

# **The Impact of Non-Governmental Organizations in Enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

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**ABSTRACT:** Sierra Leone, including the Eastern Region, remains unable to fully feed itself and relies heavily on imported food. Chronic food shortages and weak agricultural development continue to drive poverty, despite various government efforts. As the country seeks to accelerate agricultural growth, it depends on support from friendly nations, NGOs, and international agencies. After the rebel war, many NGOs became active in the country, prompting a study to assess their impact on food security in the Eastern Region.

The research was descriptive and targeted 120 full-time food crop farmers working with NGOs. Using simple random sampling, one chiefdom per district and two towns per chiefdom were selected, resulting in 93 participating farmers. Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed quantitatively using frequencies and percentages.

Findings show that most farmers believed NGO support had a generally positive impact on food security. However, they also faced challenges such as poor road networks and delays in receiving farming inputs. The study recommends that government and donor agencies strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure NGOs improve their implementation strategies and contribute more effectively to achieving food security in the region.

**KEY WORDS:** NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization) , Support Programmes, Impact, Food Security, Agricultural Development.

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## **I. Introduction**

The republic of Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa. It is bounded on the north-east by the republic of Guinea, on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The country is divided into five (5) administrative regions, namely, the northern, north-west, eastern, southern provinces and the western area, a part of which is occupied by the capital city, Freetown.

The Eastern province which is the region under study covers an area of 15,723km<sup>2</sup> of the total area of the country with a population of 1,939,122 people, according to the mid-term census report of the central statistics Sierra Leone [CSO, 2021]

It is endowed with natural resources such as diamonds and a rich fertile soil. That is why many people consider the region as the backbone of Sierra Leone economy. The main occupation of majority of the people is farming, trading and mining are in minority. They grow mainly tree crops like coffee and cacao alongside some food

crops like rice, cassava coco yam etc. The bulk of the cocoa and coffee exported from this country are from this region.

The onslaught of the rebel war, which lasted for ten years caused drastic setback for agricultural activities. Most of the tree crops were abandoned which were consequently affected by forest, pest and disease, leading to deterioration and permanent damage of the plants. The end of the war marked the beginning of fresh start of rehabilitation of the plantation, by brushing, pruning and replacing dead crops, and control of pests and disease. Sierra Leone including the eastern region due to the post war challenges cannot feed herself fully and she is highly dependent on imported food. A fundamental aspect of poverty in Sierra Leone is the chronic food deficiency. This for most households results from lack of access to food due to both low domestic production level and abysmally low income.

Improving household food security is an issue of supreme importance, to a very large number of Sierra Leonean populace who are suffering from persistent hunger and under nutrition to other who are at risk of doing so in the future. Food security is a widely debated and confused issue. Achieving a sufficient food supply is a necessary condition for food security and making it sustainable, which is keeping pace with growing food needs, remains a national challenge. Promotion of agricultural growth and food crop yield in particular needs to remain high on the policy agenda. The problems of poor agricultural development in the country appear very conspicuous. Food security is still not feasible in spite of all good attributes and government efforts. The country is still over dependent on food importation.

In the country's effort to speed up the development processes particularly in agriculture, she looks forward for assistance from friendly countries, national and international NGO's and other Agencies. There has been a wide range of NGOs and other agencies operating in the country after the end of the rebel war. The senseless ten year rebel war created the situation for the proliferation of NGOs nationwide. Many of these NGOs have carried out development, working as direct implementing Agencies like CARE, CRS, World Vision, IRS, ACR and AASL are noted as some of the NGOs working to support Agricultural development in Sierra Leone. There is therefore a desire to investigate their impact in enhancing national food security.

USAID (1992) described food security as "a situation where all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive life". FAO (1998), described food security in terms of development and humanitarian aid as a situation in which the people have continuity of food supply or methods by which the aim is achieved. FAO committee on world food security (1998) defines food security as all "people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food they need"

These definitions incorporate the fundamental variables of food security, availability, accessibility and food utilization / consumption; these being the fundamental factors to enhance food security. They consequently represent the variables of intervention by NGO's and donor agencies.

The intervention of NGOs to enhance sufficient quantity of appropriate, necessary types of food from domestic production that is consistently available to the individuals, or are within reasonable proximity to them, or are within their reach is one important aspect of the study. Agricultural programmes within their government frame work are put into operation by NGO's to alleviate farmers constraints to food availability.

These programs include, provision of machines and modern agricultural tools to increase farming acreage. Farming input such as planting materials, fertilizers and insecticides with specific objectives of increasing food productivity. Extension services and training are provided to broaden the technical knowledge and pass on vital information to farmers on food production. Microcredit loans were made available to uplift the financial status of farmers, by engaging other agricultural business enterprises. The maintenance of roads to facilitate transportation; attract business partners, building, maintenance and creating new market centers for competition of agricultural produce. Storage and other facilities to reduce on post-harvest losses are also implemented by NGOs. These strategic programs for farmers to enhance national food security are implemented in the entire district of the Eastern province, the youths and adult farmers being the focus or targeted beneficiaries of these programs.

The fundamental issue however is that investigation on the impact of NGOs operations in enhancing national food security has still not being fully achieved. This means that there is still no comprehensive data available to

provide accurate information on the impact of their operation on farmers as a way of accessing the level to which national food security have been achieved or is to be achieved. The need for this study therefore, emanates from the concern over the many programs NGOs have provided to farmers to enhance food security in this region.

### **1.1 Brief history of NGOs in general**

Non-governmental organization came into being by the end of world war II (1949) and referred to a wide range of organization with common feature being outside government functions without maximizing profit. Before the 20th century, many of them had come into existence and played important roles in providing social and humanitarian relief in times of wars, national disasters or epidemic (Richard Konteh 2000:86).

In Africa and southern Asia, the independence struggles became a catalyst for the role of NGO's with support from private voluntary organization in developed countries, a few governments' bilateral aid programmes. By then however, indigenous and national NGO's were still weak in Africa, because they lacked the financial, institution and effective co-ordination capacities. Were greater diversity existed among them in Asia. In Latin America, their history was long and varied (Kissmin, 1992) (UNDP1995).

After the world war I, NGO's such as the catholic church based CARITAS and SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND gained strength toward the end of the world war one and immediately after world war two. Hence Oxfam commenced in 1942, Catholic Relief services (CRS) in 1945). These NGO's were initially engaged in relief work, especially in war – torn Europe. Later, they shifted their attention to the third world and widened their activities to include welfare activities. During the 1950s the number of Northern NGO's multiplied and their focus moves towards development activities (John Clark 1991: 34).

### **1.2 Origin and growth of NGOs in Sierra Leone**

In sierra Leone, NGO's activities started in the 1960s with religious bodies taking the lead in stimulating development at community level. In the 1970s, there was an increased awareness of the vital role of NGO's which continued to attract local and public donation as well as international donor funding for implementing certain activities in the country.

