educated women are more inclined to innovate as well as adopt sustainable practices ($p = 0.002$, $F = 6.34$). These results are corroborated by

Nyundo (2017) who argues that empowering women with higher education and technical training has great potential to transform our society. Unfortunately, this is also accompanied by a systemically high figure of the rank, with women with primary or secondary education, which indicates a pressing problem. Such skill development and technical trainings can ease women's barriers and cause them to take proactivity in green entrepreneurship.

Cultural and institutional support system are crucial in facilitating the strategy of women to overcome socio economic barriers. This study reveals that socio-cultural norms as evidenced by a high mean score of 4.0 in the Likert scale restrict women's capacity to innovate and lead green enterprises. Often they take the form of discriminatory practices in land ownership and credit access (Kumbhar 2013). Self help groups (SHGs) established at the community levels have proved successful to address these challenges. In Himachal Pradesh, Singh (2012) found that microfinance and collective action provided empowerment to women via SHGs that enabled them to make green startup businesses that balanced economic and environmental ends. These findings establish a need to reproduce and upscale these models across various socio-economic contexts. The study identifies the concurrent potential of MSP to be both sustainable and empower women entrepreneurs, if implemented inclusively and accessible. According to Bhardwaj et al. (2012) MSP, together with institutional support, can provide women an opportunity to diversify their income via beekeeping and agro-tourism. While the effectiveness of MSP depends on filling awareness gaps and ensuring marginalized populations have access to the policy. According to Goyal and Parkash (2011), targeted outreach programs will be needed to reassure that MSP reaches its targeted beneficiaries. The results, which demonstrate a need for region specific interventions and long term approaches to evaluate MSPs' impact on women entrepreneurs, conform to this.

6. Conclusion

As a study this thesis emphasizes the importance of women in facilitating sustainable agriculture via green enterprises, and the socio economic barriers they face and the potential of the MSP. As

contributors to agricultural workforce, women are uniquely poised to drive adoption of environmentally driven practice, but are constrained by systemic barriers of restricted access to finances, land restrictions, and socio-cultural constraints. However, these barriers and the technical training and policy awareness gaps have constrained them in fully utilizing opportunities in green entrepreneurship. The findings remind us that MSP operates as both a financial risk mitigation intervention and also as an undertaking for sustainable practices. The expanded awareness and accessibility can ensure that women coming to know MSP will participate more in green farming initiatives. Nevertheless the study found considerable disparities, with financial access and education coming out as important predeterminants of entrepreneurial engagement. Yet, intervention is needed, such as from microfinance, capacity building workshops, and community based support systems like self help groups, to address these inequalities. There is a need for policy reforming that aims to strengthen MSP outreach, develop institutions to support training, and address structural barriers to MSI development (such as land ownership inequities and gender bias in financial systems). In addition, region-specific strategies are needed to take into account the various socio economic conditions that affect women participation in green enterprises. As this research affirms, women as leaders can lead transformation in sustainable agriculture; and hence the urgency of the need for inclusive policy frameworks that can help women to overcome socio-economic challenges. Addressing these systemic issues will help unlock the full potential of women entrepreneurs to help governments and stakeholders build economic resilience, environmental sustainability and equitable development. Longer term impact of MSP and region specific dynamics should be investigated and used to inform future policy intervention.

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