EDUCATION FOR ALL IN MALAWI:
The Problems and Possibilities for Girls’ Schooling

Josephine Joy Munthali

Ph.D.
The University of Edinburgh
DECLARATION

This thesis has been composed by myself from results of my own work, except where stated otherwise, and has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree.

November 2000
DEDICATION

To God
To Mr. T.N. Munthali
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Professor Kenneth King and Pravina King at the Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University suggested the underlying concept behind this doctoral study. I would also wish to thank them for their encouragement and moral support over the many years I have been connected to the Centre. I am indebted to many people for the help I received while carrying out my research. No acknowledgement here can fully express my gratitude. I might not be able to include the names of everyone; therefore, I say thank you to all.

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JOSEPHINE MUNTHALI

11.11.00
ABSTRACT

The importance of female literacy as a prerequisite for development has been acknowledged internationally by governments and aid donor agencies. The correlation between education and socio-economic development continues to be the chief incentive to promoting female literacy. It is accepted, therefore, that education provides positive values and skills for personal development and empowerment of women, in addition, to supporting national development. Despite these positive returns, many developing countries are still experiencing an increase in illiteracy among women. At the Jomtien Conference (1990) the importance of universal education was delineated in the policy Education for All (EFA). Indeed, EFA is seen as a strategy for introducing children, especially girls, to conventional schooling. Whilst some progress have been made, retention of girls in schools presents a major obstacle to the fulfilment of the EFA vision, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Malawi presents a case study for the attainment of the objectives implicit in EFA policies.

The impetus for this research, therefore, emerges from a concern about the quality and sustainability of educational programmes for female education. Through a review of discourses surrounding educational developments in Malawi between 1875 and 1994, and an analysis of the policy of free primary education (FPE) from 1994 onwards, this thesis explores the impact of these policies on girls' schooling. Through qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participatory observations, research findings reveal that girls have not enrolled or remained at school in as great numbers as boys. This is the case both at primary and secondary levels. It was found that religious, ethnic, economic and political factors have conspired to inhibit the education and development of female school children.

The interrogation of EFA in this thesis concludes that the move towards the implementation of FPE policy is being constrained due to a number of historical factors. The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is also affecting progress in the education sector. This research, therefore, contributes to knowledge that EFA can be achieved but requires suitable provision of quality education and the involvement of stakeholders in the identification of those problems which currently inhibit pupils from taking advantage of FPE/EFA. It is recommended that more aid and nuanced, co-ordinated, strategic support from the international community, is needed in order to achieve Education for All in Malawi. In this connection, the organisation, Jubilee 2000, should be seen as a force for generating new approaches to education policy in Malawi.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACEA</td>
<td>Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADMARC</td>
<td>Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDDCA</td>
<td>British Development Division in Central Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAFOD</td>
<td>Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, England and Wales</td>
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<td>CCAP</td>
<td>Church of Central African Presbyterian</td>
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<td>CDSS(s)</td>
<td>Community Day Secondary Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERT</td>
<td>Centre for Educational Research and Training</td>
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<td>CONFINTEA</td>
<td>International Conference on Adult Education</td>
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<td>CT(s)</td>
<td>Co-operating Teachers</td>
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<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner</td>
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<td>DEC(s)</td>
<td>Distance Education Centres</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DRCM</td>
<td>Dutch Reformed Church Mission</td>
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<td>EDP</td>
<td>Education Development Plan</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Forum for African Women Educationalists</td>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Free Primary Education</td>
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<td>GABLE-SMC</td>
<td>Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education-Social Mobilisation Campaign</td>
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<td>GAPS</td>
<td>Gender and Primary Schooling in Africa</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrolment Ratio</td>
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<td>GT</td>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
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<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Agency for Technical Co-operation</td>
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<td>HIPC(s)</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Countries</td>
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<td>IDS</td>
<td>Institute of Development Studies</td>
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<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>ILY</td>
<td>International Literacy Year</td>
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<td>JC</td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
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<td>JCE</td>
<td>Junior Certificate Examination</td>
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<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japanese International Co-operation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>KfW</td>
<td>Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau</td>
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<tr>
<td>KKIS</td>
<td>Keeping Kids in School</td>
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<td>MSSSP</td>
<td>Malawi School Support Systems Programme</td>
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<td>MANEB</td>
<td>Malawi National Examinations Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>MASAF</td>
<td>Malawi Social Action Fund</td>
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<td>MCE</td>
<td>Malawi Certificate of Education</td>
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<td>MCP</td>
<td>Malawi Congress Party</td>
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<td>MIITEP</td>
<td>Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme</td>
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<td>MNA</td>
<td>Malawi National Archives</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MOEC</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOESC</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOWCACS</td>
<td>Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs and Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOWCACDSW</td>
<td>Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs, Community Development and Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE</td>
<td>Malawi School Certificate of Education</td>
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<td>MSIS</td>
<td>Malawi Social Indicators Survey</td>
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<td>MSLCE</td>
<td>Malawi School Leaving Certificate Examination</td>
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<td>NALP</td>
<td>National Adult Literacy Programme</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrolment Ratio</td>
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<td>NGO(s)</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<td>NIPILAR</td>
<td>National Institute for Public Interest Law and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORAD</td>
<td>Norwegian Agency for Development and Co-operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Overseas Development Administration</td>
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<td>NNTA</td>
<td>Nyasaland National Teachers’ Association</td>
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<td>PAMET</td>
<td>Paper Making Education Trust</td>
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<td>PCSP</td>
<td>Primary Community Schools’ Project</td>
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<td>PEA(s)</td>
<td>Primary Education Advisers</td>
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<td>PIF</td>
<td>Policy and Investment Framework for Education</td>
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<td>PSLCE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination</td>
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<td>PTA(s)</td>
<td>Primary Teacher Associations</td>
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<td>RORE</td>
<td>Rates of Return to Education</td>
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<td>SCF-US</td>
<td>Save the Children Fund of USA</td>
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<td>SMC</td>
<td>Social Mobilisation Campaign</td>
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<td>SMC-EQ</td>
<td>Social Mobilisation Campaign for Educational Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPG</td>
<td>Society for the Propagation of the Gospel</td>
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<tr>
<td>TA(s)</td>
<td>Traditional Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDU</td>
<td>Teacher Development Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPP(s)</td>
<td>Teacher Preparation Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMCA</td>
<td>Universities Mission to Central Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDCF</td>
<td>UN Development Capital Fund</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations, Educational and Scientific Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Fund for Population Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UTT(s)</td>
<td>Untrained Temporary Teachers</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>US Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>USPG</td>
<td>United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel</td>
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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This thesis derives from an objective analysis of the many constraints inhibiting the realisation of the political goal of free primary education (FPE) in Malawi. It has been apparent that whilst there have been many positive developments in the implementation of FPE policy, there still remain various obstacles to the development and implementation of Education for All (EFA) in the Malawian context attributable to inadequacies and inefficiencies in the primary education system. In the wake of the Dakar Education for All 2000 assessment, this thesis, therefore, presents a case study of the fulfilment, or otherwise, of the visions embodied in the policy of EFA.

External policies such as EFA are questionable in a country such as Malawi which is one of the poorest countries in the world. Achieving the original Jomtien vision of Education for All is a particularly daunting challenge with a poor economic environment, inhibiting cultural influences and a low quality primary education system. Malawi is ranked as the world’s 16th poorest nation, with 60% of Malawi’s 10 million population living below the IMF/World Bank poverty breadline of US$1 per day, while annual salaries of the small group in the formal sector of the economy average only US$940.

Commenting on educational achievement, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MOESC) (2000) reports that there is still a high illiteracy rate in Malawi with only 42% of the population being literate. This is the result of the high population growth and a faulty primary school education system. In addition, the school system has further been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is this background of social and economic trauma and their profound impact on pupils and girls’ education in particular that fired my interest to investigate the impact of FPE policy.
To ensure that this study’s conclusions would be useful, of intrinsic validity and insulated from country wide generalisations, three areas of study were selected for field work research; Mzimba District in the North, Dedza District in Central and Mangochi District in the Southern Region. These areas are marked by differences in economic conditions, cultural practices, religion, geography, language, educational attainment and ethnicity. However, since the variations in economic conditions amongst these districts are slight, the implication is that ethnicity and cultural differences are responsible for the main distinguishing features of those areas. For instance, one has to take cognisance of the relative impact of the difference in initiation ceremonies in the three areas.