There was a steady increase in the number of NGO's establishing in sierra Leone with funding agencies shifting their aid strategies to channel funds or resources directly to beneficiaries through their grass root organization in the 1980s. Following the outbreak of the civil war in Liberia in the 1990's there was a big influx of Liberian refugees into Sierra Leone. In the same year following the outbreak of our own bloody and ruthless rebel war, there was a large movement of internally displaced Sierra Leoneans and other nationals. These scenarios resulted in the proliferation and mushrooming of NGO's in the country. All these NGO's have undertaken relief and development activities. Many of them have carried out development project geared towards agricultural sector support programmes (ASSP) in many parts of the country (before the onset of the war). In this connection some exist as implementing partners to national NGO's or grassroots organizations, while other exist as direct implementing agencies.

Although the Government of Sierra Leone recognizes the essential role of NGO's in promoting national development. It is however not oblivious of the fact that certain legal frame – work to regulate and register their activities must be put in place to ensure credibility, transparency, trust and confidence. In this connection, the government of Sierra Leone has to set up units within the various ministries to deal with the issue of coordination. Other coordinating institutions are; Central Aid Co-coordinating Bureau (CACB), the community Aid secretariat (CAS), and Humanitarian Aid Co-coordinating Unit (HACU). Some line ministries including agriculture, health, social welfare, trade, education and national commission for rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement (NCRRR) (Richard Konteh, 2000:86).

Numerous NGO's operates in Sierra Leone, like C.A.R.E, C.R.S, World Vision, I.R.C, A.C.F and A.A.S.L whose activities in the area of food security are being investigated to determine their impact in enhancing food security in the Eastern region.

### **1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of non-governmental organization in enhancing national food security in the eastern region of Sierra Leone.

The objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To determine the level of impact of NGOs in enhancing national food security in eastern province of Sierra Leone.
2. To determine the level of awareness about the support programs used by NGOs to enhance national food security in the eastern province of Sierra Leone.
3. To determine the level of successes made by NGOs in enhancing national food security in eastern province of Sierra Leone.
4. To identify major challenges faced by NGOs in enhancing national food security.
5. To identify possible solutions to these challenges.

## **II. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1 Research design**

The researcher employed a primary quantitative research design, emphasizing the collection of original, first-hand data directly from the source to address specific research objectives. This methodological choice allowed for the generation of empirical data that enhanced the scope of the study by capturing measurable insights across multiple dimensions of NGO operations. The data collection process focused on assessing variables such as the extent of NGO impact, the communication and information dissemination methods utilized, the types of support programs provided, their levels of success, as well as the challenges faced and potential strategic solutions. Data were collected through structured, closed-ended questionnaires, ensuring consistency and reliability in responses. Subsequently, the collected data were subjected to statistical and descriptive analysis to derive meaningful interpretations and identify patterns among the variables under investigation.

### **2.2 Area of study**

The study area is the eastern region of Sierra Leone, which shares common borders on the south-east of Sierra Leone with Liberia along the Mano River, on the north-east with Guinea and inland by northern and southern provinces.

For administrative reason by colonial masters, the Eastern Region was divided in to three districts, which include Kenema, Kono and Kailahun. Each district is subdivided into chiefdoms. We have a total of forty-four (44) chiefdoms in the region with its regional head quarter in Kenema Town.

According to central statistics Sierra Leone Housing and mid-term population census (2021), the population for the Eastern

Region is one million one hundred and ninety one thousand, nine hundred and thirty-nine (1,939,122).

The historical importance of this region under study is undoubtedly associated among others, its contribution to the economy and education of the country. The country's economy wholly depend on the export earning received from diamonds, palm kernels, cocoa and coffee, which are got from the eastern region of Sierra Leone. The export of diamonds contributed to about 60 % to the total value of domestic export in 1980, but drastically declined as a result of the rebel war.

### **2.3 Population**

The population of the study focused on one hundred and twenty (120) fulltime food crop farmers working with NGOs in various towns in the Eastern - Region of Sierra Leone. Most of these farmers are illiterates, hence does not necessarily follow the modern methods of farming. This coupled with poverty had not allowed them to expand their farming activities, which has paved way for food insecurity regionally. Some towns in the districts are densely populated because most of the villages and hamlets were destroyed during the then rebel war. So the occupants of these villages and hamlets have concentrated in nearby towns. The said target populations which

are one hundred twenty (120) fulltime food crop farmers who are working with NGOs were selected in all the three districts in the Eastern Region.

#### **2.4 Sample of the study**

The study initially identified a total of 120 potential food crop farmers as the target population. From this group, a representative sample of 93 farmers was purposively selected. The selection process encompassed all three districts within the study area, ensuring inclusion from various chiefdoms and towns. This systematic and inclusive approach was designed to ensure that the 93 selected respondents accurately represented the broader population of food crop farmers collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region.

#### **Sampling procedure**

A simple random sampling method was used in the study. The selection of the chiefdom for data collection in each district of the eastern region was done by writing the names of the chiefdoms on small pieces of paper and folded evenly. The folded papers were put into a black polythene bag and thoroughly mixed. Chiefdom among others in each district was dipped for and checked. Hence Kissy -Tongi, Small Bo, and Tankoro chiefdoms were selected from Kailahun, Kenema and Kono districts respectively as a samples of the study. The same randomization in the selection of towns in each chiefdom was carried out accounting for the three chiefdoms and six towns in the region. The fact that the research is focused on soliciting information from respondents in towns with more than ten houses, but less than forty, fifteen fulltime food crop farmers in a township within each district were selected randomly in order to estimate the population of the fulltime food crop farmers working with NGOs.

#### **2.5 Instrumentation**

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data in alignment with the specific objectives of the study. Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was pre-tested with ten farmers in Freetown to assess its validity and reliability. The pre-test exercise facilitated the identification and correction of ambiguities, inconsistencies, and potential sources of bias in the questionnaire. Necessary adjustments were made to enhance clarity and ensure that all items effectively captured the intended information. This process strengthened the instrument's consistency, improved respondents' understanding, and ensured the reliability and quality of the data collected.

#### **2.6 Data collection**

In the investigation, data were collected by using questionnaires. These questionnaires were administered to literate fulltime food crop farmers working with NGOs who completed and returned them to the researcher. Illiterate farmers however were interviewed, questions based on the set of instrument at their dwelling places in the mornings and evenings. The data was collected within the months of February and March when the fulltime food crop farmers were preparing their land for planting.

#### **2.7 Data analysis**

The data collected through structured questionnaires were systematically analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques. Responses obtained from the closed-ended questions were coded, tabulated, and processed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. These statistical tools provided a clear and concise summary of respondents' views across key research variables, including the impact of NGOs, methods of information dissemination, support programs, levels of success, and challenges encountered. The use of quantitative analysis facilitated objective interpretation and comparison of responses, enabling the researcher to identify patterns, relationships, and trends within the data. Results were presented in the form of tables for ease of understanding and interpretation. This approach ensured that the findings were both reliable and empirically grounded, providing a solid foundation for drawing valid conclusions and recommendations.

