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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF YOUTH ORGANISATION IN ACHIEVING
FOOD SECURITY IN KAILAHUN DISTRICT.**

**(A CASE STUDY OF JOIJOMA TOWN UPPER SAMAI SECTION MALEMA,
CHIEFDOM):**

ABSTRACT

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Food Security in Sierra Leone has been a very serious problem for farmers and in the agricultural sectors or the ministry in charge of agriculture. Farmers try their best in the agricultural productivity but, they are faced with enormous challenges that limit their operations and their agricultural productivity in the area of harvest of their agricultural products. According to the farmers, they are challenged with agricultural tools or implements, organic manure or the N.P.K 15:15:15 seedlings, and even the extension services from agricultural experts, the stakeholders in governance and in public positions of trust sometimes provide supports but, those supports are not enough to remedy their plights in the agricultural sectors or productivity. Because of the increase in the poverty rate, that is why the youths have embark in agricultural production for them to have their daily survival and to upkeep their families from the sales of those agricultural produce. This research carefully looks into the role of youths in food security.

Introduction

The world is facing a potential crisis in term of food security. Some of the challenges are to produce and supply enough, safe and nutritious, food for the growing population. Food security is a condition related to the availability of food. Yet it was only in the 1974 world food conference that the term food security was established as a formal concept. In 1950s bilateral agencies from donor countries started giving out their agricultural surplus commodities which resulted to the formation of Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) identified four main pillars of food security as: availability accessibility utilization and stability.

The idea of food security changes over years and has a general development theory. In 1945, the universal declaration on human rights recognized the right to food as a major element of adequate standard of living. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) launched a hunger campaign known as the international freedom from hunger. This gives moral governmental and non-governmental support with the aim of eradicating hunger by enabling people to engage in earth's annually production of plants especially food crops in order to feed themselves instead of relying on food aid. Attaining food security contribute significantly to the improvement of other important human development indices, especially, the reduction of child malnutrition and mortality and improvement in maternal health. For this reasons a right to food security rate has been setup by government and its partners to coordinate activities of key partners to accelerate the achievement of food security especially at the household level.

Joiroma is one of the sections in Malema Chiedom Kailahun District in the Easter part of Sierra Leone. Farmers in this section are not provided with sufficient materials like fertilizer, improved varieties of crops mechanical power etc for their farming activities. The youth population in this of the country is declining every day. Production of crops is low in the town because the elderly people/farmers do not have energy now in order to make use of the few facilities that are mainly provided for them.

Statement of the Problem:

Food security is a global issue, this has caused low human development indices, increase in child's malnutrition mortality and maternal health care services. The production of the basic food in Jijoma is gradually decreasing. The under mention can testify this. Malema Chiefdom as a whole is endowed with some of the rich natural resources in Sierra Leone like diamond and gold. Because of this, the youths always have negative attitude towards agriculture. They always feel that agriculture is time wasting. They prefer to mine diamond or gold which they can get a profit immediate. Some even like to go on petty marketing and by-day program for their goods or items.

The youth population in the study area has drastically fallen due to the rural-urban migration. They normally base their perceptions on the fact that urban-areas are endowed with most basic facilities such as hospitals, cinemas, pipe borne water, electricity club etc. This they enjoy more than staying in their villages. The farmers are poor and do not have money to buy improved varieties of food crops, farm tools and another agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, chemicals like pesticides, herbicides etc. Also they do not have the technical know – how in farming. They rely on the use of crude tools/ implements and unimproved local varieties of crops. This is a very serious problem in the town.

The most difficult situation in this part of the country is the reservation of vast farming land/forest that has being encroached by the Gola Rain. The farmers do not have enough land to cultivate the few reserved crops they have. They have to go distance off in order to get fertile land for farming. As a result of this there are always low yields in their crops.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

The general aim of this research is to help improve on the Food Security Standard in this part of the Chiefdom.