The views of teachers, communities and the initiates indicate the degree to which these practices profoundly impinge upon girls’ schooling in both areas. On the other hand the less traumatic initiation ceremonies to be found in the North mean that their impact upon girls’ education in not so pronounced as in Dedza and Mangochi districts. This thesis accordingly demonstrates the degree to which differing cultural practices which intrude on the educational process depend on the nature of the practice in question.

The interrogation of EFA in this thesis concludes that the move towards the provision of FPE policy is being constrained by a number of historical factors. This research confirms that EFA is attainable but requires provision of appropriate quality education and the involvement of stakeholders in identifying problems that hinder pupils from taking full advantage of FPE/EFA. More importantly, cancellation of national debt in Malawi which is owed to organisations like the World Bank will help to improve the quality of education if the money saved is invested in improving social services such as the primary education sector.
Chapter One explores international perspectives and global concerns in regard to female education. Discussions focus on the access and retention of girls in school especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter delineates strands which identify long-standing factors which continue to affect pupils’ schooling. Global concerns which include governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and donor agencies reveal continual support and interest in ensuring access for all children, especially girls in schools. Review of the achievements of EFA shows that whilst some progress has been made, failures in the retention of girls in schooling remain a major obstacle to fulfilling Jomtien’s vision, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chapter Two discusses educational developments by different missions in colonial Nyasaland, paying attention to the role which the Free Church of Scotland, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) and the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) played in three areas. I was particularly interested in exploring the missions’ and colonial government’s policies on female education. Insights into the present day relevance of reports such as the Phelps-Stokes report and historical constraints are documented. Also recorded is evidence of aspirations for FPE policy which were never achieved because of economic conditions among other factors.

Chapter Three gives insights into how political policy-making of former Banda’s regime and the new democratic government of President Bakili Muluzi have influenced educational developments and achievements. I also particularly explored donor interventions in various programmes and projects which have been introduced in order to achieve quality education. This chapter delineates outstanding issues on the implications of the quality and quantity in regards to FPE policy.
Chapter Four discusses research methods as applied in the field. Before going to the field, I extensively reviewed literature from international documentation, educationalists, researchers and writers on female education. In the field, qualitative methodology utilising case study, interviews, participatory observation, focus group and life story was adopted for this study. By qualitative methods I was able to gather and analyse data and discuss its implications for the research findings and consequent recommendations and conclusions. Additional data was gathered from the Malawi National Archives in Zomba and the library of Chancellor College at the University of Malawi. Secondary data was obtained from government departments and international agencies.

Chapters Five and Six discuss the implications of the findings. The principal finding was that, both at primary and secondary school level, girls have not enrolled at school nor been retained by school in as great numbers as boys. However, in each district, there are variations in the progress and achievements of female education. It was also found that the collective impact of economic, socio-cultural and educational constraints on girls' education have resulted in girls' achievements in schooling being greatly diminished.

Chapter Seven draws together the strands of the study's argument, provides a final summary, conclusions and recommendations. It draws conclusions with regard to the contribution of the study to the broader understanding of the relationship between the formulation of EFA policy at the global level, the national level and its achievements and practice at the local level.
CHAPTER ONE

FEMALE EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

Women's literacy is the challenge of the decade. It is essential to development, which is impossible without the participation of women. But their involvement depends to a very large extent upon their education (Gainza De Jauregui, 1992: vii).

Researchers, educationalists and development agencies have acknowledged the importance of female education. For the past three decades, widening access to education has been a major policy goal in most developing countries. "Donor and government interest in gender inequalities in education has arisen from two main sources: (i) the rise of the international women's movement following the Women's Decade after the Nairobi Conference in 1985 and (ii) from the evidence concerning economic efficiency and the high social and economic benefits accruing from investing in female education" (Swainson, 2000: 49). This chapter discusses issues concerning literacy for women and for girls of all ages in education. It will focus principally on primary education but also secondly on adult illiteracy, especially for women.

It is important to examine both the formal and non-formal education systems because these two issues are inter-related. If a child misses the basic education in primary school, that child will grow up not only as a young illiterate but also as an adult illiterate. If an adult is illiterate, the necessity of sending her children to school is less strongly felt and the result is a huge increase in illiteracy figures. Chlebowska (1990) noted that:

Long experience gained by international organisations involved in the fight against illiteracy throughout the world, and marked both by successes and failures has shown that a two-pronged approach makes for greater
efficacy: that of literacy training for adults and appropriate schooling for children since, paradoxically enough, the school may be the institution which directly or indirectly generates illiteracy (Chlebowska, 1990: 71).

King (1997) supports Chlebowska by stating that in many countries it is the failure of primary schools to retain young people long enough to make them literate that is one of the primary sources of new illiterates and semi-literate. In recent years there have been increasingly global concerns regarding access to, and retention of pupils, especially girls in primary schools. The next section explores international perspectives on female education and the move towards Educational for All initiatives in the 1990s.

GLOBAL CONCERNS: EDUCATION FOR ALL

Early missionaries, who introduced western education, initiated interest in female education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Literature on early missionaries' advancement of education\(^1\) has shown that a number of activities were introduced to encourage female education. As a result of missionaries' initiatives it is noticeable that over the World War II period school enrolment by women increased. Sivard stated that girls' enrolment quadrupled from 95 million in 1950 to 390 million in 1985. However, despite the increase in enrolment rates for women, the gender gap persisted. This has been attributed to the drop-out rates and absenteeism which were more common for girls than boys (Sivard, 1985).

In the past most governments acted to remove formal barriers of entry into school systems and to give equal access to girls and boys. Laws requiring compulsory attendance were widespread in the 1980s. According to United Nations (UN) records, 161 of 194 countries had compulsory schooling by 1980 (Sivard, 1985). However,

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\(^1\) Christian missions played a major part in establishment of schools and promoting literacy for both men and women in Malawi and other African countries. This will be discussed in Chapter Two.
despite the introduction of compulsory schooling, the data from the 1970s to the 1990s shows that girls' access to schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa was lower than in developed countries. Moreover, Sivard (1985) noted that the increased enrolment since 1950 also failed to eliminate the broad disparity between the sexes. At all levels of education, boys still represented a majority of students.

Statistical data shows that from the 1950s women progressed towards equal educational enrolment rates with men at all levels of schooling. However, huge gaps persisted between men's and women's educational achievement. Many girls and women still did not receive equal access to educational and training resources and this had critical consequences for women in both their productive and reproductive roles (UNESCO, 1991). Lack of achievement in basic education for girls also led to an increase of illiteracy in adult education.

The deterioration of educational attainment in Sub-Saharan Africa was especially noticeable during the 1980s. Industrialised countries became alarmed at the decline in quality and relevance whilst the developing countries were deeply affected by economic recession. Growing debt burdens thwarted the pace of educational expansion which had been achieved during the 1960s and early 1970s. Economic recession also had an impact on the quality of schools because of lack of textbooks, reading materials and other essentials.

The problems affecting educational attainment and the quality of school systems in both developing and developed countries drew together executive heads of United Nations, Educational and Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank at Jomtien, Thailand from 5-9 March 1990. These agencies organised the conference but others were present. The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA) focused on the importance and impact of basic education, and forged a global consensus and commitment to providing basic education for all. Noting the
increase in illiteracy figures, these organisations launched a joint world-wide education initiative to review the problems in meeting basic education needs and to explore realistic strategies for the rapid expansion of educational opportunities. UNESCO regards women's and girls' education as one of the top priorities in promoting literacy.

The meeting at Jomtien was preceded by the proposals advanced by UNESCO at the twenty-fifth session of the General Conference in 1989 when its six-year and two-year programmes were approved. UNESCO's education programmes were presented in three major complementary parts: (a) towards Basic Education for All; (b) education for the Twenty-first century and (c) promoting the Advancement of Education. UNESCO stated that:

The goal of the programme "Towards Basic Education for All" is to provide education of adequate quality that could form the foundation for lifelong learning for everyone young and old alike (UNESCO, 1990: 3).