### III. Results and Discussion

**Table 1A: Impact of NGOs Operations on National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

Impact of NGOs' Operations on National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone							
NGO's Impact		Positive Impact		Negative Impact		No Impact	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Provision of agricultural machines & implement	37	39.8	13	14.0	43	46.2
2	Promoting Increase in Farm Size	61	65.6	10	10.8	22	23.6
3	Introduction of New Farming Technology	49	52.7	7	7.5	37	39.8
4	Provision of Improved Planting Materials	88	94.6	4	4.3	0	0
5	Increase in Production Level	64	68.8	4	4.3	25	26.9
6	Provision of Facilities for Preserving Agricultural Products	52	55.9	13	14.0	25	26.9
7	Supply of Modern Farm Tools & Equipment	37	39.8	13	14.0	28	30.1
8	Increase in Income Level of Farmers	52	55.9	16	17.2	25	26.9
9	Provision of Chemical Fertilizers by NGOs	19	20.4	16	17.2	58	62.4
10	Provision of Improved Storage Facility	61	65.6	13	14.0	19	20.4
11	Provision of Chemicals for Pest and Disease Control	22	23.7	13	13.9	58	62.4
12	Provision of Loan Facilities to Farmers	70	75.3	16	17.2	7	7.5
13	Improving road network in farming areas	64	68.8	13	14.0	16	17.2
14	Provision of Supportive Training to Farmers	64	68.8	19	20.5	10	10.7

#### Impact of NGOs' operations on national food security in Sierra Leone

Table 1A shows the descriptive analyzed data, which represents the frequencies and percentages of farmers on the impact of NGOs operation in enhancing food security in the Eastern region of Sierra Leone.

##### 1. Provision of agricultural machines & implement

The data shows that 39.8% of farmers indicated that NGO operations had a positive impact, 14.0% observed a negative impact, while a significant 46.2% reported no impact regarding the provision of agricultural machines and implements.

##### 2. Promoting Increase in Farm Size

About 65.6% of farmers acknowledged a positive impact of NGO operations on expanding farm size, 10.8% saw a negative impact, and 23.6% perceived no impact.

##### 3. Introduction of New Farming Technology

Here, 52.7% of farmers reported a positive impact, 7.5% a negative impact, and 39.8% no impact on introduction of new farming techniques.

##### 4. Provision of Improved Planting Materials

A substantial 94.6% of farmers confirmed a positive impact, 4.3% a negative impact in term of provision of improved planting materials.

##### 5. Increase in Production Level

Results show 68.8% positive impact, 4.3% negative impact, and 26.9% no impact in terms of increase in production level.

##### 6. Provision of Facilities for Preserving Agricultural Products

About 55.9% of farmers perceived a positive impact, 14.0% a negative impact, and 26.9% no impact in the issue of provision of facilities of preserving agricultural products.

##### 7. Supply of Modern Farm Tools & Equipment

The data reveals 39.8% positive impact, 14.0% negative impact, and 30.1% no impact for the supply of modern farm tools and equipment.

##### 8. Increase in Income Level of Farmers



Here, 55.9% of farmers reported a positive impact, 17.2% a negative impact, and 26.9% no impact in the case of increase income level of farmers.

#### **9. Provision of Chemical Fertilizers by NGOs**

According to the table, 20.4% of Farmers indicated a positive impact, 17.2% a negative impact, and 62.4% no impact in the areas of provision of chemical fertilizers by NGOs.

#### **10. Provision of Improved Storage Facility**

The majority 65.6% farmers confirmed a positive impact, 14.9% a negative impact, and 20.4% no impact in provision of improved storage facilities.

#### **11. Provision of Chemicals for Pest and Disease Control**

A total of 23.7% of farmers indicated a positive impact, 13.9% a negative impact, and a majority 62.4% indicated no impact in terms of provision of chemicals for pests and diseases.

#### **12. Provision of Loan Facilities to Farmers**

This indicator shows 75.3% positive impact, 17.2% negative impact, and 7.5% no impact in term of provision of loan facilities to farmers.

#### **13. In the improvement of road network in farming areas**

The data indicates 68.8% positive impact, 14.0% negative impact, and 17.2% no impact in the improvement of road network in farming areas.

#### **14. Provision of Supportive Training to Farmers**

Finally, 68.8% of farmers reported a positive impact, 20.5% a negative impact, and 10.7% no impact in provision of supportive training to the farmers

**Table 1B: Impact Levels of NGOs Operations on National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

Table 1B presents the frequencies and percentages of farmers on the level of impact of NGOs' operations in enhancing food security in the eastern region:

<b>Impact Levels of NGOs' Operations on National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone</b>							
NGO's Impact		Impact Level on Farmers					
		High Impact		Moderate Impact		Little Impact	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Provision of agricultural machines & implement	18	19.4	20	21.5	55	59.1
2	Promoting Increase in Farm Size	19	20.4	7	7.5	68	73.1
3	Introduction of New Farming Technology	23	24.7	21	22.6	49	52.7
4	Provision of Improved Planting Materials	26	28.0	47	50.5	20	21.5
5	Increase in Production Level	26	28.0	13	14.0	54	58.0
6	Provision of Facilities for Preserving Agricultural Products	25	26.9	42	45.2	26	27.9
7	Supply of Modern Farm Tools & Equipment	17	18.3	28	30.1	48	51.6
8	Increase in Income Level of Farmers	13	13.9	13	13.9	67	72.0
9	Provision of Chemical Fertilizers by NGOs	13	13.9	40	43.0	40	43.0
10	Provision of Improved Storage Facility	28	30.1	34	36.6	31	33.3
11	Provision of Chemicals for Pest and Disease Control	26	27.9	9	9.7	58	62.4
12	Provision of Loan Facilities to Farmers	12	14.0	30	34.0	46	52.0
13	In the improvement of road network in farming areas	10	10.8	14	15.0	69	74.2
14	Provision of Supportive Training to Farmers	10	10.8	16	17.2	67	72.0

#### **Provision of agricultural machines & implement**

The data shows that 19.4% of the farmers indicated high impact, 21.5% moderate impact, while 59.1% observed little impact in the provision of agricultural machines and implements

#### **1. Promoting the Increase in Farm Size**

Here, 20.4% of farmers indicated High impact, 7.5% moderate impact, while a majority of 73.1% observe little impact in promoting increase in farm size.

## **2. Introduction of New Farming Technologies**

According to the table, 24.7% farmers indicated High impact, while 22.6% indicated moderate impact and 52.7% indicated little impact on introducing new farming technologies.

## **3. Provision of improved planting materials**

Here, 28.0% of farmers indicated High impact, and a majority of 50.5% indicated moderate impact, while 21.5% observed little impact in provision of improved planting materials.