Objectives:

The objectives of the researcher are to:

- ❖ Identify the youth participation in farming activities in the town.
- ❖ Find out the types of crops that the farmers are seriously cultivating.
- ❖ Educate the youths in agricultural activities.

- ❖ Introduce micro loan to the well –to-do elders in the town.

Justification:

Sierra Leone as one of the developing countries is mainly embarked on agricultural activities in order to provide food for the growing population of the country. Because of the continuous farming in most of these sections, there has been a reduction in the fertility of the soil. Many farmers do not realize much benefit from the labour they put in their farms. This has caused low level of crops production and eventually causing malnutrition for most of the children and some old ones in the village. The rural-urban migration is a very severe one as the youths are not longer helping their parents. Most families are offering a lot. Another most difficult and heart rendering thing is that, the Ministry of Agricultural, Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) and the Community Base Organization (CBO) are not providing the farmers with sufficient and improved varieties of crops at all. The farmers only rely on their old local tools and varieties of crops. With this, there is a low production of crops and even animals. Most families cannot have a complete balance diet, it is a serious problem in the town. Most of the land that the farmers often do their farming has been encroached by the Gola Rain Sector. It is very difficult to use the land for farming and other agricultural activities. Most families lack proteins food which is most essential for human growth, it is hard to get animals now.

Limitation and Delimitation

Limitation:

In conducting a research of this nature, this researcher was faced with series of constraints which limited/him not to get sufficient data for the research. Some of these were:

- i. The low illiterate level of youths. Since one can get enough information by administering questionnaires through them.
- ii. High cost of stationeries and the poor road net work to meet the farmers at any time.
- iii. The time scheduled for the research was too short in order to get sufficient data to meet the researcher's objectives.

Food Production has become a main challenge faced by most governments in Africa. The Challenges to Overcome hunger and poverty are critical to achieving the 2015 millennium goal. Food security remains a key to African's dream of poverty reduction in the continent. Many African governments have designed strategies as how to address the confronting

challenges. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) developed by the government of Sierra Leone in 2007 was focused on the development of the rural poor youths and adults in their different settings. The paper also made provision for support for small scale subsistence farming. These categories of people dominate the various agricultural sectors.

“One of the main responsibilities of the government is to provide good quality and quantity for its citizens at affordable cost” (GO Dixon, 2008). In order to achieve its goals government that is assigned with the responsibilities of drawing agricultural policies. Dixon stated that, “these policies are geared towards increase in the production of suitable food crops to meet demand of the population and also increase the quantity and quality of export crops and livestock in order to earn foreign exchange. He also concluded the policies also provide job opportunities in agriculture in small and large farms. Food security is an issue that is achieved when it is ensured that “all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and health life. (Kleumert, 2000), define food security as the adequate food safety, socio-cultural acceptability which is available and accessible for and satisfactorily utilized by an individual at all times to live a healthy and happy life. He also stated that “food security has a number of good reasons why a nation needs to invest in it”. He supported his statement with the following reasons. It is profitable, and worthwhile investing in food security as it provides.

- Basic needs, humanitarian task ethical obligations.
- Ensures human rights and the right to food and with economic considerations.

He highlighted that actions to improve access to food include provision of employment facility and income generation for the people, promotion of farmers’ income and employment opportunities, food subsidy and transfer systems and ensures free distribution of relief rations with special supplementary feeding programmes and food aid distribution. According to an interest address access to food is generally regarded as a fundamental right. Allowing people to starve is unusually viewed as inhumane and unjust. Food security refers to a situation where there is no threaten of people lacking food. Factors that threaten food security include poverty war and crop destruction. Many people believe poverty is the primary concern regarding food security. This is far from true. A lack of insufficient financial resources is only one reason responsible for food insecurity. There are many other circumstances that can result in food security. In order to acquire food security there should be sufficient quantities of food. Even if everyone has money problems will result if

there is not enough food for them to purchase. The supply of food can be affected by many things. These include transportation problems, crop destruction and contamination (WISEGRESK).