In this connection, the education of girls and women has been an area of special concern and preference towards the provision of EFA. 1990 was also proclaimed by the UN to be the International Literacy Year (ILY). The importance of female education was acknowledged at ILY and, at the same time, there was concern about the attendance of girls in schools. It was noted that:

Women play a crucial role in transmitting knowledge and values from one generation to the next, yet women are the majority among illiterates and girls are more disadvantaged than boys where school attendance is concerned. Their rates of enrolment are lower and their dropout rates higher (UNESCO, 1990: 4).

Noting the importance of adult education during the International Literacy Year, UNESCO considered the provision of basic education for out-of-school youths and adults. "Within the perspective of Jomtien, the importance of non-formal education for
youths and adults lies in its contribution (in co-operation with schools) to meeting the basic learning needs of target communities, and its integration as an educational component, (skill training, attitude change, literacy) into development projects of other sectors, particularly in the informal economy, health and agriculture” (UNESCO, 1992: 41).

One of the priorities proposed by UNESCO’s Plan of Action, was the improvement of education for women and girls. Over 100 government plans of action were introduced which included strategies to address inequities in girls’ educational participation (Swainson, 2000: 49). At the World Conference in Thailand, it was noted that 900 million men and women, which is a quarter of the world’s adult population, could neither read nor write (UNESCO, 1990). UNESCO reported that 100 million children had no access to schooling. UNESCO (1993) further noted that illiteracy rates for women in Africa were over 60%. Twenty six million African girls were out of schools and most of them lived in rural areas. At the start of the new millennium, figures for out of school children have increased to 113 million, of whom 60% are girls (UNESCO, 2000b). The poorest sections of the population of the developing world such as Sub-Saharan Africa are mostly affected, especially women.

An extensive World Bank study, according to UNESCO (1993), showed that where there has been heavy investment in female primary education, benefits for all occur through higher productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, longer life expectancy for both men and women, and lower fertility rates. Families, especially children, benefit from having a mother with formal schooling. The survival, health and school performance of children were shown to be clearly linked to the mother’s educational attainment.

Although aid agencies such as the World Bank view female education as crucial to economic and social development, especially in reducing fertility, there have been on-going debates and criticisms by feminists who are concerned with policies that directly
impact on women's reproductive rights. One can argue along with the World Bank and UNESCO that reduced female fertility does encourage economic and social development. However, one may also note that, it seems that women are indeed pressurised by educational establishments to exercise birth control. Yet, one should take into consideration that, because of socio-cultural practices, some policies that are formulated at the national level sometimes are not recognised at the local level. For instance, Wynd (1996) explained that the anticipated positive return of education for girls in decreased fertility through education ignores the side effects on the age of marriage, pre-marital sexual relations and pregnancy rates.

These issues are dominant in rural areas particularly where initiation ceremonies are practised. This is explored in detail in Chapter Six. However, one may note, in passing that studies reveal that in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Malawi, girls go through initiation ceremonies at a very young age and are encouraged to get married as soon as they reach puberty. Girls also drop-out of school before completing their primary education because of pregnancies.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) agreed that educating girls is a basic human right. The importance of educating girls is seen as a good investment available in the developing world.

It provides positive values and skills for personal; and national development. It has multiplier effects, empowering women to bring about other necessary changes like smaller family size, increased income and non-market productivity, investing more in family welfare especially the education of girls (FAWE, Undated).

Studies undertaken by various countries and funding agencies, in relation to the promotion of development, confirm the need for improving the quality of teaching, particularly in girls' schooling, and considering the advantages which girls' education brings. UNESCO has also pointed out the notion of increased income as the result of
educating women. UNESCO (1992) emphasised that food production and food processing are two areas in which women have traditionally earned an income.

UNESCO has calculated that women constitute over 46% of the agricultural labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa. The link between farmer education and efficiency suggests that more education for women could be expected to bring improved agricultural yields. UNESCO further reported that if agricultural improvements are combined with community development, then women’s and girls’ education is even more effective. For instance, the quality of village life is improved. Thus female education leads to agricultural improvement and better quality of village life (UNESCO, 1992).

Early childhood care is also important because the progression through formal schooling by pupils can be affected by the way children are brought up. Improving early childhood care is partly dependent on the better education of women and girls.

An educated mother learns to protect children from exposure to health risks, thus increasing the chances of child survival, and is better able to ensure a diet which supports sound physical and mental development (UNESCO, 1992: 8).

The influence of women's education on the intellectual development of children and on their attendance and success in school is very important. The effect of women's education extends beyond the pre-school into school itself. According to UNESCO (1992), studies have shown the beneficial influence of educated mothers in reducing grade repetition and drop-out rates at the early stages, and in improving motivation for staying on to higher levels of education. Furthermore, the Department for International Development (DFID) states that “research studies show that women participating in adult literacy programmes are more likely to send their children to schools and keep them there, than illiterate mothers” (DFID, 2000: 9). On the other hand, illiterate mothers provide a less stimulating environment, and their children have a less than equal
start at school in comparison with others. Therefore, "a stimulating home environment helps a child's development. At the same time, the parental factor in formal day care can diversify and enrich what centre-based services offer. The earlier that parents are involved, the better it will be for the children, their parents, and for others who will be responsible for their care and education later on in life" (UNESCO, 1992: 21).

Brock and Cammish (1991) and agencies such as UNESCO (1993) and the World Bank (1996), when addressing differential literacy rates, point out that despite these positive attitudes towards women's education, many developing countries are still experiencing an increase in the number of illiterate women. Moreover, Swainson (2000) quotes UNESCO (1996) by stating that in spite of the commitments in the provision of education for all, the gender gap in literacy appears to have widened in developing countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa since 1990. Before discussing literacy issues further, the definition of "illiterate" needs to be examined.

WHO IS ILLITERATE?

The word illiterate defines a person who can neither read nor write. However, Torres (1991) pointed out that people who can recognise the letters of the alphabet or who know how to write their own name often do not consider themselves to be illiterate.

UNESCO suggests that any person who can, with understanding, both read and write statements on his/her everyday life should be considered literate (Chlebowska, 1990). A functionally literate person is "one who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development" (Chlebowska, 1990: 10). For instance, educated parents are more willing to send their children to attend schools as they realise the benefits of schooling. King and Hill (1993) have recognised that literate mothers have more of a
potential for sending their daughters to school than do the illiterate. As already discussed, parental involvement in childhood care and education is important in enhancing the child's ability to adapt to the formal education sector.

It is also easier for literate parents and communities to develop strong working partnerships with governments, service agents and educators. It is important for the community to get involved in educational development so that they can share their problems, ideas, cultural attitudes and customs. UNESCO stated that, "to begin any kind of economic or educational development without consulting the people for whom it is intended risks being resented as an expression of cultural arrogance, which assumes that simple people are too ignorant to know what is good for them" (UNESCO, 1992: 22).

**WOMEN’S LITERACY**

An examination of issues concerning female education, both access to and retention in schools, as discussed above, is vital in this chapter. Ten years have passed since the declaration of the proposed Education for All in Thailand in 1990. Yet educationalists, donor agencies and researchers point to the increasing rates of illiteracy, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, England and Wales (CAFOD) (1997) states that available data reveal that girls and women are generally disadvantaged in the area of education and literacy in relation to boys and men in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In countries like Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Malawi (just to mention a few), men have higher literacy rates than women. India, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone and Cameroon face similar problems (World Bank, 1996; Ballara, 1992). In some countries both formal and informal education systems are experiencing decreasing numbers of attendance. The problem has been drop-out of girls in schools and various factors affecting female
education. Writers such as King and Hill (1993) and Hyde (1993a) emphasised that there is a problem of retention and drop-out among girls in schools.