## **4. Increase in production level**

The table shows, 28.0% of farmers indicated High impact, and 14.0% indicated moderate impact, while a majority of 58.0% indicated little impact in increasing the production levels of farmers.

## **5. Provision of facilities for preserving agriculture**

Here the table shows that, 26.9% of farmers indicating High impact, and a majority of 45.2% indicated moderate impact, while 27.9% showed little impact in provision of facilities for preserving agricultural produce.

## **6. Supply of Modern Farm Tools and Equipment**

The table shows that, 18.3% of farmers declared High impact and 30.1% indicated moderate impact, while a majority indicated little impact in the supply of modern farm tools and equipment.

## **7. Increase Income Level of the Farmer**

From the table, 13.9% of farmers declared High impact, and 13.9% also indicated moderate impact, while a majority of 72% indicated little impact on increasing the income level of the farmers.

## **8. Provision of chemical fertilizers by NGOs**

The table showed that, 13.9% of farmers indicated High impact, and a majority of 43% indicated moderate impact, while 43% declared little impact in providing chemical fertilizer by NGOs.

## **9. Provision of improved storage facilities**

Here, 30.1% of farmers indicated High impact, and 36.6% indicated moderate impact, while 33.3% indicated little impact on providing improved storage facilities.

## **10. Provision of Chemical for pest and diseases control**

The table shows, 27.9% of farmers indicated High impact, and 9.7% indicated moderate impact, while a majority of 62.4% indicated little impact in providing improved storage facilities.

## **11. Provision of Loan Facilities to farmers**

The table shows that, 14.0% of farmers indicated High impact, and 34.0% indicated moderate impact, while a majority of 52.0% declared little impact in providing loan facilities to farmers.

## **12. Improvement in the road network in the farming areas**

Here, 10.8% of the farmers indicated High impact, and 15% declared moderate impact, although a majority of 74.2% indicated little impact in improving the road network in the farming areas.

## **13. Provision of supportive training to the farmers**

The tables shows that, 10.8% of farmers indicated High impact, and 17.2% indicated moderate impact, although a majority of 72.0% declared

**Table 2A: Awareness Levels of Farmers for National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**



Awareness Levels of Farmers for National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone									
NGO's Impact		Level of Awareness							
		No Awareness		Little Awareness		Moderate Awareness		High Awareness	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Radio Broadcasting	7	7.5	10	10.8	7	7.5	69	74.2
2	Extension worker/ fields officer	13	14.0	31	33.3	39	41.9	10	10.8
3	Community meeting geared towards promoting sensitization	4	4.3	31	33.3	39	42.0	19	20.4
4	Workshop organize by farmers to articulate their felt needs.	13	13.9	34	36.6	42	45.2	4	4.3
5	Newspaper publications	42	45.2	30	32.3	15	16.1	6	6.4

#### Awareness of support programme used by NGOs to enhance national food security

Table 2A presents a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentage of farmer's views on the level of awareness of NGOs support programmes used in enhancing food security in the eastern region:

##### 1. Radio Broadcasting

The table shows that, 7.5% of farmers indicated No Awareness, 10.8% indicated Little Awareness, and 7.5% indicated Moderate Awareness, while a majority of 74.2% indicated High Awareness in educating farmer through radio broadcasting programs.

##### 2. Extension workers/ field officers sharing information

The table shows that, 14.0% of farmer indicated No Awareness, 33.3% indicated Little Awareness, and a majority of 41.9% indicated Moderate Awareness, while 10.8% indicated High Awareness in Extension workers or field workers sharing information to farmers.

##### 3. Community meetings geared towards promoting sensitization

Here, 4.3% of farmers indicated No Awareness, 33.3% indicated Little Awareness, and majority of 42.0% indicated Moderate Awareness, while 20.4% indicated High Awareness in community sensitization.

##### 4. Workshop organized by farmers to articulate their felt needs

The table shows that, 13.9% of farmers indicated No Awareness, 36.6% indicated Little Awareness, and a majority of 45.2% indicated Moderate Awareness, while 4.3% indicated Huge Awareness in organizing workshop for farmers.

##### 5. News Paper Publications

The table shows that, a majority of 45.2% of farmers indicated No Awareness, 32.3% indicated Little Awareness, and 16.1% indicated Moderate Awareness, while 6.4% indicated Huge Awareness in publication of newspaper.

**Table 2B: Availability of Support Programmes Provided by NGOs to Farmers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

Availability of farmers support programs provided by NGOs to farmers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone					
Support Programs		Availability of Programs			
		Available		Not Available	
		F	%	F	%
1	Provision of food for work	8	8.6	85	91.4
2	Distribution of planting material	66	71.0	27	29.0
3	Extension worker working with farmer	55	59.1	38	40.9
4	Supply of pesticides and insecticides	6	6.5	87	93.5
5	Provision of micro credit loans	68	73.1	25	26.9
6	Distribution of modern farm tools	12	12.9	81	87.1
7	Maintenance of modern farm tools equipment / machinery	16	17.2	77	82.8
8	Provision of chemical fertilizers	66	71.0	27	29.0
9	Provision of livestock for production enterprise	23	24.7	70	75.3
10	Provision of training on new agricultural skills	62	66.7	31	33.3

Table 2B presents a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentage of farmer's view on the availability of the support programme provided by NGOs in enhancing food security in the eastern region:

#### 1. Provision of Food for Work

The table shows that, 8.6% of farmers indicated food for work is available, and a majority of 91.4% indicated food for work is not available.

#### 2. Distribution of Modern Farm Tools

The table shows that, a majority of 71.0% of farmers indicated that distribution of planting materials were available, while 29.0% indicated that they were not available.

#### 3. Extension Workers working with Farmers

Here, a majority of 59.1% indicated that extension workers make themselves available to farmers and while 40.9% indicated that extension workers are not available to farmers.

#### 4. Supply of Pesticides and Insecticides

The table shows that, 6.5% of farmers indicated that pesticides and insecticides were made available to them, while a majority of 93.5% indicated that that pesticides and insecticides were not made available to them.

#### 5. Provision of micro credit loans

The table shows that, a majority of 73.1% of farmers indicated that financial loans were made available, while 26.9% indicated that financial loan were not made available to them

#### 6. Distribution of Modern Farm Tools

Here, 12.9% of farmers indicated that Farm tool were made available to them, while a majority of 87.1% indicated farm tools were not made available to them.

#### 7. Maintenance of modern farm tools equipment /machinery

The table shows that, 17.2% of farmers indicated that maintenance of farm tool and equipment were made available, while a majority of 82.8% indicated that maintenance of farm tools and machinery were not made available for them.

#### 8. Provision of Fertilizers

The tables shows that, majority of 71.0% of farmers indicated that, fertilizers were made available for them, while 29.0% indicated that fertilizers were not made available for them.