According to the above internet address, food security also takes into consideration nutritional value. That is material available for people to eat doesn't avert a crisis. This food needs to cover the nutritional needs that human have. The food that people have access to must be acceptable to them. For example I Muslims are only allowed access to pork products, a situation of insecurity arises. Many will starve since their religious beliefs prohibited the consumption of pork products.

According to the "2005 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reports for Sierra Leone". Food security is acquired where all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life.

According to this report, food security refers to accessibility to food, availability of sufficient food, reliability and stability of access and availability and effective utilization of food consumed. Food insecurity is one the major problems in Sierra Leone as indicated by limited access to food and the poor quality of food intake, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in 2002 estimate shows that out of 580,000 metric tons require only 46% of the cereal consumption especially the staple food (rice) was met be local production, the rest coming from commercial imports and aids.

After 1991, the report revealed that there has been a visible increasing trend in food production. Major constrains to agricultural production and productivity includes shortage of pesticides, quality seeds, fertilizers, modern implements and poor marketing system. "Achieving Food Security in its totality continues to be challenge not only for the developing nations, but also for the developed world" (Angela Mwanikimarch, 2006). The differences lies in the magnitude of the problem in terms of its severity and proportion of the population affected. In developed nations, the problems is alleviated by providing targeted food security interventions, including food aid in the form of direct food relief food stamps, or indirect through subsidized food production. These efforts have significance reduced food insecurity in the regions. Similar approaches are employed in developing countries but with less success. The discrepancy in the results may be due to insufficient resource base, shorter duration of intervention or different systems most of which are currently heterogeneous among other factors. If the country is to achieve self sufficiency in food production, it must reduce its dependence on the importation of rice and other food stuffs, which utilize a vital economy of the country's foreign exchange. If this is done, it can help to standardize the output of food staffs in the country (Josephus O. Reilley, 1971). "Food security is a basic human right which improves on the necessity for people to have enough to eat. Such a country

according to the paper is dependent upon three major factors which are availability, accessibility and affordability (Agric News paper, 2003). The paper also says, to achieve food security a country must be able to grow sufficient food at affordable prices to feed its people, adequate distribution network to ensure easy access by all. Short of this, the country must have sufficient foreign exchange to imports its food requirements.

There is an intrinsic link between the challenge we face to ensure food security through the twenty-first century and other global issues, most notably climate change, population growth and the need to sustainably manage the world's rapidly growing demand for energy and water. Our progress in reducing global poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals will be determined to a greater extent by how coherently these long term challenges are tackled. A key question is whether we can feed a future nine billion people equitably healthily and sustainably. Science and technology can make a major contribution by providing practical solutions. Securing, this contribution requires that high priority be attached both to research and to facilitating the real world deployment of existing and emergent technologies put simply. We need a new "greater revolution" important areas focused include, crop improvement, smart use of water and fertilizers new pesticides and their effective management to avoid resistance problems: introduction, reduction of post harvest losses; and more sustainable livestock and marine production (John Beddington, 24 November, 2009), contribution from science to a new and greener revolution. Food security in developed countries consists of three aspects pertinent to food access. These include the quantity and quality of food available, the geographical accessibility and the availability of food. Food access is the means by which food security is satisfied (Leidenfrost, 1993). Food security more than just quantities by li chang gang China Daily, 2013) comments that it's always the top priority for the government to ensure people have access to enough food, especially in a populous country like China. Tuesday's central rural work conference in Mid December, which listed guaranteeing national food security as the primary major task for 2014. Both conferences elaborated on a national food security strategy based on domestic supply and moderate imports aimed at ensuring production and speeding up the development of agricultural science and technology. Ensuring that China is sufficient in grain supply is extremely important for national security. China's focus on food security shows that the central leadership has strong crisis awareness and attaches importance to people's lives and security. With a huge population, the importance of food security cannot be over emphasized. Catastrophic famines in the past tell how devastating they can be. To li Chenggang food security is viewed as having enough accessible food in hand. There have been studies showing that China's self sufficiency in grain has plunged below