Several indicators - including measures of literacy, enrolment and years in school - reveal important patterns and trends in women's education in developing countries. Each of these indicators leads to the same conclusions: the level of female education is low in the poorest countries, with just a handful of exceptions, and by any measure, the gender gap is largest in these countries (King and Hill 1993: 2).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, UNESCO (1992) noted that the introduction of universal primary education has increased enrolment of girls in schools; however, figures for girls completing primary education remain lower than boys. Hyde explained that:

One of the most enduring kinds of educational inequality is between males and females. Although many countries have made tremendous progress in widening the reach of education, in no country have males and females benefited equally. In the poorest countries, this inequality is reflected in lower enrolment rates, higher drop-out and repetition rates, and lower levels of attainment for girls (Hyde, 1993a: 101).

Increasing schooling for girls has been on the agenda in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hyde (1993a) notes that the educational attainment level of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa is low because enrolment is low and wastage is high. In most countries more girls than boys never enter school at all, and many girls who enrol in primary schools drop-out at an early stage. Only a few continue on to study in secondary schools and universities.

A major problem in combating women's illiteracy is the number of girls who drop-out. This problem has been expressed by a number of researchers and agencies (Ballara, 1992; Hyde, 1993a; UNICEF, 1993; CAFOD, 1997; Chlebowska, 1990; the World
Factors affecting female education are related to government policies, practices and institutions, which promote gender biases and affect women's participation in educational systems as indicated by Odaga and Heneveld (1995). "Socio-economic and socio-cultural factors are significant in parental and familial decisions on whether to invest in female education. School-related factors also affect the supply and the demand of female education" (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 4).

Socio-economic factors include direct costs of schooling. Costs of schooling have been cited by Colclough et al. (2000) as the major reason parents offer for not educating or removing children, particularly girls, from school. Poverty is widespread in Sub-Saharan African countries and affects schools and communities. Children who do not attend primary school are from poor households in poor countries. The majority of such non-attendees are girls. DFID reports that in countries with the worst education indicators, most children from the poorest households have no schooling. The gaps between the attainment of rich and poor children can be enormous. Moreover, of the children who do enrol, it is the poor who mostly drop-out of school (DFID, 2000: 7).

In countries such as Malawi where education is free, parents are still required to incur some expenditure for text and exercise books. Many also have to contribute to the construction or upkeep of school buildings and provide other inputs in cash. For the poorest households, as DFID argues, education may be a lesser day-to-day priority than basic survival. Lack of access to a local school or poor quality of education may support the perception that work is a more attractive option than education or that education will not result in sufficient economic reward relative to the cost of sending children to school (DFID, 2000: 7).

King noted that "the retention of school literacy cannot be relied upon because of the quality of primary schooling i.e. lack of resources, textbooks, and the most elementary maintenance" (King, 1991: 158). In most African countries, primary schools are not operating effectively because of lack of resources, i.e. learning and teaching materials,
inadequate classrooms and teachers. Lack of funds for educational materials has caused young girls in senior classes in primary and secondary school to opt for sexual relationships in order to get educational support. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) explain that such relationships end up in girls becoming pregnant and, therefore, dropping out of school. They also increase the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases including the HIV virus. Paucity of educational materials and school facilities have also affected the attainment of literacy skills. As Hyde pointed out:

The poor quality of the institutions they attend and their constricted curriculum choices also put women at a disadvantage after leaving school because they are less likely to have acquired permanent functional literacy and the skills that employers value in educated workers (Hyde, 1993a: 120).

King and Bellew suggested that where enrolment for girls in primary school is low, government effort should be directed towards expanding access to primary education rather than to secondary or higher education.

Not only are the rates of return highest at the primary level, but, even under the best of circumstances, it takes five to eight years of schooling to acquire the reading and mathematics skills essential for operational literacy and numeracy...governments would, therefore, be wise to invest in basic education in both formal and non formal settings (King and Bellew, 1993: 285-286).

Indeed one would argue that the rates of return might be the highest for primary education. However, there is a major debate and controversy about the rates of return at the primary level. For instance, Bennell (1996) argues that most studies seriously overestimate the rates of return to education (RORE) to primary education while at the same time underestimate ROREs to higher education. He notes that “the inclusion of the full range of income and costs adjustment factors tends to lower primary ROREs considerably more than the corresponding rates of return to secondary and higher
Adjustments for labour force participation, unemployment, drop-out and repetition rates, according to Bennell, have similar differential impacts on ROREs depending on which level of education as being referred to. Most importantly, Bennell further discusses the connection between opportunity costs and rates of return. He pertinently finds that:

The opportunity costs of attendance at primary schools are usually underestimated mainly because the prevailing wage rates for the relevant age cohorts are used rather than the value of production actually foregone. In low income developing economies where subsistence homeland production typically predominates, this is a major factor which strongly influences parental decisions about schooling for their children (Bennell, 1996: 236).

Indeed socio-cultural factors have also impacted upon girls’ access to and retention in primary schools. Odaga and Heneveld explained that socio cultural expectation of girls and the priority given to their future roles as mothers and wives have a strong negative bearing on their formal educational opportunities (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 22). Moreover, socio cultural customs and beliefs influence the decisions to enrol girls in school, decisions to withdraw them from school, their own decisions to drop-out of school, their academic performance, and their grade level attainment.

The evidence, as pointed out by King and Bellew (1993) and Hyde (1993a), shows that traditional norms and cultural aspects, such as initiation ceremonies, have contributed to the low attendance of girls in schools. When girls reach puberty in some African countries, they go through the initiation ceremonies during which they are declared to be mature enough for marriage. In most cases the initiation period may continue for two months (Hyde, 1993a) and runs on into the school term. This results in dropping out from school. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) point out that “the scheduling of initiation ceremonies conflicts with the school calendar, leading to absenteeism from school” (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 22). The National Institute for Public Interest Law and
Research (NIPILAR)/UNICEF reports that in some instances during the initiation ceremonies, the girl-child undergoing training at puberty is required to obtain her first sexual experience by sleeping with an adult man. The research that was carried out in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Swaziland revealed that:


These findings reveal that in countries such as Malawi the initiation ceremonies profoundly impact upon girls' schooling as they encourage girls to indulge in sexual practices, which lead to a lack of retention in schools. NIPILAR states, "within the school, violence is connected to male teachers and students abusing female students, sexual harassment and early pregnancy. Within the community, violence incorporates intimidation, rape, sexual harassment and sexual abuse" (NIPILAR/UNICEF, 1999: 8).

Initiation ceremonies are also in competition with formal schooling. For instance, what girls are taught at the initiation ceremonies is different from the way in which the school expects the girls to behave. Odaga and Heneveld explain this competition by stating that:

Although initiation marks the passage from childhood to adulthood, school authorities continue to treat initiated girls who return to school as children. They expect them to participate in certain activities and punish them in a manner, which is considered inappropriate for adults. Initiated girls also find it difficult to return to formal school or concentrate on their studies because their next expectation is marriage (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 22-23)

Before and after initiation ceremonies, girls are also encouraged to engage in all sorts of household duties and are told to help their mothers with small income generating activities, such as selling agricultural products at the markets. It is, therefore, important
to point out that the way a girl-child is brought up has a tremendous impact on participation in schooling. Odaga and Heneveld explained that:

Child labour is indispensable to the survival of some households, and schooling represents a high opportunity cost to those sending children to school. Girls are more likely to be involved than boys, in childcare, agricultural domestic and marketing tasks (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 17).

The Department for International Development notes that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that there are up to 250 million children working full or part time in the developing world. One hundred and forty million of these children are between the age of 6 and 11 years (DFID, 2000: 8). Poor children contribute unpaid labour mainly in domestic and agricultural activities, particularly at household level in rural areas. As DFID states, girls comprise the majority of child workers and the majority of children out of school. Agricultural and domestic labour are hidden forms of child labour which impact disproportionately on girls and lessen the likelihood of their attending school (DFID, 2000: 7).

The rapid growth in urbanisation has increased the demand for domestic labour in urban areas. Poor rural households have responded by sending their daughters into the domestic labour market in exchange for regular cash income. Poorer households may depend more upon the labour of their children in order to supplement household income either directly on the farm or in the market place, or indirectly, by children undertaking household tasks, which liberate adult labour for other remunerated work (Colclough et al., 2000: 7).

