

# Rural women entrepreneurship: a systematic literature review and beyond

Rural women  
entrepreneurship

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Rural women entrepreneurship has been a domain attracting academicians and governments. This paper aims to to annotate existing literature in order to find a nexus between rural women and entrepreneurship using a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. Further, it has a certain scope and direction of existing research by critically analysing the work published in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Out of 213 documents, 192 were published during last 20 years till October 2020 in Scopus journals that were downloaded using the keywords “Women Entrepreneurship” OR “Female Entrepreneurs” OR “Women Entrepreneurs” OR “Female Entrepreneurship” AND rural were accepted for further processing. VOS-Viewer software has been used to present bibliometric analysis. A thematic analysis of top 10 papers and 26 open access papers has also been done.

**Findings** – It was found that research interest in the said domain gained momentum in the last decade only. India is the top country that is publishing maximum papers; the United Kingdom has the maximum citations. The existing studies have focussed on factors influencing entrepreneurship, impact of gender and role of government schemes in fostering entrepreneurship. It is recommended that future studies may explore few inadequately explored grey areas including impact of entrepreneurial education, microcredit and information technology on rural women entrepreneurship.

**Originality/value** – This literature review article contributes to the existing literature by identifying the scope and direction of the existing literature. Further, it helps in identifying the least explored areas that can be taken up for the conduct of future research.

**Keywords** Rural women entrepreneurs, Systematic literature review, Bibliometric analysis, Thematic analysis

**Paper type** Literature review

## Introduction

Rural areas are generally portrayed as backward, peripheral, deficit in entrepreneurial activities (Markantoni and Hoven, 2012). Academicians and governments focus on rural entrepreneurship as it symbolises innovations (Kabgu, 2018; Nosratabadi *et al.*, 2020), self-employment, reduces poverty (Obinna and Ejike, 2017; Osei and Zhuang, 2020), growth of economy (Kyrgidou and Petridou, 2013), and thus ensures dynamic and sustainable (Warren-Smith and Jackson, 2004) economies. In developing economies across the globe, it has been noted that rural women are engaged in child care activities (Markantoni and Hoven, 2012) and other household work. However, women contribute not only in household activities but also in economic activities to support family. They are the key agents for development and catalytic for transformation in the economy, society, culture and in fostering sustainable



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development. They can make ample contributions in the growth of the economy (Jabeen *et al.*, 2020) through micro-businesses (Warren-Smith and Jackson, 2004).

The role of entrepreneurial learning is important in case of female entrepreneurs (Kyrgidou and Petridou, 2013). Chrisman and McMullan (2004) opined that the theory of “outsider assistance as a knowledge resource” can be usefully employed in case of women entrepreneurs. Economies worldwide are adopting entrepreneurial programmes for fostering women entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas (Rattanawiboonsom and Ali, 2016; Klapper *et al.*, 2006). The Malaysian Government endeavoured to improve marketing skills by use of social networking skills through information and communication technologies (ICT) for the growth and development of rural entrepreneurs (Ali *et al.*, 2019). Governments including Khyber (Jabeen *et al.*, 2020) Malaysia (Hashim *et al.*, 2011), Nepal, India and Greece have initiated and sponsored training programmes and witness its positive impact. But in spite of all such efforts, rural women are still lagging behind and need more push (Rattanawiboonsom and Ali, 2016; Warren-Smith and Jackson, 2004). The Government of India has taken numerous initiatives in this direction at the national, state and grass root levels. Varied entrepreneurship development programmes, micro finance programmes, management development programmes, skill development initiatives and vocational programmes and trainings have been started in the private and public sector and through private–public partnerships almost in every state and district in India to foster entrepreneurship, particularly targeting youth and women from rural areas.

The relevance of varied aspects of rural women and entrepreneurship has been explored in the literature. Shabbir and Di Gregorio (1996) opined that international development agencies have been conducting macro-perspective studies in developing economies particularly related to uneducated, poor, rural areas and urban informal sectors. Markantoni and Hoven (2012) opine that major rural area research has been on gender issues including farmers and their spouses. Other than this, it is also important to focus on non-farm activities, small scale activities, digital entrepreneurship (Ali *et al.*, 2019) that is slowly emerging. Existing research identifies many intangible and psycho-social factors like pride (Markantoni and Hoven, 2012), self-esteem (Oberhauser, 1997), personal growth, sense of achievement, desire for success (Idris *et al.*, 2014) and empowerment (Baylina and Schier, 2002) that motivate rural women to take up entrepreneurship. In social and cultural context (Sen, 2018; Jabeen *et al.*, 2020), education, household size, access to capital (Khan *et al.*, 2020), economic conditions (Jabeen *et al.*, 2020) and social networking (Ali *et al.*, 2019; Sullivan and Ford, 2014) are the factors that determine entrepreneurship (Daudu *et al.*, 2019). Literature suggests that numerous studies have been conducted on varied aspects of rural women entrepreneurship. But the consensus in findings and the direction of these studies is not yet established. This paper is an endeavour to conduct a systematic review and bibliometric analysis of the existing literature so as to identify the direction of the research in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship.

### Research questions

The basic objective of this study is to understand the scope and trends of the studies conducted in the domain of rural women and entrepreneurship in the last 20 years. It attempts to answer the research questions as follows:

- RQ1. What is the nexus between rural women and entrepreneurship in the existing literature?
- RQ2. Who are the prominent authors in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship?

- RQ3. Where are the international collaborations taking place and which countries are working together to build the nexus between rural women and entrepreneurship?
- RQ4. Which are the prominent journals publishing papers on rural women entrepreneurship?
- RQ5. What are the thematic areas of the top ten papers on rural women and entrepreneurship accepted by journals?

### Research methodology

A total of 213 documents published in Scopus during last 20 years, i.e. from the year 1990 till October, 2020 were downloaded using the keywords “Women Entrepreneurship” OR “Female Entrepreneurs” OR “Women Entrepreneurs” OR “Female Entrepreneurship” AND rural. Out of these 213 documents, a total of 192 documents were finally accepted for further processing for systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis as per the criteria given in [Table 1](#).

### Analysis

An analysis of 192 documents has been done in two parts. Part one of the study focusses on systematic literature review and part two focusses on bibliometric analysis. An overview of top 10 papers and 26 open access full length documents is also provided for better understanding of findings of these papers (see [Figure 1](#)).