90% more detailed studies show that beans accounted for over 70% of China's grain imports. As a result, the country's self – sufficiency rate for major grains and other beans remains higher than 97% food in fact, the core of ensuring fod security is to realize the country's sufficient and stable grain supply. To reach that goal, a country can rely on both its on production and trade; but considering. China's huge population, decision makes cannot take risks in this regard and it is much better to seize the initiative in grain supply. Therefore highlight domestic production for sufficient grain supply is a choice base on reality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter involves the method and strategies used to collect relevant information on the role of the youth organizations in achieving food security in Kailahun District, Malema Chiefdom, Jijoma town to be specific. The chapter entails description of the study area, research design, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation and analysis of data.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA:

Jijoma town is located in Malema Chiefdom Kailahun District in the Eastern Part of Sierra Leone. Jijoma town has five (5) sections, these are Upper Sami, Lower Sami, Njagbla, Bamboo, and Pelegbambiema. The town has ethnic groups predominant of Mende, Temne, Kissi, Fullah, Limba and Mandingo with some few foreigners. The inhabitants in this town practice different socio- cultural activities in accordance with their respective cultural background, for instance “Bondo” for women and “Poro” for men. The economic activities of the inhabitants are agriculture, mining, trading, skilled labour like teaching, carpentry, contractor etc; unskilled labour etc inhabitants are mainly focused on mining than any other work's of life, because they feel agriculture is time wasting and cannot generate wick income compared to mining. The town has great advantage in production of rice, cassava and several crops. Because of the fertility of the soil in this part of the country, the parents and even the children are deriving much benefit to their labour. Interestingly most the women enjoy their back yard garden benefits.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The study is based on qualitative and quantitative approaches in the process of colleting, analysing and interpreting data. There were both close- ended and open-ended questions in the questionnaires. Oral discussions were carried out to enhance pertinent information for the

administered questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed equally to the respondents in the five (5) sections. Oral discussions were made generally in local languages Krio, Temne, Kissi, Fullah and Mende, respectively for the less literate ones.

SIZE OF THE POPULATION:

The population of the study area include elderly parents farmers (men and women). There are also some tradition and religious leaders who serves as advisers to the youths in order to maintain the laws of the society. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size of the purpose of the research. For the interest of the research and the limitation of time, ten (10) respondents from each section were met to serve the purpose of the research.

INSTRUMENTS USED TO COLLECT DATA:

The following instruments were used to collect data from the respondents in the study area. The instruments of this research was based on procedures and methods used to collect relevant information for the study. The instruments used were:

Questionnaires:

Because of the level of literacy in this part of the country, suitable questionnaires were prepared to meet the objectives of the research. These were collected from each section and resulted carefully recorded. The format of the questionnaire is shown in appendix.

Personal Interview:

As started earlier there was high level of illiteracy in all of these community. In order for the research to accomplish, personal face – to –face interview was done in all of these sections. Necessary information need for the research was done accordingly and recorded as can be shown in chapter IV of the research.

Observation:

It was not easy to get all the information needed for the research work inorder to attain sufficient data to meet the research objectives. Personal observation was done in all these five sections. Data were collected unknown to the farmers and recorded as can be seen in chapter (IV) of the research.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED:

Data obtained from the field was processed and analysed using simple statistical computation. The information collected by the researcher from the various categories of farmers in the study area were carefully collected and presented and put in tabular forms, expressed and percentages as can be shown in chapter (IV) of the research work.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF DATA

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter is presenting the collecting analysis of data collected. Information pertaining to this study was collected by means of personal interviews and responses from the questionnaires.