#### 9. Provision of Livestock for production enterprise

The table shows that, 24.7% of farmers indicated livestock were made available for animal production, while majority of 75.3% indicated livestock were not made available to them.

#### 10. Provision of training on new agricultural skills

The table shows that, majority of 66.7% of farmers indicated that agriculture skills training were made available to them, while 33.3% indicated that agriculture skills training was not made available for them.

**Table 2C: Adequacy of Farmer's Support Programmes Provided by NGOs to Farmers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

Adequacy of Farmer Support Programmes Provided by NGOs to Farmers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone					
Support Programs		Adequacy of Programs			
		Adequate		Inadequate	
		F	%	F	%
1	Provision of food for work	0	0.0	93	100
2	Distribution of planting material	0	0.0	93	100
3	Extension worker working with farmer	0	0.0	93	100
4	Supply of pesticides and insecticides	0	0.0	93	100
5	Provision of micro credit loans	0	0.0	93	100
6	Distribution of modern farm tools	0	0.0	93	100
7	Maintenance of modern farm tools equipment / machinery	0	0.0	93	100
8	Provision of chemical fertilizers	0	0.0	93	100
9	Provision of livestock for production enterprise	0	0.0	93	100
10	Provision of training on new agricultural skills	0	0.0	93	100

Table 2C presents a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentage of farmer's view on the adequacy of the support programmes that were provided by NGOs in their regions. According to the data, all the respondents (farmers) which represents 100% of the sample population indicated that all the programmes that were provided by the NGOs were not - adequate. Never the less they accepted the availability of these programmes but they strongly indicated that they were not adequate to enhancing food security in their region.

**Table 2D: Suitability of the Programmes Provided by NGOs to Farmers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

Suitability of the Programmes Provided by NGOs to Farmers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone					
Support Programs		Suitability			
		Suitable		Not Suitable	
		F	%	F	%
1	Provision of food for work	0	0.0	93	100.0
2	Distribution of planting material	38	44.2	48	55.8
3	Extension worker working with farmer	45	48.4	48	51.6
4	Supply of pesticides and insecticides	48	51.6	45	48.4
5	Provision of micro credit loans	48	51.6	45	48.4
6	Distribution of modern farm tools	61	65.6	32	34.4
7	Maintenance of modern farm tools equipment / machinery	61	65.6	32	34.4
8	Provision of chemical fertilizers	48	51.6	45	48.4
9	Provision of livestock for production enterprise	48	51.6	45	48.4
10	Provision of training on new agricultural skills	52	55.9	41	44.1

Table 2D presents a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentage of farmer's view on the suitability of the support programmes provided by NGOs in enhancing national food security in the eastern region:

**1. Provision of food for work**

The table shows that, 100% of farmers indicated that provision of food was not suitable.

**2. Distribution of Planting Materials**

The table shows that, 44.2% of farmers indicated that distribution of planting materials was suitable, while 55.8% indicated that distribution of planting materials was not suitable.

**3. Extension workers working with farmers**

48.4% of farmers indicated that it is suitable working with extension workers, while majority of 51.6% indicated that working with extension workers is not suitable.

**4. Supply for pesticides and insecticides**

Majority of 51.6% of farmers indicated that the supply of pesticides and insecticides were suitable, while 48.4% indicated that the supply of pesticides and insecticides were not suitable.

#### 5. Provision of Micro credit loan

The table shows that, 51.6% of farmers indicated that financial credit given to them was suitable, while 48.4% indicated that financial credit was not suitable.

#### 6. Distribution of modern farm tools

65.6% of farmer indicated that the distribution of modern farm tools was suitable, while 34.4% indicated that the distribution was not suitable

#### 7. Maintenance of modern farm tools /Machines

65.6% of farmers indicated that training on maintenance of farm tools and machines was suitable, while 34.4% indicated that maintenance training was not suitable.

#### 8. Provision of chemical fertilizers

51.6% of farmers indicated that fertilizers provided to them was suitable, while 48.4% indicated fertilizers provided was not suitable.

#### 9. Provision of livestock for production enterprise

51.6% of farmers indicated that livestock provided was suitable, while 48.4% indicated that livestock provided was not suitable.

#### 10. Provision of Training on new agricultural skills

55.9% of the farmers indicated that provision of training on new agricultural skills to farmers was suitable while 44.1% indicated not suitable.

**Table 3: NGOs Success Levels in Enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

NGOs Success Levels in Enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone							
Success of NGOs Operations		High Success		Little Success		No Success	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Adoption of new farming techniques	7	7.5	46	49.5	40	43.0
2	Increase in the financial status of farmers	13	14.0	49	52.7	31	33.3
3	Use of improved planting materials for farmers	25	26.9	64	68.8	4	4.3
4	Increase in food production	7	7.5	54	58.1	32	34.4
5	Use of Agriculture machines	4	4.3	46	49.5	43	46.2
6	Adoption of new skills in pest and disease	7	7.5	10	10.7	76	81.7
7	Active enhancement of the involvement of women in farming activities	7	7.5	79	84.9	7	7.5
8	Active enhancement of the involvement of youths in farming activities	13	14.0	64	68.8	16	17.2
9	Extension services available to the farmers	4	4.3	76	81.7	13	13.9
10	The nutritional status of the family improved	4	4.3	55	59.1	34	36.6
11	Loan/micro-credit scheme to farmer maintenance	10	10.8	52	55.9	31	33.3
12	Market excess produce	7	7.5	58	62.3	28	30.1
13	Availability of agricultural tools	7	7.5	64	68.8	22	23.7
14	Improved storage facility for farmers available	19	20.4	58	62.4	16	17.2

#### Success made by NGOs in enhancing national food security Sierra Leone

Table 3 presents a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentages of farmer's view on the level of success made by NGOs in enhancing food security in the eastern region:

##### 1. Adoption of new Farming techniques

Out of the 93 farmers interviewed, 7.5% indicated that there was High success, 49.5% indicated little of success, while 43.0% indicated no success at all in terms of adoption of new farming techniques.

##### 2. Increase the Financial status of farmers

14.0% of the farmers indicated high success 52.7% of them indicated little impact while 33.3% indicated no success in improving the financial status of farmers.

**3. Use of improved planting materials for farmers**

From the 93 farmers, 26.9% of the farmers indicated high success, majority of 68.8% indicated little success while 4.3% indicated no success in planting materials provided.

**4. Increase in food production**

The table shows that, 7.5 % of the farmers indicated high success, 58.1% indicated little success while 34.4% indicated no success in helping farmers increase food production.

**5. Use of Agriculture machines**

From the table, 4.3% of the farmers indicated high success, 49.4% indicated little success while 46.2% indicated no success in use of agricultural machines.

**6. Adoption of new skills in pest and disease control**

Out of the 93 farmers, 7.5% of the farmers declared high success, 10.7% declared little success while a majority of 81.7% declared no success in adopting new skills on pest and disease control

**7. Active enhancement of the involvement of women in farming activities**

From the table, 7.5% of the farmers indicated high success, 84.9% indicated little success, while 7.5% indicated no success in involving women in farming activities.