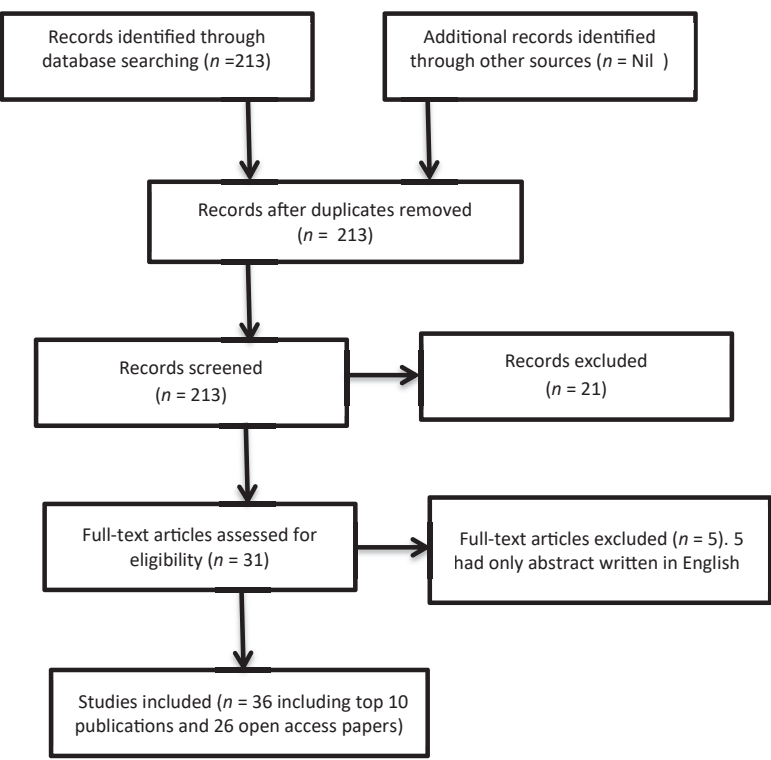
#### PART-I: systematic literature review

[Table 2](#) shows the status of year-wise publications. Research interest in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship basically gained momentum from the year 2010. 165 studies, i.e. 86% studies were conducted from the year 2010–2020. From the year 1990 till 2009 only 14% studies were conducted. From the year 1990 till 2007 there were only one or two studies or no study published in a year. Maximum studies were published in the year 2020 i.e. 32 (16.7%) papers, followed by 22 studies (11.5%) published during the year 2019, 18 publications (9.4%) in 2018 and 2016 each and 16 (8.3%) in the year 2017.

Source-wise number of publications ([Table 3](#)) shows that the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* and the *Journal of Agricultural Extension* have published maximum number of papers, i.e. six each. *Gender in Management* is third in the list with five papers followed by the *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research* with four papers. Journals including the *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *Gender and Development*, *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, *Journal of Enterprising Communities* and *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* published three papers each. Whereas, journals including *Appropriate*

| Criteria           | Acceptance  | Rejection  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Language           | English (207)   | Spanish (5)<br>French (1)<br>German (1)<br>Portuguese (1)<br>Russian (1) |
| Source of document | Article (162)<br>Book chapter (18)<br>Conference paper (17) | Review papers (8)<br>Book (4)<br>Conference reviews (2)<br>Notes (1)     |

**Table 1.**  
Criteria for acceptance and rejection of documents (Number of documents given in brackets)



**Figure 1.**  
PRISMA chart

**Source(s):** Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

**Table 2.**  
Year wise publications

| Documents |        |            | Documents |        |            | Documents |        |            |
|-----------|--------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|
| Year      | Number | Percentage | Year      | Number | Percentage | Year      | Number | Percentage |
| 2020      | 32     | 16.7       | 2010      | 9      | 4.7        | 2000      | 2      | 1.0        |
| 2019      | 22     | 11.5       | 2009      | 5      | 2.6        | 1999      | 1      | 0.5        |
| 2018      | 18     | 9.4        | 2008      | 4      | 2.1        | 1998      | 1      | 0.5        |
| 2017      | 16     | 8.3        | 2007      | 2      | 1.0        | 1997      | 2      | 1.0        |
| 2016      | 18     | 9.4        | 2006      | 0      | 0.0        | 1996      | 2      | 1.0        |
| 2015      | 14     | 7.3        | 2005      | 1      | 0.5        | 1995      | 0      | 0.0        |
| 2014      | 13     | 6.8        | 2004      | 2      | 1.0        | 1994      | 1      | 0.5        |
| 2013      | 6      | 3.1        | 2003      | 0      | 0.0        | 1993      | 0      | 0.0        |
| 2012      | 8      | 4.2        | 2002      | 1      | 0.5        | 1992      | 0      | 0.0        |
| 2011      | 9      | 4.7        | 2001      | 1      | 0.5        | 1991      | 1      | 0.5        |
|           |        |            |           |        |            | 1990      | 1      | 0.5        |

*Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews, Indian Journal of Labour Economics, International Journal of Economic Research, International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences Review and Research, International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research, Journal of Advanced Research in*

**Table 3.**  
Number of  
publications:  
source -wise

| Source  | Number |
|---|--------|
| <i>International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business</i>         | 6      |
| <i>Journal of Agricultural Extension</i>                                    | 6      |
| <i>Gender in management</i>   | 5      |
| <i>International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and research</i>      | 4      |
| <i>European Journal of Social Sciences</i>                                  | 3      |
| <i>Gender and development</i>   | 3      |
| <i>International Journal of Applied Business And Economic research</i>      | 3      |
| <i>Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship</i>                            | 3      |
| <i>Journal of Enterprising Communities</i>                                  | 3      |
| <i>Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship</i>                       | 3      |
| <i>Appropriate Technology</i>   | 2      |
| <i>Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews</i>                               | 2      |
| <i>Indian Journal of Labour Economics</i>                                   | 2      |
| <i>International Journal of Economic Research</i>                           | 2      |
| <i>International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship</i>                 | 2      |
| <i>International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences Review and Research</i> | 2      |
| <i>International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research</i>          | 2      |
| <i>Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems</i>        | 2      |
| <i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>  | 2      |
| <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i>   | 2      |
| <i>Journal of Small Business and Enterprise development</i>                 | 2      |
| <i>New Medit</i>  | 2      |
| <i>Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>                              | 2      |
| <i>Sustainability Switzerland</i>   | 2      |
| <i>World Development</i>  | 2      |

*Dynamical and Control Systems, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Rural Studies, Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, New Medit, Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, Sustainability Switzerland* and *World Development* published tow papers each.

Table 4 lists the country-wise publications in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship. Top 10 publishing countries include India (39), the United Kingdom (24), USA (20), Malaysia (17), Greece (9), Spain (9), Nigeria (8), China (7), Iran (6) and South Africa (6).