Parental and familial attitudes have a strong influence in the decision to invest in children's education. For instance, parents, especially in poor communities, value boys' education more highly than girls’. Some parents hold the belief that boys are more intelligent, that they perform better in school and that they are a better educational
investment than girls. This is evident in patrilineal marriage systems. Men are regarded as the sole decision-makers in investing in human capital. In addition, as Odaga and Heneveld (1995) point out, parents worry about wasting money on the education of girls who are likely to get pregnant or married before completing their schooling. Countries in Africa have different views of why or whether it is not of much importance to educate a girl.

Studies conducted by Odaga and Heneveld (1995) reveal that in Chad, some parents believe that schools push girls to prostitution, make them unfaithful to their husbands and make them difficult to control by parents. In Cameroon, educated girls are perceived as being too independent and demanding and as being likely to challenge the traditional submissive role expected of them in marriage. However, it is argued that in other countries such as Kenya and Rwanda, some parents preferred to invest in girls' education, in the hope that girls will support them in their old age (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 20-21).

Cultural norms have affected female education in schools. Girl pupils are treated differently from boys in schools. For instance, girls are still perceived to be the mothers of tomorrow; as a result their curriculum is centred on domestic science subjects such as home economics and needlework, whilst boys are encouraged to take up mathematics and technical subjects (King and Bellew, 1993; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). It can be argued that as a result of cultural factors and preferred career possibilities, girls also tend to opt for subjects that steer them into education and health employment (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 33). These further limits the option open to women in the formal labour market as women continue to remain concentrated in non-competitive fields. Formal education has always been linked to employment opportunities. Therefore, families tend to judge the value of education by the returns from the labour market.

The environment of the school may also be more conducive to the attendance and performance of boys than of girls. In the classroom it is evident that teachers (both
male and female) pay more attention to boys than girls or they completely ignore girls. Colclough et al. (2000) state that male teachers may not provide girls sufficient support, and they may even be sexually threatening. It is argued that teachers’ attitudes to their students are a reflection of the broader societal biases about the role of women in society and the academic capacity of girls.

King and Bellew stated that in areas such as the Middle East, North Africa, East and South Asia, and Africa's Sahelian region, girls' and young women's activities are governed by social practices that restrict their presence in public places and their interaction with males. Parents may insist that their daughters be separated from males at school (King and Bellew, 1993: 292). This is particularly true in Muslim-dominated areas.

In addition, Brock and Cammish (1997) analysed some issues concerning religion, law and political administration that have shown gender bias against women. It has been argued that religion, especially Islam, is usually associated with low female participation. UNESCO pointed out that “anthropological and sociological studies have shown that in traditional Muslim societies, education beyond puberty is inhibited by the social pressure for women to become wives and mothers as soon as puberty is reached” (UNESCO, 1992: 11). Therefore, parents find it harder to understand the benefits of education when the curricula are irrelevant to this mother-wife role or contradict the values they want to teach their children.

Historically Muslims resisted western formal education which was associated with Christianity. Muslims were suspicious of the motives of missionaries and feared conversion to Christianity. It seems this fear has continued over the years in Islamic regions. Brock and Cammish (1997) argued that some parents prefer Islamic education for their daughters. This is associated with the fear that western education promotes values and behaviour for girls, which are contrary to cultural norms. In some Muslim countries, it is vital to introduce schools with female teachers. It is has been pointed out
by UNESCO (1992) that in countries where religion requires seclusion of women, parents allow girls to attend only single-sex schools with female teachers, or they withdraw girls at the onset of puberty.

Brock and Cammish (1997) noted that in countries such as Sierra Leone, Northern Cameroon and rural Bangladesh which are dominated by Muslims, justification for low enrolment figures for girls, and the negative attitudes to girls' education, were identified in terms of being in the Muslim areas. They are also, however, areas which are rural and poor, and these factors contribute towards low enrolment rates.

However, it is vital to note that Muslim factors have exceptions. Brock and Cammish indicate that some daughters of the elite Muslim families, for instance in Dakar, participated successfully at all levels of the educational system in single-sex schools because they had parents who were educated. Moreover, Brock and Cammish noted that the Koran does not itself discourage the education of girls. More support from local religious leaders would help to persuade parents to send their daughters to school. In addition, more female teachers and single-sex schools and secure boarding facilities might encourage girls to go to school and calm parental fears (Brock and Cammish, 1997: 24).

Commenting on the legal factor, Brock and Cammish (1997) noted that although most countries have legislated for equal status in respect of sex, traditional sanctions often still operate unchallenged. In many rural areas long-standing societal rules constraining females are still in force, such as the condoning of early marriage. Legal knowledge and support for laws promoting female education could challenge unfair pressures in respect of marriage and be very helpful to the female cause.

Brock and Cammish (1997) and Odaga and Heneveld (1995) have cited political and administrative issues as factors which affect participation of women in education. Brock and Cammish mentioned that "although policies exist in most cases for such
developments as universal primary education, equal educational opportunities in terms of gender and the eradication of gender biases from texts and other materials, the political will to carry these through seems to be weak in the face of severe economic constraint” (Brock and Cammish, 1997: 4). Odaga and Heneveld suggested that low gross enrolment ratios are related to the failure of the governments to achieve universal primary education, in addition, to the factors already discussed.

Odaga and Heneveld cited Colclough and Lewin (1993) and King and Hill (1993) as stating that “low-per-capita income affects the capacity of governments to finance and deliver education, and restricts educational supply, making the proportion of public spending needed for universal primary education greater in poorer countries” (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 46). Countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Malawi and Ethiopia which have low gross enrolment ratios, are viewed as having low commitment to providing schooling for all children.

Brock and Cammish (1997) and NIPILAR/UNICEF (1999) have cited another factor which is affecting participation of girls in schools as the impact of health on education, especially in female education. Poverty and malnutrition affect the health of school age children and girls more than boys. Boys may get preferential feeding, while girls who have heavier domestic workload are more likely to be undernourished.

Even if they get to school, this adversely affects their performance and, therefore, retention rate (Brock and Cammish, 1997: 3).

As suggested by NIPILAR/UNICEF (1999) and Brock and Cammish (1997), health problems are also associated with pregnancy, especially for adolescent girls as they indulge in sexual activities at an early age.
In recent years it is seen that the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is also affecting the progress in the education sector. The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIIEP) (2000) has indicated that there is evidence that education and health systems in a number of African countries are surviving on seriously depleted human resources with health workers, teachers and system managers affected by AIDS. It has pointed out that school systems are particularly affected by the deaths of teachers. For instance, studies conducted by UNICEF reveal that in countries such as the Central African Republic and Cote d’Ivoire, the capacity of the education systems to accommodate students is being affected by the increasing deaths of teachers from the epidemic.

The Department for International Development (2000) states that the impact of HIV/AIDS on the teaching profession is now also being acknowledged; effective schooling is threatened by high sickness and attrition levels among the teaching force (DFID, 2000: 10). The International Institute for Educational Planning notes that:

...as teachers disappear primary schools are subsequently closed down. Teacher absenteeism caused by the illness is also badly affecting the quality of education (IIIEP, 2000: 8).

Due to the AIDS crisis, the number of orphans has increased in African countries and this has had a tremendous effect on pupils who may drop-out of school due to a lack of adequate support. The growing number of AIDS orphans is a significant challenge to achieving UPE, especially in Africa.

Many of these orphans end up on the streets, and the extended families who take in these orphans often can

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2 The case study in Cote d’Ivoire revealed that during the 1996/97 academic year, 827 teachers (2.5 per cent of the total teaching staff) left the primary education system and that death accounted for 322 of these departures. In the Central African Republic, from 1996 to 1997, the number of deaths of primary school teachers due to AIDS increased by 8% in five of the seven educational regions where the survey was carried out (IIIEP, 2000:8).
barely afford to send all their children to school, let alone additional members (IIEP, 2000: 8).