**8. Active enhancement of the involvement of youth in farming activities**

14.0% of farmers indicated high success, a majority of 68.8% indicated little success while, 17.2% indicated no success in involving youth in farming activities

**9. Extension services available to the farmers**

4.3 % of farmers indicated high success, a majority 81.7% indicated little success, while 13.9% indicated no success in extension service available to the farmers

**10. The Nutritional status of the family improved**

The table shows that, 4.3% of farmers indicated high success, a majority of 59.1% indicated little success, while 36.6% indicated no success in improving the nutritional status of the family.

**11. Loan/micro- credit scheme to farmer maintenance**

10.8% of the farmers indicated high success, 55.9% of them indicated little success while 33.3% of indicated no success in NGOs creating credit scheme for farmers.

**12. Market excess produce**

7.5% of the farmers pointed high success, 62.3 % of indicated little success while 30.1% indicated no success in making excess produce for market.

**13. Available of agricultural tools**

From the table, 7.5% of farmers indicated high success, 68.8% of them indicated little success while 23.7% of them indicated no success in NGOs making agricultural tools available.

**14. Improved storage facilities for farmers available**

The table shows that, 20.4% of the farmers indicated high success, 62.4% indicated little success while 17.2% indicated no success in providing storage facilities for farmers.

**Table 4: Problems faced by NGOs in enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

<b>Problems faced by NGOs in enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone</b>									
Problems faced by both NGOs and Farmers		High Difficulty		Moderate Difficulty		Low Difficulty		No Difficulty	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Farmers resistance to change	64	68.8	12	12.9	13	14.0	4	4.3
2	Poor road condition	25	26.8	58	62.4	10	10.8	0	0.0
3	Poor loan recovery	58	63.0	34	37.0	0	0	0	0
4	Improper assessment done by NGOs to determine farmers felt needs	43	46.2	27	29.0	16	17.2	7	7.5
5	Diversions of equipment / materials meant for farmers	55	59.1	34	36.6	4	4.3	0	0.0
6	High level of illiteracy	67	72.0	19	20.4	7	7.5	0	0
7	Poor market facilities	66	71.0	19	20.4	8	8.6	0	0.0
8	Inadequate information provided by NGOs to farmers	16	17.2	64	68.8	10	10.8	3	3.2
9	Inadequate supply of appropriate farm tools to farmers	37	39.8	43	46.2	13	14.0	0	0
10	Untimely distribution of farm input	52	55.9	31	33.3	10	10.8	0	0
11	Lack of fertilizers farming	70	75.3	19	20.4	4	4.3	0	0
12	High level of pest infestation	70	75.3	19	20.4	4	4.3	0	0
13	Untimely disbursement of micro credit loans	49	52.7	34	36.6	10	10.8	0	0

#### **Problems faced by NGOs in enhancing national food security**

Table 4 present a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentage of farmers view on the difficulty of the major problems faced by NGOs and themselves in enhancing food security in the eastern region of Sierra Leone:

##### **1. Farmers resistance to change**

The table reveals that 68.8% of indicated high difficulty, 12.9% indicated moderate difficulty, 14% indicated low difficulty, while 4.3% indicated no difficulty in accessing farmers resistance to change.

##### **2. Poor Road Condition**

From the table, 26.8% of farmers indicated high difficulty, majority of 62.4% indicated moderate difficulty, while 10.8% indicated how difficulty due to the poor road conditions.

##### **3. Poor loan recovery**

The table shows that, 63.0% of farmers indicated high difficulty, while 37.0% of indicated moderate difficulty in recovering loans from the farmers.

##### **4. Improper assessment done by NGOs to determine farmers felt needs**

From the table, 46.2% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 29.0% of indicated moderate difficulty 17.2% indicated low difficulty while 7.5% indicated no difficulty in determining the improper assessment of farmer felt needs.

##### **5. Diversions of equipment's / materials meant for farmers**

From the table, 59.1% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 36.6% indicated moderate difficulty, and 4.3% indicated low difficulty in determining the challenges faced when material and equipment are diverted.

##### **6. High level of illiteracy of farmers**

72.0% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 20.4% indicated moderate difficulty, while 7.5% indicated low difficulty accessing the illiteracy level of the farmers.

##### **7. Poor Market facility**

From the table, 71.0% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 20.4% indicated moderate difficulty and 8.6% indicated low difficulty in infrastructural development.

##### **8. Inadequate information provided by NGOs to farmers**

The shows that, 17.2% of farmers indicated high difficulty, a majority of 68.8% indicated moderate difficulty, 10.8% indicated low difficulty, while 3.2% indicated no difficulty in providing inadequate information to farmers.

##### **9. Inadequate supply of appropriate farm tools to farmers**



From the table, 39.8% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 46.2% indicated moderate difficulty, and 14.0% of the indicated low difficulty in supplying appropriate farm tools

#### 10. Untimely distribution of farm input

59.9% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 33.3% indicated moderate difficulty, and 10.8% indicated low difficulty in distributing farm input to farmers.

#### 11. Lack of fertilizers for farming

A majority of 75.3% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 20.4% indicated moderate difficulty and 4.3% indicated low difficulty in accessing fertilizer for farming.

#### 12. High Level of Pest Infestation

From the table, a majority of 75.3% of farmers indicated high difficulty, 20.4% indicated moderate difficulty and 4.3% indicated low difficulty in dealing with severe pest infestation.

#### 13. Untimely Disbursement of Micro Credit Loans

52.7% of them indicated high difficulty, 36.6% of them indicated moderate difficulty and 10.8% indicated low difficulty nobody mentioned any difficulty in the late payout of micro credit loans

**Table 5: Solutions to the Problems encountered in Enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone**

Solutions to the Problems encountered in Enhancing National Food Security in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone							
Solutions		High Success		Little Success		No Success	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Provide training to farmers on modern farming technologies	46	49.5	19	20.4	28	30.1
2	Improve on the road network	40	43.0	28	30.1	25	26.9
3	Effective monitoring and supervision of farmers to ensure loan recovery	40	43.0	22	23.7	31	33.3
4	Proper baseline security to determine farmers felt needs	34	36.6	31	33.3	28	30.1
5	Proper monitoring of filed staff on the distribution of materials to farmers	28	30.1	37	39.8	28	30.1
6	Organize adult education classes for farmers	37	39.8	28	30.1	28	30.1
7	Farmers produce should be introduce to bigger market centers	40	43.0	31	33.3	22	23.7
8	Increase access to funds by NGOs	49	52.7	22	23.7	22	23.6
9	Provision of adequate information on farmers	34	36.6	28	30.1	31	33.3
10	Ensure adequate supply of farm tools to farmers	28	30.1	37	39.8	28	30.1
11	Timely distribution of farm inputs	22	23.7	28	30.1	43	46.2
12	Provision of chemical fertilizers	34	36.6	28	30.1	31	33.3
13	Provision of pesticides	40	43.0	19	20.4	34	36.6
14	Timely disbursement of micro credit loan	28	30.1	22	23.7	43	46.2