**Table 4.**  
Number of  
publications:  
country-wise

| Country      | Documents | Country         | Documents | Country              | Documents |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| India        | 39        | Germany         | 3         | Ghana                | 1         |
| UK           | 24        | Indonesia       | 3         | Ireland              | 1         |
| USA          | 20        | Italy           | 3         | Jordan               | 1         |
| Malaysia     | 17        | The Netherlands | 3         | Madagascar           | 1         |
| Greece       | 9         | Portugal        | 3         | Mexico               | 1         |
| Spain        | 9         | Zimbabwe        | 3         | Nepal                | 1         |
| Nigeria      | 8         | Chile           | 2         | New Zealand          | 1         |
| China        | 7         | Finland         | 2         | Papua New Guinea     | 1         |
| Iran         | 6         | Israel          | 2         | Romania              | 1         |
| South Africa | 6         | Norway          | 2         | Serbia               | 1         |
| Australia    | 5         | Oman            | 2         | South Korea          | 1         |
| Japan        | 5         | Singapore       | 2         | Swaziland            | 1         |
| Pakistan     | 5         | Tanzania        | 2         | Switzerland          | 1         |
| Sweden       | 5         | Thailand        | 2         | Uganda               | 1         |
| Bangladesh   | 4         | Botswana        | 1         | United Arab Emirates | 1         |
| Canada       | 4         | Cambodia        | 1         | Viet Nam             | 1         |
| Turkey       | 4         | Gambia          | 1         | Undefined            | 6         |

Table 5 reflects the institutions publishing more than two documents in the domain under study. Top nine institutions publishing more than two papers are Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, University of South Africa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Harper Adams University, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. Prominent institutions working in India on the topic under study and having more than two papers published includes Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, IIT Kharagpur, Bharathiar University, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, IIT Delhi, IIM Ahmedabad and St. Joseph's College, Bangalore.

Table 6 highlights the authors publishing more than two documents. There were nine authors with more than three documents including McElwee, Amir, Hashim, Koutsou, Man, Partalidou, Petridou, Razak and Warren-Smith.

*PART-II: bibliometric analysis*

Part-II of the paper presents the results of bibliometric analysis. Co-occurrence analysis is presented in Table 7. Out of 885 keywords used in the documents under study, 78 meet the threshold of minimum three occurrences in the document. Top five maximum used keywords are Entrepreneur, Women, Gender, Women's Status and Rural Area.

Keywords co-occurrence map (Figures 2 and 3) shows that top five keywords used are women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, women and gender. These keywords

**Table 5.**  
Institutions publishing  
more than two papers

| Affiliation   | Documents |
|---|-----------|
| Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece                          | 6         |
| Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  | 4         |
| Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece | 4         |
| University of South Africa  | 3         |
| Universiti Teknologi MARA   | 3         |
| Harper Adams University, UK   | 3         |
| Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, India                 | 3         |
| Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigeria                     | 3         |
| Universiti Malaysia Terengganu  | 3         |
| University of Valencia  | 2         |
| University of Haifa   | 2         |
| Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India                       | 2         |
| Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria                                   | 2         |
| Robert Gordon University  | 2         |
| Bharathiar University, India  | 2         |
| SRM Institute of Science and Technology, India                        | 2         |
| University of Trás-os-montes and Alto Douro                           | 2         |
| Universiti Teknologi Malaysia   | 2         |
| UiT The Arctic University of Norway                                   | 2         |
| Bu Ali Sina University  | 2         |
| Universidad de Granada  | 2         |
| University of Huddersfield  | 2         |
| Indian Institute of Technology Delhi                                  | 2         |
| Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad                              | 2         |
| Bindura University of Science Education, Zimbabwe                     | 2         |
| St. Joseph's college, Bengaluru                                       | 2         |
| Dhofar University, Oman   | 2         |
| Centro de Estudos Transdisciplinares para o Desenvolvimento CETRAD    | 2         |
| Huddersfield Business School  | 2         |

**Table 6.**  
Authors publishing more than two papers

| Author          | Documents | Author             | Documents |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| McElwee, G      | 4         | Abdul Jalil, M.M   | 2         |
| Amir, Z         | 3         | Ali, N             | 2         |
| Hashim, F       | 3         | Durrah, O          | 2         |
| Koutsou, S      | 3         | Gerry, C           | 2         |
| Man, M          | 3         | Goswami, K         | 2         |
| Partalidou, M   | 3         | Hazarika, B        | 2         |
| Petridou, E     | 3         | Iakovidou, O       | 2         |
| Razak, N.A      | 3         | Movahedi, R        | 2         |
| Warren-Smith, I | 3         | Muhamad, S         | 2         |
| Srinivasan, N   | 2         | Munkejord, M.C     | 2         |
| Ukanwa, I       | 2         | Newbery, R         | 2         |
| Xiong, L        | 2         | Packirisamy, P     | 2         |
|                 |           | Yaghoubi-Farani, A | 2         |

are divided into five clusters as stated above on the basis of their occurrences and total link strength. Particularly, in India, the keywords map shows that maximum work has been done using keywords like entrepreneur, women entrepreneurs, empowerment, employment and rural area. On the other hand, very less work has been done in integrating sustainability, self-employment, rural entrepreneurship, training, rural development, poverty, gender issue, social status and human side of women entrepreneurship. Areas like micro-credit, micro-entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education are yet to be explored in the context of India. The Cluster-1, red in colour, has 207 occurrences with focus on entrepreneurs, women, gender, women's status, rural area etc. Cluster-2, green in colour, has 91 occurrences with focus on terms like developing countries, economics, article, developing country etc. Cluster-3, blue in colour, has 124 occurrences considering keywords like entrepreneurship, agriculture, case study, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial development etc. Cluster-4, yellowish-green in colour, has its main focus on items like women entrepreneurs, rural, information technology, micro-enterprise and micro-credit. It has 58 occurrences. Cluster-5, with 14 occurrences, purple in colour, focusses on only two keywords including female and human.

Citation analysis analyses the number of citations received by the document. Out of 192 papers, 86 papers meet the threshold of receiving at least 2 citations. Table 8 shows the documents' citations. Maximum cited documents are authored by Attanasio (2015), Shabbir (1996), Pernilla (1997), Chitsike (2000), Warren-Smith (2004), Merrett (2010), Babbitt (2015), Petridou (2009), Ntseane (2004) and Poon (2012). These authors have been cited more than 20 times in other research papers. The following Table 9 shows themes undertaken by these researchers (see Figure 4).

The top 10 publications focussed on gender issues, impact of training and business support programmes and factors motivating entrepreneurship.

*With respect to micro-credit programmes*, Attanasio *et al.* (2015) found the positive impact of joint liability micro-credit on rural women entrepreneurship through a randomised field experiment in rural Mongolia. However, individual liability micro-credit program had no impact on poverty. Further, joint liability loans had stronger impact on restricting the use of loan amount for non-investment purposes.