TABLE 4.1.1: SEX DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS FORM THE VARIOUS SECTIONS:

SECTIONS	MALE	FEMALE
Upper Sami	5	5
Lower Sami	6	4
Bamboo	6	4
Njagbla	7	3
Pelegbambiema	4	6
Total	28	22
Percentage %	56	44

Table 4.1.1 shows that, out of a total of selected respondents interviewed in the various sections 28 (56%) are male and 22 (44%) are female. According to the data there are more male than female in the study area because male are more involved in agricultural activities than female. The female are only there to assist in farming activities as they cannot do hard work compared to male.

TABLE 4.1.2: LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE STUDY AREA:

SECTIONS	ILLITERATE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY
Upper Sami	5	3	1	1
Lower Sami	6	4	-	-

Bamboo	7	1	1	1
Njagbla	8	1	1	-
Pelegbema	5	2	2	1
Total	31	11	5	3
Percentage %	62	22	10	6

According to table 4.1.2 above, out of a total of selected respondents in the study are 31 (62%) of the respondents are illiterate which means they cannot read and write and because of this, they find it difficult to adhere to new innovation about farming, the farmers in the study area are involves in subsistence farming where in they only produce to feed themselves and their farming members, they use local tools to produce because of the high illiteracy they cannot read and interpret the manuals for machine neither they operate those machines. The tertiary sector is low because, most of the habitats that have gone through tertiary institutions stay in the cities because of white collar jobs and other social amenities, so they will find it difficult to go home and assist their parents.

TABLE 4.1.3: THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE YOUTHS THE STUDY AREA:

SECTIONS	MINING	CROP PRODUCTION	ANIMAL REARING	TRADING	TEACHING
Upper Sami	5	2	1	1	1
Lower Sami	6	3	1	-	-
Bamboo	4	2	2	1	1
Njagbla	5	3	1	1	-
Pelegbmbie	7	1	1	1	-
Total	27	11	6	4	2
Percentage %	54	22	12	8	4

Table 4.1.3 shows that, 27 (54%) out of the respondents interviewed in all the sections are miners, which tells that, majority of the youths are miners and they donot pay attention to farming practices, this is even the main reason why food production in the study area is very low because bulk of the youths are looking at mining as the fastest way of getting money instead of agriculture which to them is them wasting and cannot yield them benefits. The teaching sector is very low in

the study area because the youths are after mining, so whenever their parents sent them to the urban areas to gain education at their childhood, during holidays when they return home they will decide to join their peers in mining bush, so sooner they start getting money they will switch to mining instead of schooling could you imagine a town that has five sections there is only three(3) primary schools and no secondary school. Most of the primary school teachers are untrained and unqualified to teach, that more the reason why teaching is very low in the study area.

TABLE 4.1.4: THE TYPES OF FOOD CROPS GROWN IN EACH SECTIONS IN THE STUDY AREA:

SECTIONS	RICE	CASSAVA	POTATO	YAM	GROUND NUT	MAIZE
Upper Sami	4	3	-	-	2	1
Lower Sami	4	2	-	2	2	-
Bamboo	3	1	1	1	2	2
Njagbla	5	2	2	-	1	-
Pelegbambiema	4	2	2	1	-	1
Total	20	10	5	4	7	4
Percentage	40	20	10	8	14	8

Table 4.1.4. shows that, out of a total of respondents interviewed 20 (40%) of respondents grow rice, which indicated that rice is the major crop grown by all the farmers because it is their staple food in the study area and Sierra Leone as whole. The yam and maize have low percentage 4(8%) respectively because few farmers grow them only when they have appetite for it.

TABLE 4.1.5: THE TYPES OF FARMING PRACTICE BY FARMERS IN THE STUDY AREA:

SECTIONS	LOW LAND	UPLAND	ANIMALRERING
Upper Sami	3	6	1
Lower Sami	2	7	1
Bamboo	3	5	2
Njagbla	2	6	2
Pelegbambiema	1	8	1
Total	11	32	7
Percentage %	22	64	14

According to table 4.1.5 it shows that, out of a selected respondents in the study area 32 (64%) of the respondents practice upland farming. This is because there are enough yeast area of fertile land available in this period of the country. Again the village farmers enjoy mixed cropping in their farms. Some of the harvest the vegetable crops like cucumber, garden eggs, and many others in their farms.