#### Solutions to problems faced by NGO's in enhancing national food security

Table 5 presents a descriptive analyses, which represents the frequencies and percentages of farmer's views on the possible solutions to the problems encountered in enhancing food security in the eastern region:

##### 1. Provide Training to Farmers on Modern farming technologies.

From the table, a majority of 49.5% of farmers indicated Appropriate, 20.4% indicated more appropriate, while 30.1% indicated most appropriate possible solution to enhance national food security

##### 2. Improve on the road network

A majority of 43.0% of farmers indicated appropriate, 30.1% indicated more appropriate, while 26.9% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security

##### 3. Effective monitoring and supervision of farmers to ensure loan recovery

From the table, a majority 43.0% of farmers indicated appropriate, 23.7% indicated more appropriate and 33.3% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security

##### 4. Proper Baseline security to determine farmer's felt need

From the table, 36.6% of farmers indicated appropriate,

33.3% indicated more appropriate and 30.1% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**5. Proper monitoring of field staff on the distribution of material to farmers**

From the table, 30.1% of farmers indicated appropriate, 39.8% indicated more appropriate, while 30.1% of indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security

**6. Organize Adult Education Classes for farmers**

The table shows, 39.8% of farmers indicated appropriate, 30.1% indicated more appropriate while 30.5% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**7. Farmers produce should be covered to bigger market centers**

The table shows, 43.0% of farmers indicated appropriate, 33.3% indicated more appropriate, while 23.7% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**8. Increase Access to Funds by NGO's**

From the table, 52.7% of farmers indicated appropriate, 23.7% indicated more appropriate, while 23.7% indicated most appropriated possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**9. Provision of adequate Information on Farmers**

From the table, 36.6% of farmers indicated appropriate, 30.1% indicated appropriate, while 33.3% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**10. Ensure adequate Supply of farm tools to farmers**

From the table, 30.1% of farmers indicated appropriate, 39.8% indicated more appropriate, while 30.1% of farmers indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**11. Timely distribution of farm inputs**

The table shows that, 28.7% of farmers indicated appropriate, 30.1% indicated more appropriate, while 39.8% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**12. Provision of Chemical Fertilizers**

From the table, 36.6% of farmer indicated appropriate, 30.1% indicated more appropriate, while 33.3% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**13. Provision of Pesticides**

The table shows that, 43.0% of farmers indicated appropriate, 20.4% indicated more appropriate while 36.6% indicated most appropriate possible solution in enhancing national food security.

**14. Timely disbursement of micro credit loan.**

From the table, 30.1% of farmers indicated appropriate, 23.7% of farmers indicated more appropriate, while 46.2% indicated most appropriate

**IV, Discussion**

**4.1 Impact of NGOs' operations on national food security in Sierra Leone**

According to the findings, the responses of farmer's views on the impact of NGOs operation on national food security showed Positive impact, Negative impact and No impact.

The findings reveal a mixed but generally encouraging pattern of influence regarding NGO interventions in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone. Farmers consistently acknowledged that NGOs play a valuable role, especially in inputs that directly stimulate crop productivity. The strongest evidence of positive impact emerged from the provision of improved planting materials, where an overwhelming majority of farmers confirmed receiving tangible benefits. This aligns with the broader understanding that improved seed varieties significantly raise yields, making this intervention central to food security enhancement in rural communities. The data also show that increases in production levels, expansion of farm size, and supportive training were widely recognized as beneficial. These outcomes suggest that NGOs are succeeding in strengthening farmers' technical capacity and operational scale.

However, the analysis also exposes important gaps. Many farmers reported *no impact* in crucial areas such as chemical fertilizers, pest and disease control, and access to modern farm tools. These components are essential for transitioning from subsistence to more resilient, market-oriented farming systems. Their limited availability implies that farmers remain vulnerable to pests, soil infertility, and low productivity

cycles. Furthermore, even where support existed, its effectiveness was hindered by poor timing, inadequate quantities, and low understanding of how to apply the new inputs. This suggests that interventions are not only insufficient but sometimes poorly aligned with the agricultural calendar and farmers' skill levels.

Overall, while NGO contributions have undeniably improved certain aspects of farming, the uneven distribution and inadequate follow-up have resulted in inconsistent impacts across the surveyed communities. Strengthening these weak links is critical to achieving sustainable food security outcomes.

#### **4.2 Impact levels of NGOs Operations on National Food Security**

According to the findings, the responses of farmer's views on the impact level of NGOs operation on national food security showed High impact, Moderate impact and little impact. Majority of the farmers indicated that support provided by NGOs to farmers, had varied level of impact in the study area.

Most farmers rated the impact of NGO programmes as little rather than moderate or high. This assessment highlights a recurring theme: **interventions are present but not strong enough to produce transformative change**. For example, although machinery and tools were sometimes provided, farmers largely described their usefulness as limited—either because tools were unavailable when needed or because supply did not match the scale of demand. Similar patterns appeared in areas such as income improvement, fertilizer provision, and pest control support.

One of the underlying factors for the low impact ratings appears to be structural, particularly the land tenure system, which restricts expansion of farming land regardless of NGO support. This illustrates that some constraints lie beyond the direct influence of NGOs, emphasizing the need for coordinated approaches involving government policy reforms.

Additionally, infrastructure—such as roads and storage facilities—scored low because even when built or supported by NGOs, most structures lacked maintenance. Poor road conditions continue to impede market access, input delivery, and emergency responses. Likewise, without well-maintained storage, post-harvest losses persist, reducing overall gains from increased production.

Despite these challenges, NGOs achieved moderate impact in areas like training and the introduction of new technologies. These human-capital investments are crucial foundations for long-term agricultural growth, suggesting that with better resourcing and continuity, these interventions could achieve significantly higher impact.

#### **Awareness of support programme used by NGOs to enhance national food security**

Despite the existence of various food security programmes supported by NGOS in this area, farmers do not know much about food security issues. This is partly due to the high rate of illiteracy among farmers and lack of proper information dissemination mechanism. NGOS therefore step up information dissemination strategies in order to sensitise farmers on food security programmes. According to the research findings, awareness levels varied considerably depending on the mode of communication. Farmers strongly identified radio broadcasting as the primary source of information with the highest awareness levels. This finding underscores the importance of locally accessible and culturally familiar communication channels. In contrast, workshops and printed media such as newspapers generated much lower awareness, likely due to literacy barriers and limited access.

Although many programmes were available, **100% of farmers stated that the interventions were not adequate**. This unanimity demonstrates a mismatch between NGO intentions and the scale of farmers' needs. Farmers acknowledged the suitability of certain programmes—such as modern tools distribution, pesticide supply, and training in new agricultural skills—but repeatedly emphasized that the coverage was too limited or inconsistent to produce lasting change.