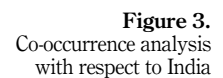
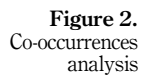
*Considering gender concerns*, Babbitt *et al.* (2015) found strong preference for formalisation amongst old, married, educated and rural female entrepreneurs operating in informal sector in Indonesia. Further, as compared to male entrepreneurs, female entrepreneurs found formalisation can help them access credits. Chitsike (2000) concluded that large scale ventures are predominantly men's area so women cannot opt for it. Further, women cannot claim the success of venture due to their major role in families. The

Table 7.  
Keywords analysis

| Keyword              | CN* | OC* | TLS* | Keyword                                     | TLS* | OC* | CN* | Keyword                                    | CN* | OC* | TLS* |
|----------------------|-----|-----|------|---|------|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|------|
| Entrepreneur         | 1   | 24  | 118  | Developing Countries                        | 75   | 9   | 2   | Entrepreneurship                           | 3   | 28  | 60   |
| Women                | 1   | 23  | 88   | Economics                                   | 71   | 6   | 2   | Agriculture                                | 3   | 4   | 8    |
| Gender               | 1   | 15  | 46   | Article                                     | 67   | 5   | 2   | Case Study                                 | 3   | 3   | 27   |
| Women's Status       | 1   | 14  | 69   | Developing Country                          | 67   | 5   | 2   | Entrepreneurship Education                 | 3   | 3   | 10   |
| Rural Area           | 1   | 14  | 65   | Africa                                      | 51   | 5   | 2   | Entrepreneurial development                | 3   | 3   | 3    |
| Empowerment          | 1   | 12  | 39   | Economic development                        | 44   | 5   | 2   | Economic Empowerment                       | 3   | 3   | 2    |
| Women                | 1   | 11  | 27   | Bangladesh                                  | 26   | 5   | 2   | Rural Areas                                | 3   | 9   | 25   |
| Entrepreneurship     |     |     |      |   |      |     |     |  |     |     |      |
| Women's Employment   | 1   | 9   | 40   | Rural Population                            | 64   | 4   | 2   | Female Entrepreneurs                       | 3   | 8   | 24   |
| India                | 1   | 9   | 29   | Socioeconomic Factors                       | 64   | 4   | 2   | Female Entrepreneurship                    | 3   | 8   | 8    |
| Entrepreneurs        | 1   | 7   | 18   | Culture                                     | 46   | 4   | 2   | Rural Entrepreneurship                     | 3   | 7   | 17   |
| Greece               | 1   | 7   | 14   | Social Status                               | 31   | 4   | 2   | Sustainable development                    | 3   | 5   | 22   |
| Gender relations     | 1   | 6   | 22   | Women's Empowerment                         | 26   | 4   | 2   | Pakistan                                   | 3   | 5   | 12   |
| Microfinance         | 1   | 6   | 20   | Employment                                  | 25   | 4   | 2   | Information And communication Technologies | 3   | 4   | 11   |
| Poverty              |     |     |      |   |      |     |     |  |     |     |      |
| Gender Issue         | 1   | 6   | 15   | Demographic Factors                         | 59   | 3   | 2   | Women Empowerment                          | 3   | 4   | 4    |
| Rural development    | 1   | 5   | 43   | Demography                                  | 59   | 3   | 2   | Malaysia                                   | 3   | 3   | 11   |
| Social capital       | 1   | 5   | 34   | Economic Factors                            | 59   | 3   | 2   | Small And medium Enterprise                | 3   | 3   | 10   |
|                      |     |     |      | Population And Population related Phenomena | 59   | 3   | 2   | Sales                                      | 3   | 3   | 9    |
| Sustainability       |     |     |      |   |      |     |     |  |     |     |      |
| Rural society        | 1   | 4   | 23   | Population characteristics                  | 59   | 3   | 2   | Iran                                       | 3   | 3   | 7    |
| Business development | 1   | 4   | 20   | Rural Population—Women                      | 59   | 3   | 2   | Rural Economy                              | 3   | 3   | 6    |
| Informal sector      | 1   | 4   | 15   | Socioeconomics                              | 59   | 3   | 2   | Social media                               | 3   | 3   | 5    |
| Development          | 1   | 4   | 14   | Entrepreneurialism                          | 25   | 3   | 2   | Rural Women                                | 3   | 12  | 28   |
| Immigrant            | 1   | 4   | 10   | Population                                  | 59   | 3   | 2   | Women Entrepreneurs                        | 4   | 29  | 73   |
| Self employment      | 1   | 3   | 18   |   |      |     |     | Rural                                      | 4   | 7   | 15   |
| Training             | 1   | 3   | 17   |   |      |     |     | Information Technology                     | 4   | 5   | 10   |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | Micro-enterprise                           | 4   | 4   | 7    |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | Micro-credit                               | 4   | 4   | 2    |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | Business                                   | 4   | 3   | 6    |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | Internet                                   | 4   | 3   | 6    |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | SHGs                                       | 4   | 3   | 2    |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | Female                                     | 5   | 9   | 70   |
|                      |     |     |      |   |      |     |     | Human                                      | 5   | 5   | 20   |

Note(s): CN\* = Cluster number, OC\* = Occurrence and TLS\* = Total link strength





Merrett and Gruidl (2010)

| Document  | Citations | Document                   | Citations | Document  | Citations |
|---|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|
| <a href="#">Attanasio et al. (2015)</a>         | 102       | Munkejord (2017b)          | 9         | Chatzitheodoridis (2016)                        | 5         |
| <a href="#">Shabbir and Gregorio (1996)</a>     | 70        | Seedhouse (2016)           | 9         | <a href="#">Hashim et al. (2011)</a>            | 5         |
| <a href="#">Pernilla (1997)</a>                 | 67        | Appelstrand (2015)         | 9         | Onphanhdala (2010)                              | 5         |
| <a href="#">Chitsike (2000)</a>                 | 35        | Arul Paramanandam (2015)   | 9         | Sultana (2010)                                  | 5         |
| <a href="#">Warren-Smith and Jackson (2004)</a> | 28        | Kumar (2013)               | 9         | Shahriar (2019)                                 | 4         |
| <a href="#">Merrett and Gruidl (2010)</a>       | 26        | Movahedi (2012)            | 9         | Adnan (2016)                                    | 4         |
| <a href="#">Babbitt et al. (2015)</a>           | 24        | Oluranti Ogunrinola (2011) | 9         | Kartiwi (2013)                                  | 4         |
| <a href="#">Petridou (2009)</a>                 | 23        | Hosseini (2011)            | 9         | Buendía-Martínez (2013)                         | 4         |
| <a href="#">Ntseane (2004)</a>                  | 22        | Benedict (2007)            | 9         | Iakovidou (2012)                                | 4         |
| <a href="#">Poon et al. (2012)</a>              | 21        | Raven (2015)               | 8         | Yaghoubi (2010)                                 | 4         |
| <a href="#">Markantoni and Hoven (2012)</a>     | 18        | Ukanwa (2018)              | 7         | Aggelopoulos (2008)                             | 4         |
| <a href="#">Weber (2007)</a>                    | 18        | Ekinsmyth (2012)           | 7         | Tovo (1991)                                     | 4         |
| <a href="#">Panta (2018)</a>                    | 17        | Marques (2011)             | 7         | Katre (2018)                                    | 3         |
| <a href="#">Webster (2007)</a>                  | 17        | Davis (2011)               | 7         | Hazarika (2018)                                 | 3         |
| <a href="#">Munkejord (2017a)</a>               | 17        | Iakovidou (2009)           | 7         | Huang (2018)                                    | 3         |
| <a href="#">Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013)</a>    | 16        | Bortamuly (2014)           | 6         | Igwe (2018)                                     | 3         |
| <a href="#">Pallarès-Blanch (2015)</a>          | 14        | Afza (2010)                | 6         | Ojo (2015)                                      | 3         |
| <a href="#">Lourenço (2014)</a>                 | 12        | Kattaa (2009)              | 6         | Hemalatha (2014)                                | 3         |
| <a href="#">Billore (2010)</a>                  | 12        | Egan (1997)                | 6         | <a href="#">Warren-Smith and Jackson (2004)</a> | 3         |
| <a href="#">Jiyane (2010)</a>                   | 12        | Pickering (1996)           | 6         | Möller (2012)                                   | 3         |
| <a href="#">Ghouse (2017)</a>                   | 11        | Mahmud (1994)              | 6         | Semali (2011)                                   | 3         |
| <a href="#">Petridou (2009)</a>                 | 11        | Hopkinson (2017)           | 5         | Razak (2010)                                    | 3         |
| <a href="#">Koutsou (2009)</a>                  | 11        | Santos (2017)              | 5         | Epstein (1990)                                  | 3         |
| <a href="#">Ghouse (2019)</a>                   | 10        | Pathak (2017)              | 5         |   |           |