TABLE 4.1.6: THE PARTICIPATION OF THE YOUTHS DURING FARMING ACTIVITIES IN THE STUDY AREA:

SECTIONS	LOW	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Upper Sami	8	3	-
Lower Sami	10	3	-
Bamboo	9	1	-
Njagbla	7	-	1
Pelegbambiema	9	1	1
Total	43	5	2
Percentage %	86	10	4

Table 4.1.6 shows that, out of a total of selected respondent interviewed in the various sections 43 (86%) of the respondents complained that the participation of the youths

during farming activities is low because bulk of the youths pay attention to mining instead of farming activities. Most of the youths migrate from the study area to urban areas for social amenities which are lacking in the study area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter is a summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations in relation to the study conducted by the researcher on the investigation of youth organizations in achieving food security in Joijoma town.

SUMMARY OF FINDING OF RESEARCH:

Research conducted by the research student in the study area from these five sections revealed that, the participation of the youths during the farming activities is very low. The main reasons are:

- Migration of the youths to urban areas
- High illiteracy in the study area
- Lacks of governmental and non-governmental organization support in terms of mining.
- Mining is the main reason because more youths are focused to mining for quick income.
- The farmers are poor and they cannot afford machines, improved varieties etc.

It is also revealed that, majority of the farmers are involved in rice production which is their staple food and next to cassava. Form the research analysis it was revealed that, all of the sections in the study area and Sierra Leone generally grow different types of food crops for home consumption.

CONCLUSION:

This dissertation deals with the work which probe in to an investigation of youth organizations in achieving food security in Foitorna town. It indicates that majority of the farmers in all the sections are illiterate and at times do not have access to improved varieties of seeds or planting materials and other crops protection chemicals such pesticides fritzes, herbicides etc. This has been a bottleneck which greatly affects food production in most developing countries in order to meet the food security drive in the part of the country. Therefore, for Sierra Leone and other developing

countries to be food secured the enabling environment should be created for the farmers to carry out their farming activities though the following strategies such as adequate rural development appropriate policies for food sector ect. From the research analysis, it was revealed that all of the sections, in the study area and Sierra Leone in general grow different types of food crops for home consumption. To attain sustainable food production to meet the growing demand of the population in the country government should assist farmers so that food self sufficiency will be easily achieved. Research finding also shows that, the participation of the youths in the farming activities in the study area is very low as good number of the youths are highly involved in mining because they feel agriculture is time wasting and cannot generate quick income.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the analysis of the study the following recommendations are made to help improve on the production of food crops and farm animals in Joijoma town and Sierra Leone in general. There should be a quick government intervention to salvage some of the bottle – neck faced by farmers in agriculture in the rural area. The government through ministry of agriculture should provide credit facilities as well as improve varieties of crops to farmers to help maximize food production and this can also help to bring the youths to agricultural activities and encourage them to see agriculture as dignified field from which they can earn their living. Government should sent extension agents to rural areas, these extension agents conduct agricultural programmes in the rural areas such as agricultural shows, workshops to sensitize farmers on recent techniques in farming and if possible train and visit on the cultivation of improved varieties of crops. Also government should strengthen the activities of extension agents by providing them with good incentives, support services and infrastructure to enhance effective communication. Government and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) should provide farmers with improved varieties of food crops that are resistance to pests and diseases. The government should provide social amenities for the ruralities as this will limit the movement of youths form the rural areas to settle in the urban areas.

This is mainly done to aid future researcher investigators who might intend to expend on the topic for its intended purpose. The research can serve them as spring board for gainful knowledge, detail understanding, application and implementation prior to the task for the achievement of goals to be fulfilled and the new generations yet unborn after we shall have departed from this planet.

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