A critical insight from the findings is that many farmers misunderstood the purpose of certain interventions, such as mistaking microcredit for gifts rather than repayable loans. This misunderstanding contributes to poor loan recovery rates and undermines future credit opportunities. It also highlights that awareness does

not necessarily translate to comprehension. Therefore, strengthening communication, education, and consistent follow-up is essential for improving the impact of NGO support.

#### **4.4 Success made by NGOs in enhancing national food security Sierra Leone**

According to the research findings, farmers' responded to the options on the level of success of the food security programmes in their region by rating it as either high success, little success or no success.

From the findings, the success levels mirrored the impact findings: while NGOs achieved notable progress in a few areas, such as improved planting materials and storage facilities, many other interventions showed only modest success. Farmers widely acknowledged *little success* in financial improvement, food production, youth and women involvement, extension services, and market access. These are foundational elements of a robust agricultural system, so their low success rates suggest that NGOs are struggling to address systemic and multi-dimensional constraints.

The least successful areas were pest and disease control, use of agricultural machinery, and adoption of innovative farming techniques. These failures are likely interlinked, as farmers cannot adopt new methods without adequate training, machinery, or timely input supply. These challenges show that knowledge transfer alone is insufficient; enabling environments, consistent access to tools, and contextualized training are equally important. Many programmes also did not achieve high success because farmers needed more time to adjust to new systems, and because implementation was constrained by logistical, financial, and environmental difficulties. This is not necessarily a reflection of poor NGO performance, but rather an indication that transforming agricultural systems requires long-term, sustained engagement.

#### **4.5 Problems faced by NGOS in enhancing national food security**

Sierra Leone was self-sufficient in terms of food especially the staple food rice. Looking back at 41 years of historical records starting in 1960, the country was exporting rice. Now the country has eminent danger of food crisis. The ten years of rebel war actually aggravated the situation. Able bodied farmers were either killed or amputated rendering them uneconomically ineffective in performing their productive activities. The war has also made both psychological and physical impacts on the farmers to the extent that their abilities to produce food crops have been seriously undermined.

Although NGOs have stepped up their efforts in providing support programmes to the farmers to help upgrade their farming activities, yet they are faced with series of problems. From findings, a majority of the farmers in the Eastern Region experienced constraints alongside with the NGOs, these challenges identified by farmers reflect deep-rooted structural barriers affecting both communities and NGOs. High levels of illiteracy, poor market facilities, pest infestation, lack of fertilizers, and poor loan disbursement and recovery all emerged as serious difficulties. More than half of the farmers highlighted these constraints as *high difficulty* issues, signifying that NGOs must operate in an environment where systemic limitations significantly restrict programme success. The impact of Sierra Leone's civil war continues to shape these challenges. Loss of skilled labor, trauma, and displacement have long-term implications for agricultural productivity. Additionally, diversion of resources and improper assessments contribute to inefficiencies in programme delivery.

Moderate challenges, such as poor road conditions and inadequate information flow, further compound the situation by limiting market access and proper utilization of support. Even though some farmers reported no difficulty in areas such as assessment of felt needs, the overwhelming majority stressed that these problems hinder productivity and must be addressed to attain meaningful progress.

The researcher believed that in order for NGOs to succeed in their efforts to promote high productivity and hence enhance food security in this region, much consideration should be given to these problems as they impede increase in productivity. NGOs should therefore be encouraged to adopt measures that can help solve these problems so as to succeed in their operations.

#### **4.6 Solutions to problems faced by NGOs in enhancing national food security**

The Eastern Region of Sierra Leone has large track of arable land. The rainfall pattern is mono-modal with the year distinctly divided into raining and dry seasons. Increase in crop production can be achieved if these constraints are addressed.

According to the findings, Farmers considered many potential solutions as “appropriate,” “more appropriate,” or “most appropriate,” demonstrating a strong awareness of what is needed for agricultural progress. The most essential solutions include:

- Expanding training on modern farming technologies
- Improving rural road networks
- Strengthening monitoring and supervision for loan recovery
- Ensuring timely and adequate distribution of farm inputs
- Enhancing access to funds for NGOs
- Expanding market access for farmers
- Increasing supply of pesticides, fertilizers, and modern tools

The emphasis on *timeliness* reflects farmers’ understanding that the agricultural calendar is unforgiving. Inputs that arrive late have little value, no matter how beneficial they might be under ideal circumstances. Therefore, improving coordination and implementing efficient supply chain management systems is critical.

Overall, farmers’ proposed solutions align well with the challenges identified, showing that local communities possess clear insights into how to improve the food security landscape when their voices are effectively incorporated.

## V. Conclusion

The results of this study show that while NGOs have significantly contributed to improving aspects of agricultural productivity in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone, their interventions remain insufficient to fully address the region’s food insecurity challenges. Programmes such as improved planting materials, training, and microcredit have produced measurable benefits, but their scale, timeliness, and adequacy fall short of farmers’ needs. Structural barriers including poor infrastructure, widespread illiteracy, limited input supply, and weak market systems continue to undermine progress. Farmers value the presence and intentions of NGOs, but their evaluation makes it clear that isolated or under-resourced interventions cannot achieve sustainable food security. Lasting improvement will require a coordinated, long-term approach that integrates capacity building, policy reform, infrastructure development, and targeted agricultural support.

Thus, enhancing food security in the Eastern Region demands both expansion and refinement of existing programmes, alongside closer alignment between NGOs, government agencies, and community structures.

## Recommendations

1. **Scale up the provision and timely distribution of essential agricultural inputs** such as fertilizers, pesticides, modern tools, and improved seeds to ensure farmers can fully utilize each planting season.
2. **Invest in strong, continuous farmer education** through extension services, adult literacy programmes, and practical demonstrations to address misunderstandings about inputs, credit systems, and best farming practices.
3. **Enhance monitoring, evaluation, and needs assessment mechanisms** to ensure that interventions match actual farmer needs and are delivered at the right time and in adequate quantities.
4. **Strengthen rural infrastructure**, particularly feeder roads and storage facilities, through joint initiatives between NGOs, government, and community groups.

5. **Improve market access and value-chain support**, enabling farmers to sell produce more profitably and reduce post-harvest losses.
6. **Expand and improve microcredit systems**, ensuring transparent communication about repayment terms and strengthening monitoring to reduce loan default rates.
7. **Promote the introduction and adoption of resilient modern farming technologies**, accompanied by practical, hands-on training tailored to farmers' literacy levels.
8. **Encourage collaboration between NGOs and local governance structures** to address land tenure barriers, improve resource allocation, and ensure community ownership of interventions.
9. **Increase financial and logistical support from donor agencies and government**, ensuring NGOs have the capacity to expand successful programmes and address gaps identified in this study.

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