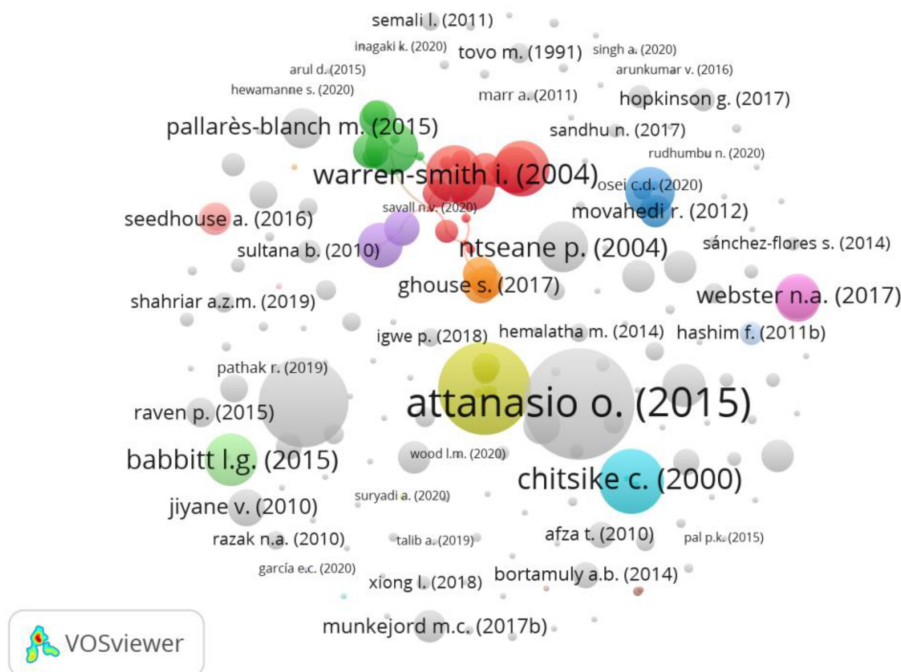
**Table 8.**  
Citation analysis

female entrepreneurs face more obstacles to business success than their male or urban female counterparts after surveying 4,200 business owners in Illinois.

*On factors influencing rural female entrepreneurship*, [Ntseane \(2004\)](#) focussed on contextual and personal factors impeding the success of small business women entrepreneurs. He concluded that the use of cultural values to negotiate, resistance towards dominance of men within family and informal and non-competitive factors leads to business success for rural women entrepreneurs in Botswana. With respect to social capital [Poon et al. \(2012\)](#) found that in two distressed regions in Northern Vietnam, family social capital, distance to public markets and access to capital increases the probability of women entrepreneurship, whereas institutional social capital has opposite effect. This negative relationship between network resources and self-employment may arise due to poor quality meetings and lack of proper trainings of resources. Furthermore, family composition is also important, particularly majority of male and children in the age group 15–59 have a positive influence, and majority of women within this age group negatively influence rural women entrepreneurship. [Shabbir and Di Gregorio \(1996\)](#) found that personal freedom, security and satisfaction are the motivational factors behind starting ventures. Further, the impact of internal (women's qualification and work experience) and external structural factors (finance,

| Citations                | Methodology                                | Data/Sample size                       | Area                          | Theme  |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Attanasio <i>et al.</i>  | Randomized field experiment                | 1,148 poor women from 40 villages      | Rural Mongolia                | Micro-credit programme   |
| Babbitt <i>et al.</i>    | Semi-structured face to Face interview     | 40 individuals (27 women and 13 men)   | Indonesia                     | Gender and its role  |
| Chitsike                 | Auto-biographical Survey                   | Case Study 4,200 firms                 | Zimbabwe Illinois             | Gender issues and culture<br>Gender and location                 |
| Merrett and Gruidl       | Interview                                  | 13 women                               | Botswana                      | Contextual and personal factors                                  |
| Ntseane                  | NA   | NA                                     | Sweden                        | Counselling  |
| Pernilla                 | Close ended questionnaire, Factor Analysis | 104 rural women                        | Greece                        | Impact of entrepreneurial skill training                         |
| Petridou and Glaveli     | Stratified sampling                        | 160 women participants of Micro-credit | Vietnam                       | Social capital   |
| Poon <i>et al.</i>       | Indepth interviews                         | 33 women participants of EDP           | Pakistan                      | Factors influencing women entrepreneurship                       |
| Shabbir. and Di Gregorio | Interview                                  | 135 self-employed women                | Shropshire/ West midlands, UK | WIRE programme and characteristics of rural female entrepreneurs |
| Warren-Smith and Jackson |  |  |                               |  |

**Table 9.**  
Themes of top ten cited papers



**Figure 4.**  
Document citation analysis

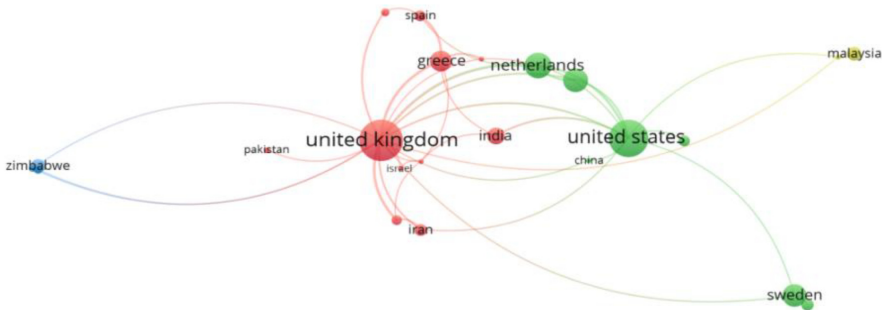
location, family, employees, suppliers and customers) on women's ability varies. Chitsike (2000) concluded that if cultural constraints do not hold women back then they can be self-confident and autonomous in their economic activities. Warren-Smith and Jackson (2004) concluded that the existing difficulty of securing employment in rural areas is the motivation behind rural female entrepreneurship in Shropshire.