It has been noted that girls are disadvantaged because they drop-out of school since they are usually the first to be withdrawn from school to take care of sick parents and siblings. This supports DFID (2000), which notes:

Where traditional community safety - nets are disrupted, children may become heads of household, or be kept at home to care for sick family members. Girls are particularly vulnerable and where attendance at school is possible, it is likely to be disrupted and there is clear evidence of declining attendance rates of girls in particular (DFID, 2000: 10).

The International Institute for Educational Planning suggests that for education to play an efficient role in preventing HIV/AIDS, it must first retain children in school, reach those who drop-out, and be of good quality. In this regard, the literacy gap between males and females should be reduced and emphasis put on comprehensive reproductive health education for youth (IIEP, 2000: 8). It has been suggested that preventive education in schools and the non-formal and traditional education programmes should be set up in an attempt to reach the most vulnerable groups which are out-of-school orphans and children living on the streets. In an attempt to reduce these problems, if not eradicate them, several studies have pointed to the importance of interweaving formal and non-formal education (IIEP, 2000: 8). However, studies also reveal that non-formal education systems are not progressing well because of a number of problems.

As already discussed, adult female literacy is very important because of the direct input on girls’ education. In this connection the field of adult education is seen as increasingly important among educators and policy makers world-wide. Wagner (1997) suggested that most participants at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V), which was held in Hamburg in 1997, agreed that adult
education is central to the social and economic viability of all nations, whether wealthy or poor.

In the past, educationalists and researchers such as King (1991) and Chlebowska (1990) have noted that formal education alone cannot solve the problem of illiteracy. Wagner (1997) further argued that a formal education system is not capable of delivering all of a nation's educational needs. For instance, there are too many dropouts, too many poor achievers and too many youths and adults in need of further training. On the other hand, adult programmes also have many problems, such as unqualified teachers, poor funding and lack of resources, including few teachers and reading materials for new literates. In addition, other constraints, such as evaluation of programmes, are commonplace.

Cultural attitudes are one of the problems causing resistance to women's achievement of functional literacy skills. Rabakoarivelo (1998) mentioned that difficulties encountered in adult programmes are arousing the motivation of the learners to learn and to experience change. He gives an example of a health worker on the Island of Sainte-Marie who complained that despite her efforts to teach nutrition and child care, women were reluctant to feed their children eggs and other food because it was a taboo for them. As a result there was still evidence of malnutrition. Oxenham from the World Bank stated in 1997 that the Bank has long supported and continues to maintain efforts aimed at adult literacy. However, he argues that the adult education profession has failed the Bank's staff who want to promote it. He stated that:

Even the adult education work which has used loans from the World Bank, has not helped much to furnish irresistible arguments for more substantial investment (Oxenham, 1997: 36).

Oxenham argued that countries, which borrowed money for non-formal educational programmes, have failed to supervise and evaluate the progress and achievements of
adult education. For instance, the government of Indonesia borrowed money ten years ago aimed partly at developing supervision and evaluation capabilities. According to Oxenham (1997), in late 1995, there was still no comprehensive testing of participants’ achievement. The same holds true for Ghana: the government borrowed money to help establish a research and evaluation unit, but the unit has produced little feedback. Evaluation and assessment of the achievements of adult education are some of the problems in running adult literacy programmes effectively. Commenting on the theme of ensuring the universal right to literacy and basic education, CONFINTEA stated that literacy should be a gateway to fuller participation in social, cultural, political and economic life everywhere in the world.

It must address the needs of both women and men, to enable them to understand the interconnections between personal, local and global realities (CONFINTEA, 1997: 16).

Theme four of CONFINTEA called for gender equality and equity in adult learning and the empowerment of women. It was suggested that “equal opportunities in all aspects of education are essential to enable women of all ages to make their full contribution to society and to the resolution of the multiple problems confronting humanity” (CONFINTEA, 1997: 18).

As remarked by King and Hill (1993), and other writers on female education, lack of access to knowledge and information has prevented women from sharing in decision making in their communities and families. Therefore, "education should ensure that women become aware of the need to organise as women in order to change the situation and to build their capacities so that they can gain access to formal power structures and decision-making processes in both private and public spheres" (CONFINTEA, 1997: 18). Globalisation and new technologies are having a powerful and growing impact on the individual and collective lives of women and men. Yet Chlebowska (1990) and King and Hill (1993) noted that women in Africa are actively involved in agricultural
tasks and yet do not participate fully in the labour market because of a lack of education. Odaga and Heneveld argued that “one of the greatest disincentives to female education is the low level of female participation in the formal labour force” (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 13).

Although women in Sub-Saharan Africa are actively involved in agricultural activities, lack of literacy skills has not enabled them to participate in the global economy. As mentioned by Halsey et al. (1997), the key to future economic prosperity is the quality of a nation’s education and training system. Halsey et al. adds that at the top of the agenda is a commitment to invest in human capital and strategic investment in the economy as a way of moving towards a high-skilled, high-waged, "magnet" economy. For these to be achieved, investment in education and training systems is inevitable. Halsey et al. mentioned that:

Underlying these economic forms of investment is a vision of a society permeated by a culture of learning; for it is the knowledge, skills and insights of the population that is the key to future prosperity (Halsey et al. 1997: 179).

Indeed lack of investment in education for women will certainly continue to decrease women’s participation in labour force. Hyde (1993a) noted that female participation in the labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa dropped from 45% in 1960 to 42% in 1981 despite a massive expansion in education in the same period. Odaga and Heneveld reinforces this argument by stating that “the International Labour Organisation estimates that in 1990 the female labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa was 73 million, 38% of the total labour force, a decrease from 40% of the total labour force in 1970” (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 13). It has been noted that although women are actively engaged in the agricultural labour force, their numbers declined from 84% in 1970 to 76% in 1990. This is a depressing pattern, the result of a number of interrelated factors.
At the Beijing conference in 1995 women expressed the need for female education for empowerment. The non-governmental organisations call for gender-sensitive materials and for the recognition of literacy as a vehicle for new forms of citizenship, for support for the qualification of women as literacy teachers and for drastic reductions in the rates of women's illiteracy (Stromquist, 1997). CONFINTEA agreed that millions of adults are illiterate, most of them being women who lack opportunities to learn. It was, therefore, proposed that "youth and adult learning policies should be responsive to local cultures and give priority to expanding educational opportunities for all women" (CONFINTEA, 1997: 4).

Donor agencies are concerned that countries such as Tanzania (which was actively involved in literacy campaigns) are once again experiencing an increase in illiteracy rates. Economic crisis, growing national debt, structural adjustment programmes, deteriorating social services, globalisation of markets and technology, privatisation, increasing poverty, and growing unemployment mean that deprived and illiterate people have to prioritise more basic survival needs, and that governments are becoming even less interested in adult literacy than before (Lind, 1997).

Despite factors affecting pupils' schooling, especially girls, many countries in Africa, such as Malawi, are taking initiatives to promote female education. In recent times, donor agencies have continued to support and aid programmes in order to achieve the Jomtien vision of Education for All. The year 2000 has been crucial in assessing progress over the 10 years since the declaration of EFA in 1990. Different organisations were represented at Dakar to re-examine the EFA initiatives. The next section will explore the EFA achievements especially in regards to female education.
Ten years have now passed since the declaration of Education for All by the year 2000. Countries and representatives from different organisations met at Dakar, Senegal, to assess the achievements of EFA. It has been reported by UNESCO (2000a) that some achievements have occurred over the years especially in less developed countries. For instance, the number of entrants to the first grade of primary education has grown steadily since 1990 in all less developed regions. The number of new entrants increased from 106 million in 1990 to 117 million in 1998, a rise of 11%. In the less developed regions as a whole, the gross intake rates rose from 106% in 1990 to 112% in 1998. However, the rate in Sub-Saharan Africa was 81% in 1998, which according to UNESCO reflects shortcomings in education provision.

The net intake rates for Sub-Saharan Africa were the lowest among other less developed countries. The comparison of gross intake rates and net intake rates suggests that a large number of entrants are actually older than the official entrance age. Some country reports cited the factors underlying late entry as economic hardship, paid and unpaid child labour, distance from school and access to transportation.

