

## **ABSTRACT**

The agriculture sector supports the majority of livelihoods in Kisii County. However, the community is largely patriarchal which thus brings about conflicts on land use, ownership, and labor provisions. Women and widows are thus largely affected by these patterns of ownership which eventually affect their farming practices. Despite its vital importance, the sector is highly susceptible and sensitive to climate change and variability were small scale farmers more so the widows are disproportionately affected since their access to land, labor and credit are highly inhibited. Studies on widows in the agricultural sector have been inadequate and hence the need for this study. The aim of the study was to assess the effects of land, labour, and credit facilities on widows participating in small scale farming. The study was carried out in Nyaribari Masaba Sub- County, Kisii County. The area was selected because of data from the government agencies showed that there was a high number of widows practicing small scale farming. The study was grounded on Structural Functionalism and the Symbolic Interactionism theories. The study employed a mixed methods research design. The study population was 1749 widows who were practicing small scale farming. A sample size of 144 respondents was obtained using a proportionate stratified sampling procedure. Data was collected using key- informant interview schedules and semi-structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the study were represented using narratives, text boxes, bar graphs, and frequency tables. From the study findings, majority of the participants agreed that their access to land was under threat. Further, the study found out that labour was available as it was provided mainly by household members and if they had to hire labour services, they were cheap and adequate. From the study findings, most of the participants agreed that there are significant numbers of micro-finance institutions that offered soft loans and credit for farming. The study therefore concluded that land access, labour access, and access to credit among widows was influenced by other factors such as access to collateral, education levels, culture, and government land policies. This study recommends that it is important to have land title policies that include the marginalized groups in society such as the widows to ensure their security in land ownership. Thus, this will, in turn, affect their access to labour and credit

### **Keywords**

Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Widows' Participation in Small Scale Farming, Nyaribari Masaba Sub- County, Kisii County, Kenya