*Government support and training programmes* also play a significant role in women entrepreneurship. Pernilla (1997) illustrated a situation where legitimacy concern was resolved as one of the gender-segregated counselling components of government business support programme for women entrepreneurs in the rural districts of Sweden. Similarly, Warren-Smith and Jackson (2004) highlighted the Women in Rural Enterprise-WiRE project and concluded that in rural context business support and training should focus on cultural/social and economic requirements rather than transferring urban models to rural areas. Petridou and Glaveli (2008) also found positive effects of training support on the entrepreneurial skills, cooperatives' viability, growth Perspex and work-family balance of rural women entrepreneurs running co-operatives in Greece. Similarly, Shabbir and Di Gregorio (1996) found positive impact of training through interview of 33 participants who attended an entrepreneurship development programme in Karachi. Out of these 33 participants, 16 started their ventures.

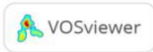
Country-wise citations show that the United Kingdom, the USA, Sweden, Greece and India are top cited document producing countries. Documents produced by the United Kingdom are 24 but are cited 300 times. The USA produced 20 documents and cited 248 times. Sweden produced 5 documents and cited 96 times. Similarly, Greece produced 9 documents and cited 81 times. The total documents from India are 39 and cited only 51 times. Furthermore, documents produced by countries including Canada, Greece, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Oman, Pakistan, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom fall into Cluster-1, marked in red, in Figure 5. China, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the USA fall into Cluster-2. Australia, Portugal and Zimbabwe are in Cluster-3, whereas Bangladesh and Malaysia are in Cluster-4.

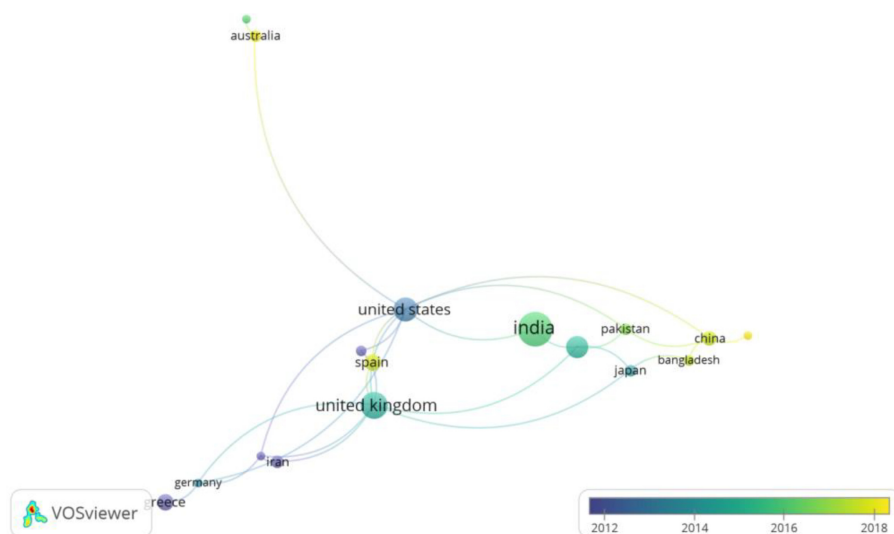
Figure 6 shows the co-authorship network country-wise. Co-authorship analysis shows that the United Kingdom, the USA, Spain, Canada, Germany, Greece, Iran and The Netherlands are related in Cluster-1. Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and Pakistan are clustered together as Cluster-2, whereas Australia and Portugal are in Cluster-3

Co-authorship analysis was done for understanding who all are in network. Out of 459 authors, 26 authors meet the threshold of having more than two documents. Figure 7 shows

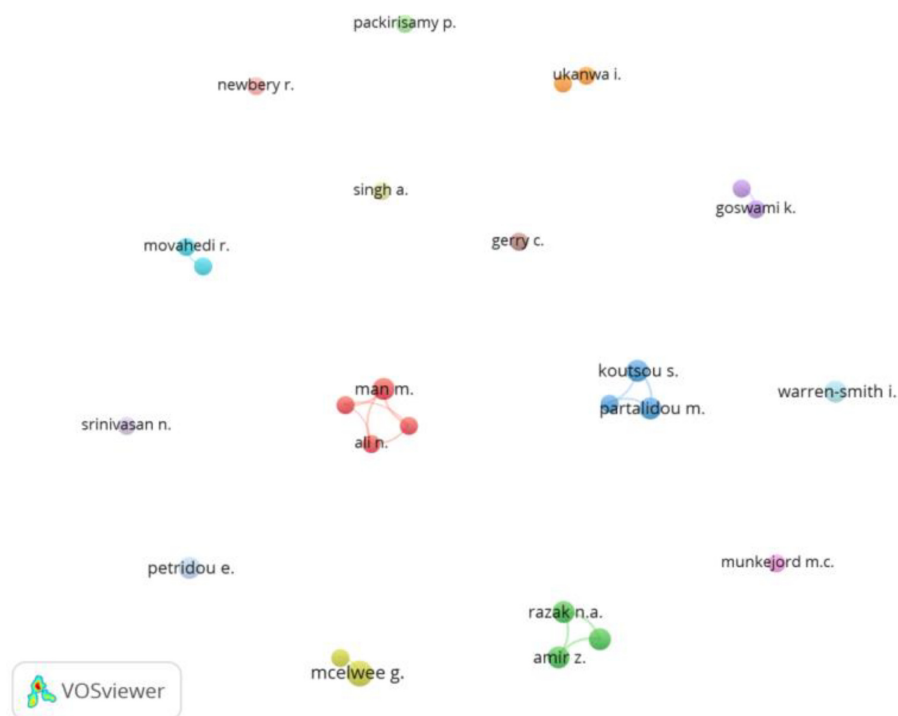


**Figure 5.**  
Citation analysis-  
country wise





**Figure 6.**  
Country wise  
co-authorship  
network map



**Figure 7.**  
Author wise  
co-authorship  
network map

that Abdul Jalil, Ali, Man and Muhamad are working in network. Amir, Hashim and Razak are linked with each other. Iakovidoe, Koutsou and Partalidou are in similar cluster. Durrah and Mcelwee are working together. Goswami and Hazarika are in the same network. Similarly, Movahedi and Yaghoubi-Farani are in network.