In order to assess the achievements of EFA it is essential to compare the gross enrolment ratio (GER)\(^3\) and the net enrolment ratio (NER)\(^4\). The gross enrolment ratio can assess whether an educational system has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of universal primary education. The net enrolment ratio shows the proportion of primary school-age children who are enrolled or out of school. The objective of UPE implies the realisation of a net enrolment ratio equal to 100%. UNESCO reports that in less developed regions as a whole, the gross enrolment ratio in primary education remained relatively stable.

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\(^3\) Gross enrolment ratio for primary education is defined as Total Number of primary school pupils all ages divided by Total Population aged 6-13 years and multiplied by 100.

\(^4\) Net enrolment ratio for primary education is defined as Total Number of primary school pupils aged 6-13 years old divided by Total Population aged 6-13 years and multiplied by 100.
during the 1990s, when it grew from 93% to 96%. However, the net enrolment ratio in less developed regions is still low below 80%. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the net enrolment ratio grew from 54% in 1990 to 60% in 1998 but is still lower than other regions.

UNESCO notes that the number of out-of-school children has been declining in all regions except Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and North Africa. Ninety-seven of every 100 out-of-school children live in less developed regions and nearly 60% of them are girls. It has been estimated that the Sub-Saharan region has the largest proportion of out-of-school children, at 40%.

Over the decade, the number of out-of-school children continues to increase in this region despite notable gains in the net enrolment ratio. In almost one-third of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa region, 60% or more of children are not in school and in more than half the countries the proportion is above 30% (UNESCO, 2000a: 31).

Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 on pages 32 and 33 show that the gross enrolment ratios and net enrolment ratios are still the lowest in Sub-Saharan countries as compared to other regions. Net enrolment ratios also reveal that UPE has not been accomplished in regions because the net enrolment ratio has not reached 100%.

Women’s and Girls’ Achievements

UNESCO rightly points out that the elimination of disparities is an essential step towards UPE. These include disparities according to gender, social class, income, ethnicity, language group or geographical location (e.g. urban/rural, by regions or districts). The reduction of gender disparities is reflected in the gross enrolment ratios. It has been noted that at a global level, the proportion of girls enrolled in primary
education, regardless of age, has steadily increased to the point that it almost equals the proportion of boys in the total school-age population. However, despite the progress made, Table 1.3 on page 33 shows that the net enrolment ratios remain lower for girls than for boys especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This suggests that school-age girls have lower access to primary education as compared to boys in the same age group. Moreover, between 1990 and 1998, the gender gap decreased in all of the less developed regions except for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Commenting on adult literacy UNESCO mentions that there has been some increase in the number of adult literates in the world, from 1.5 billion in 1970 to around 3.2 billion in 1998. Despite this increase, it is seen that there were still some 880 million illiterate adults in the world in 1998, two thirds of which were women (64%). Gender disparities have remained high especially in South and West Asia, in the Arab States and N. Africa and in Sub-Saharan Africa. The widest gender disparities for young adults (15-24 year olds) are found in these regions. It has been reported that among the world’s less developed regions, the adult literacy rate is the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia.

Table 1.1: Gross Enrolment Ratios in Primary Education by Region, 1990 and 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990 (%)</th>
<th>1998 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More developed regions</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less developed regions</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries on transition</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Saharan Africa</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and/West Asia</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States/N. Africa</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Caribbean</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO, 2000a: 29
Table 1.2: Net Enrolment Ratios in Primary Education by Region, 1990 and 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1990 (%)</th>
<th>1998 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More developed regions</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less developed regions</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries on transition</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Saharan Africa</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and/West Asia</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States/N. Africa</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Caribbean</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO, 2000a: 29

Table 1.3: Net Enrolment Ratios by Sex and Gender Parity Index by Region, 1990 and 1998.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>GENDER PARITY INDEX</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>GENDER PARITY INDEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More developed regions</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries in transition</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Saharan Africa</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.84</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.82</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Caribbean</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Asia</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab States/N. Africa</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO, 2000a: 33
Many factors continue to affect the attainment of universal primary education. Most countries, according to UNESCO Report, have very high pupil/teacher ratios especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This has led to high repetition rates in schools. School wastage which is derived from repetition and drop-out rates, can constitute an important obstacle to the realisation of the goals of EFA. Repetition can be seen as a reflection of the quality of education. The inefficient use of school resources has a significant impact, as the presence of large numbers of repeaters can prevent other eligible children from accessing schools.

Repetition increases the number of pupils per class and thus leads to higher schooling costs, when pupils leave school before the end of the term or the final grade of primary school (drop-out) they are less likely to have obtained basic competencies, including literacy and numeracy skills (UNESCO, 2000a: 34).

It has been noted that despite the general decline in repetition rates between 1990 and 1998 in a number of countries, the levels of repetition remain extremely high. The problem of survival rate to the fifth year of primary education is still a pressing issue in many less developed countries.

This short statistical analysis which was represented at Dakar, Education for All 2000 Assessment on Jomtien vision, therefore, reveals that despite the move towards the provision of universal primary education (UPE) with the aim of increasing access to, and retention of girls in schools, the EFA goal - education for all by 2000 - has not been accomplished. Moreover, the gender gap still persists in less developed countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. As already discussed in this chapter, there are crucial factors which, despite the move towards EFA, still continue to affect particularly the participation of girls in schools. Factors such as socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions have diverse impact upon girls’ schooling. Therefore, more research needs to be done in order to address questions of why girls are not being enrolled and retained
in schools despite the move towards EFA. This research contributes to that goal by providing evidence of the situation of girls’ education in Malawi.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has reviewed literature on female education at the global level. Issues that have been covered are internationally recognised and acknowledged by writers and researchers on women’s literacy. Literature examination has shown that donor agencies and governments world-wide have given female education a top priority because women are still lagging behind men in achieving literacy. In this chapter it has been shown that in developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, a gender gap in literacy attainment still persists. Statistics reveal that retention in and completion of girls’ schooling is the major problem. This is due to culturally related factors that have also affected schooling and policy makers.

Several countries have adopted an EFA policy to introduce children, especially girls, to conventional schooling. Whilst some progress has been made, retention of girls in schools presents a major obstacle to the fulfilment of the EFA vision, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Chapter Three, it will be seen that Malawi also endorsed the policy of free primary education in order to raise the rates of pupils’ enrolment.

Before discussing the policy of free primary education in Malawi, it is important to explore the historical dimension in the successes and failures of the policy of EFA and UPE. In order to evaluate the historical record, Chapter Two examines the educational policies adopted by the early church missions and the colonial government and the early constraints, particularly in female education. It is hoped that this will provide some insight into the historical factors which have inhibited and continue to constrain the fulfilment of EFA/UPE in Malawi.
CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORY OF WESTERN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS BY MISSIONARIES IN MALAWI: 1875-1950

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore missionary educational activity in Malawi, and resistance to it amongst three different ethnic groups in the North, Central and Southern Regions. It will be seen that in each of these areas traditional, economic, political and cultural factors as well as religious teaching have impacted upon girls' schooling. The choice of these areas derives from the fact that the principal ethnic groups in Nyasaland\(^5\) were the Ngoni, the Yao, the Tonga and the Nyanja.

The Ngoni in the North provided resistance to western educational developments. The Ngoni remained outside colonial rule until 1904. This was several years after the rest of the country had come under this rule (Macdonald, 1975). The Ngoni chiefs protected their heritage and they were suspicious of the motives of the colonial administration as well as missionaries. The Nyanja in the Central Region portray a different account of resistances towards the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM). The Yao (especially the Yao Muslims) in the South represent an illustration of resistance towards educational developments by the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). It is hoped that these three ethnic groups will provide different accounts of the historical resistances, which have continued to the present to affect participation of girls in schools.