Co-citation analysis on the basis of cited authors shows that (Figure 8) out of 8,775 authors, 63 authors meet the threshold of having minimum of 10 citations.

As per Table 10 there are total 6 clusters. Cluster 1, red in colour, consists of 21 authors. Cluster 2, green in colour, consists of 11 items. Cluster-3, blue in colour, consists of 8 items. Similarly, cluster-4, yellowish-green in colour, and cluster-5, purple colour, consist of 8 items each. Cluster 6, sky blue in colour, consists of 7 authors.

Overview of full text articles

This section presents the overview of 26 full-text articles downloaded out of the total database under study. Few studies endeavour to explore *factors influencing rural women entrepreneurship*. Ertac and Tanova (2020) surveyed 200 women entrepreneurs from ecotourism sector of rural Northern Cyprus and found that women with growth mind-sets flourish more even in unfavourable situations. Mandongwe and Jaravaza (2020) applied structural equation modelling (SEM) model on the responses of 192 rural women entrepreneurs from Manicaland Province; Zimbabwe collected through convenience sampling. Significant impact of innovativeness and risk-taking ability was found on entrepreneurial intentions. Kabgu (2018) conducted structured interviews with 165 women farmers from 6 local government areas of Nasarawa State in Nigeria using multi-stage sampling. It was found that women had low entrepreneurial capacity and particularly they lack persuasion and networking skills. However, women entrepreneurs were found to be committed, persistent and risk bearing. Rathna et al. (2016) selected sample of 400 rural and urban women from Thanjavur district using snowball sampling technique. Factor analysis indicated that women take up entrepreneurship as a part-time activity, to support family occupation, to become independent and to improve social status. Rattanawiboonsom and Ali (2016) collected data using questionnaire from 105 Dhaka men and women. It was found that due to high degree of discrimination, insufficient use of resources, less or insufficient capital investment, they lack logistic support both from government and private sectors. Idris et al. (2014) used SEM analysis to determine factors encouraging 292 rural Malaysian women to get involved in business activities. It was found that desire to succeed that was explained by

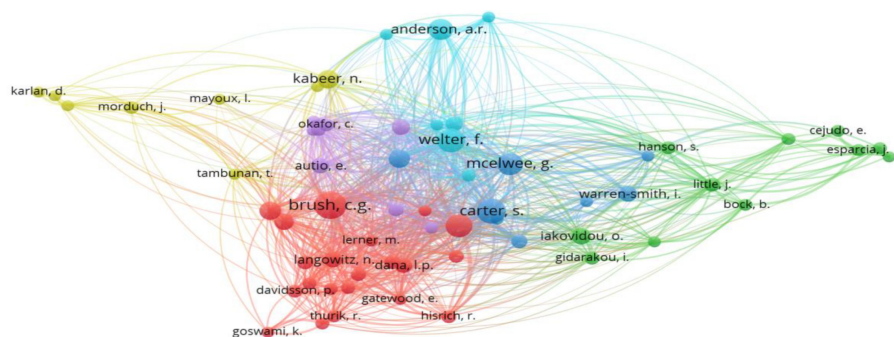


Figure 8.  
Co-citation analysis on  
the basis of cited  
authors



| Author        | Cluster | Total link strength | Author        | Cluster | Total link strength | Author       | Cluster | Total link strength |
|---------------|---------|---------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|
| Brush, C      | 1       | 596                 | Bock, B       | 2       | 108                 | Kabeer, N    | 4       | 127                 |
| Brush, C.G    | 1       | 731                 | Bosworth, G   | 2       | 104                 | Karlan, D    | 4       | 39                  |
| Cannon, T     | 1       | 82                  | Camarero, L   | 2       | 121                 | Mayoux, L    | 4       | 29                  |
| Carter, N.M   | 1       | 212                 | Cejudo, E     | 2       | 48                  | Mckenzie, D  | 4       | 73                  |
| Dana, L.P     | 1       | 244                 | Esparcia, J   | 2       | 108                 | Morduch, J   | 4       | 63                  |
| Davidsson, P  | 1       | 162                 | Gidarakou, I  | 2       | 149                 | Tambunan, T  | 4       | 123                 |
| Gatewood, E   | 1       | 200                 | Hanson, S     | 2       | 108                 | Thapa, B     | 4       | 72                  |
| Goswami, K    | 1       | 82                  | Iakovidou, O  | 2       | 195                 | Woodruff, C  | 4       | 82                  |
| Greene, P.G   | 1       | 262                 | Little, J     | 2       | 241                 | Autio, E     | 5       | 239                 |
| Hair, J.F     | 1       | 71                  | Paniagua, A   | 2       | 120                 | De Bruin, A  | 5       | 296                 |
| Hart, M.M     | 1       | 159                 | Partalidou, M | 2       | 110                 | Gherardi, S  | 5       | 155                 |
| Hisrich, R    | 1       | 196                 | Bock, B.B     | 3       | 152                 | Mordi, C     | 5       | 143                 |
| Hisrich, R.D  | 1       | 133                 | Carter, S     | 3       | 656                 | Okafor, C    | 5       | 163                 |
| Jennings, J.E | 1       | 184                 | Chrisman, J.J | 3       | 76                  | Simpson, R   | 5       | 136                 |
| Langowitz, N  | 1       | 269                 | Jackson, C    | 3       | 81                  | Singh, S     | 5       | 136                 |
| Lerner, M     | 1       | 161                 | Marlow, S     | 3       | 429                 | Watson, J    | 5       | 221                 |
| Minniti, M    | 1       | 263                 | McElwee, G    | 3       | 447                 | Ahl, H       | 6       | 224                 |
| Ramadani, V   | 1       | 189                 | Shaw, E       | 3       | 240                 | Anderson, A  | 6       | 340                 |
| Shane, S      | 1       | 147                 | Warren-Smith  | 3       | 196                 | Gartner, W.B | 6       | 218                 |
| Thurik, R     | 1       | 140                 |               |         |                     | Jack, S      | 6       | 175                 |
| Verheul, I    | 1       | 141                 |               |         |                     | Reynolds, P  | 6       | 157                 |
|               |         |                     |               |         |                     | Welter, F    | 6       | 715                 |
|               |         |                     |               |         |                     | Williams, C  | 6       | 101                 |

**Table 10.**  
Co-citation analysis on the basis of cited authors

the need to fulfil the dream of having own business, gaining experience and how to become responsible is the most important factor influencing women entrepreneurship. [Markantoni and Hoven \(2012\)](#) conducted in-depth interviews with 17 rural women engaged in side activities (tourism, home products, service sector, art and craft) in Veenkoloniën, a rural area, The Netherlands. Using qualitative data analysis software MaxQDA, it was concluded that rural women take side activities as personal achievement and empowerment.

Most recent studies, particularly conducted in the year 2020, *focus on gender and rural women entrepreneurship*. [Adinolfi et al. \(2020\)](#) applied logistic model with fixed effect on balanced panel data of 6,234 Italian farmers. It was found that gender gaps existed in terms of farm management, performance, networking and access to rural policies. [Jabeen et al. \(2020\)](#) collected data from 480 rural women of rural areas of Khyber using snowball sampling technique and by conducting face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. It was found that men dominated in making household decisions and women's economic activities are confined to their home boundaries only. [Llorca-Jaña et al. \(2020\)](#) provided early estimates

of entrepreneurial activities and gender income in Chile during first decade after independence. It was found that male land owners were six times than women, however, the largest landowner was a woman, and women agrarian entrepreneurs and landowners were wide-spread. [Rattanawiboonsom and Ali \(2016\)](#) also found that women stand at less advantageous position as compared to men.

Studies have also identified the *impact of training on rural women entrepreneurs*. [Ali et al. \(2019\)](#) constructed a framework for the development of social networking site skill to help the community rural women in Setiu Wetlands, Malaysia to enable them to utilize ICT growth. The study was conducted on 30 women entrepreneurs. [Daudu et al. \(2019\)](#) studied 320 male and female rural farming household from Kwara State of Nigeria using two-stage sampling. It was found that men were more creative as compared to women. [Obinna and Ejike \(2017\)](#) surveyed 180 respondents from Abia State of Nigeria using multi-stage sampling. The author recommended the formation of cooperative to encourage rural entrepreneurship. Furthermore, governments should emphasize on capacity-building programmes for rural women in entrepreneurial ventures including agriculture. [Obinna and Maduka \(2017\)](#) assessed a sample of 120 non-farm rural entrepreneurs using multi-stage sampling through structured questionnaire to identify training needs. It was concluded that entrepreneurial training should include record keeping and ways to access capital. [Kyrgidou and Petridou \(2013\)](#) found positive result of e-mentoring by conducted survey through structured questionnaires considering 60 rural entrepreneurs from Greece who agreed to become mentees. [Petridou \(2009\)](#) analysed the reactions of a group of 60 women mentees from rural cooperatives in Greece and 30 women mentors using questionnaire for recording responses during pre-mentoring, mentoring and post-mentoring. Both mentee and mentors found their relationship, frequency of contact and e-mentoring to be satisfactory. Mentees achieved their personal goals and mentors gained publicity. [Petridou and Glaveli \(2008\)](#) found a positive impact of training programmes on entrepreneurial skills and attitude by analysing a sample 104 rural women members of cooperatives in Greece who attended a specific training programme. [Osei and Zhuang \(2020\)](#) on the basis of data collected from 333 women agri-entrepreneurs from rural Ghana concluded that rural women entrepreneurial growth potential is significantly, positively related to poverty alleviation.

Studies attempted to measure the *impact of initiatives taken by the Government of respective countries in fostering rural women entrepreneurship*. [Islam and Ahmad \(2020\)](#) collected data from 330 Selangor's (rural area of Malaysia) disadvantaged women on Shariah rules on two micro-equity financing instruments through structured questionnaire. Using SEM model it was found that women were aware of Shariah rules and that it require high moral and ethical values along with diligent repayment system. Disadvantaged group accept only those rules that are favourable to their interest. Furthermore, the experience of borrowers does not have significant influence on their perception of instruments under study. [Khan et al. \(2020\)](#) analysed 300 borrowers and 100 non-borrowers under micro-finance programme in Pakistan and concluded that micro-finance does contribute positively and it is not reaching to the poorest of the poor rural women. Similarly, [Garcia et al. \(2020\)](#) found a positive impact of European Union LEADER rural development program. Furthermore, through secondary data, researchers found social disparity in distribution of funds. [Mahesh et al. \(2020\)](#) highlighted that scheme of women technology park (WTP) equip women with desired technologies and helps in solving regional problems. [Grant et al. \(2019\)](#) interviewed 15 rural women entrepreneurs from Cambodia and 12 government employees and used NVivo for qualitative data analysis to study the impact of establishing and managing water supply scheme. Operational, regulatory, financial and limited demand were found to be the key barriers, and social, economic, government and NGO support were the enablers of successful ventures. [Adhikari et al. \(2018\)](#) found positive impact of project allo (the Himalayan nettle, *Girardinia diversifolia*) focussed on rural women of Nepal. The project provides training in



sustainable harvesting and processing techniques, offers buyback guarantee scheme, promotes products in high-end international markets, share the benefits for local people and organises skill training and visits to trade fairs. This led to an increase in the number of rural women-run micro-businesses, increased their confidence, empowerment and better earnings. Hashim *et al.* (2011) conducted an impact study of 136 women participants under project Inita sponsored by the Government of Malaysia. Using qualitative and quantitative data it was found that rural women gained confidence. The training resulted with an increase in sales and enhanced knowledge of use of computers. Warren-Smith and Jackson (2004) highlighted the positive impact of project WiRE (Women in Rural Enterprise) initiated in Shropshire, UK and opined that rural enterprises need to be encouraged not only economically but also socially and culturally.

### Conclusion and lessons drawn

Systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis concludes that research interest in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship basically gained momentum during this decade only. Maximum publications took place in the year 2020. The *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* and the *Journal of Agricultural Extension* have published maximum number of papers. India is the top country producing 39 documents in the domain under study followed by the United Kingdom, the USA, Malaysia and Greece. But the top cited papers are from the United Kingdom followed by the USA, Sweden, Greece and India. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece published maximum documents/papers. The Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, IIT Kharagpur, Bharathiar University, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, IIT Delhi, IIM Ahmedabad and St. Joseph's College, Bangalore are the prominent institutions publishing papers in *Scopus* in the domain of rural women entrepreneurship. McElwee published maximum papers but Attanasio (2015) is cited maximum times followed by Shabbir (1996). Particularly, in India, the keywords map shows that maximum work has been done in keywords like entrepreneur, women entrepreneurs, empowerment, employment, rural area and very less work has been done in integrating sustainability, self-employment, rural entrepreneurship, training, rural development, poverty, gender issue, social status and human side of women entrepreneurship. The focus of the top publications is on analysis of factors influencing entrepreneurship, case analysis of impact of a specific project, impact of training programmes and business support programmes, micro-credit and gender issues. Literature has established positive impact of micro-credit programmes, entrepreneurship training and business support programmes and specific projects to foster entrepreneurship on rural women entrepreneurship, but on the other hand it is also concluded that the benefit of such programmes are not reaching to the poor. Furthermore, females stand to disadvantageous positions as compared to male participants. Sense of achievement, independence, confidence and family support are the factors influencing entrepreneurship amongst rural women positively but cultural and social factors restrain these women from starting their own ventures. On the basis of foregoing analysis, it is recommended that areas like micro-credit, micro-entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial education can be explored further in context of India in order to add value to the existing literature.

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