Chapter One noted the importance of female education to governments, non-governmental organisations and educationalists as an investment and a contributory factor to the socio-economic development of a country. Multilateral and bilateral

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\(^5\) In the days of colonialism, Malawi used to be called the British Central Africa Protectorate (1891-1907) and Nyasaland (1907-1964). Nyasaland will be referred to for the colonial period.
agencies also continue support for educational activities in various ways with an emphasis on women’s and girls’ education. The priority is to remove obstacles to access to female education and to improve its quality. This notion of removing obstacles to female participation in education is not new and is becoming a complex issue, not only affecting girls and women but also the community as a whole (which includes parents, local authorities, schools and teachers). However, some strategies being proposed by governments and donor agencies to remove these obstacles are contradictory.

Stromquist has argued that the Education for All (EFA) proposal of involving full community participation in girls’ education does not analyse problems that might occur within communities. For instance, it is not said what effects there will be for educational transformation if parents and other community members subscribe to views of girls merely as potential mothers and consider as a "relevant curriculum" only one that trains women for domestic roles (Stromquist, 1994: 26).

To understand more fully resistance to women’s education in Malawi, it is important to look at the historical development of education. The next section discusses the development of western education by missionaries and the contributions they made towards promoting female education in Malawi. The purpose is to explore early resistance to women’s education and to argue that factors affecting female education today have an important historical dimension.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MALAWI: 1875-1950

The history of early educational developments in Malawi was a result of Dr. David Livingstone's expeditions in Africa in the nineteenth century. Livingstone, a Scottish missionary, played a major role in encouraging other missionaries to set up mission
stations in Nyasaland. Johnston noted that, “the real history of British Central Africa began with the advent of Livingstone” (Johnston, 1897: 60). Livingstone started his explorations in 1851 from the Cape of Good Hope until he reached the Central Zambezi. Livingstone was determined to search for the reported great lake out of which the Shire River flowed to join the Zambezi. His African explorations led him and Sir John Kirk (a medical officer) finally to reach the South of Lake Nyasa on the 16th of September 1859.

In 1863 the British government recalled Livingstone and his expedition and they quit Zambezia in 1864. Johnston explains that the British government was at that time discouraged from any further work in South Central Africa because of the political opposition shown by the Portuguese. Other obstacles included the absence of an easy way into the Zambezi River which was apparently dangerous. However, David Livingstone later returned on further African expeditions. He played a major role in the abolition of the slave trade in Eastern Central Africa. Johnston noted that “as the direct result of Livingstone’s work, slavery and the slave trade were at end with the British Central Africa Protectorate, and were fast disappearing in the regions beyond under the South Africa Company; and the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar was to be decreed as a final triumph of Livingstone’s appeal” (Johnston, 1897: 157-158).

Livingstone’s expeditions in Africa show the role which he played in encouraging other missions to set up mission stations in Nyasaland with the aim of spreading Christianity, establishing hospitals, schools and introducing trade in goods in place of the slave trade. The Christian missions in Africa affected many aspects of life such as religion, health, education, and economic and political structures. Nyasaland was among the African nations where Christian missions played a major part in promoting literacy and the establishment of schools. As the result of Livingstone’s connections with the Church of Scotland, Scottish missionaries had a special concern in the lives and social activities of

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* The material from Sir Harry Johnston has been extensively used for the documentation of the early years of Dr. Livingstone’s expeditions in Africa.
Africans in Nyasaland. In the pre-colonial era, for instance, Scottish missionaries served as a pressure group with the aim of drawing Nyasaland into the orbit of British colonial rule7 (Mufuka, 1977).

Following Livingstone’s footsteps more missionaries of his church started arriving in Nyasaland from 1875. Under the leadership of Dr. Robert Laws the Free Church of Scotland established a mission station at Cape Maclear in the Southern Region of Nyasaland. This is where Dr. Robert Laws started the first school in Nyasaland in 1875. He enrolled one boy as his first scholar. As Smith et al. (1971) and Pretorius (1967) mentioned, this was the beginning of the whole system of education in Malawi today. Pretorius quotes from Laws from Livingstonia and narrates how the first school started in Malawi.

One day in the year 1875 at Cape Maclear “a boy appeared with some men who sought work; the Doctor (Dr. Laws) pounced upon him and enrolled him as his first scholar...when the men left the boy went with them, but returned a fortnight and surprised the doctor with what he had retained. Presently there were four boys laboriously learning the letters and making progress” (Laws quoted in Pretorius 1967: 61).

From this quotation one can see that the first pupils to start schooling in Malawi were boys and not girls. However, establishment of a mission station in Cape Maclear was not an easy task. The missionaries encountered a number of problems, including illnesses, which forced them to move North to Bandawe in 1881 and establish a mission among the Tonga. Bandawe was instead seen as the suitable place to establish a mission station. As stated by Pretorius “Dr. Laws saw these small beginnings as the first step towards the establishment of an Institution at once industrial and educational,

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7 British Colonial rule was finally established in 1896.
to teach the truth of the Gospel and the arts of civilised life to the Africans” (Pretorius, 1967: 61).

The move to Tonga land in the North proved difficult as well. Johnston explained that the Free Church Mission was confronted with the immediate dilemma with the Ngoni-Zulu of the interior, who were gradually exterminating and enslaving the indigenous people of the lake-coast. Johnston also indicated that the mission played a dominant role in stopping the raids by the Ngoni. In addition, the mission served as a refuge for the Tonga who according to Johnston were eventually able to recover their position and assert themselves against the invaders (Johnston, 1897: 70).

In 1894 the headquarters of the Free Church Mission was established at Khondowe in Karonga, Northern Region. There, the Overtoun Institution began to be developed as the centre of higher educational work of the mission (Banda, 1982: 4). The Institution gave complete courses from learning the alphabet to theology. It comprised the primary school, the middle school, the normal school, the girls’ school, a technical school, a theological school and a school for the blind (Banda, 1982: 5, also cited in Pretorius, 1967: 61).

The mission schools were referred to as central mission stations and the small village schools were termed “bush schools”. The duration for the village schools was two years (Sub A and Sub B), or five years (from Sub A to Standard III). After a successful pupil had obtained reading skills (mainly of the Bible), he or she proceeded to the middle school, Standards IV, V and VI. The middle school also offered some vocational training in carpentry, agriculture, printing, clerical work, sanitary and medical services and sewing and tailoring (Jones, 1924). On successful completion of middle school students proceeded to a normal school that gave a two-year course for teachers.

The Overtoun Institution, as Banda (1982: 5) stated, was more than a school. It was an educational and religious community of the Africans from all over the country, under the
leadership of Scottish Missionaries. As a result of the work at the Institution there came into existence a body of stable and able village schoolmasters who laid a good foundation for primary teaching in the Northern Region and in parts of Zambia.

In 1875 the same year as Laws established the Free Church of Scotland Mission, the Church of Scotland (the other branch of the divided Presbyterian Church in Scotland) instituted the Blantyre Mission in the Southern Region of Nyasaland. The selection of Blantyre as the mission’s first settlement was the work of Henry Henderson who came along with the United Free Church Party under the leadership of Young (Banda, 1982: 90). Henderson was instructed to find a mission on behalf of the Church of Scotland to be named “Blantyre” after the birthplace of David Livingstone in Scotland.

The object of the first missionary party was to establish a mission station, which was to be industrial and evangelical and designed to be a nucleus of advancing centres of Christian life and civilisation to the Nyasa Region. Between 1876 and 1881 Blantyre Mission concerned itself more with Christian, commercial and colonial matters than educational (Banda, 1982). In 1883 the Blantyre Mission’s policy changed when Rev. Scott joined the mission. Banda discusses Rev. Scott’s objectives as:

Laying down the foundation of not Scotch nor English, but an African Church. His reference to building up the African church did not stop at the evangelical side of things but concern for industrial and limited forms of intellectual training for the African was provided in agriculture, simple village industries, the 3Rs and religious knowledge respectively (Banda, 1982: 10).

Blantyre station became the centre of not only educational and religious affairs but also political and social life of the Southern Region. Pretorius (1967) stated that missionaries were full of plans for the future. In 1892 educationalists came together in Blantyre to discuss a revised code for schools set up by the two Scottish missionaires.
The Universities Mission to Central Africa were actually the first to respond to Livingstone’s call inviting the Church of England to plant a Mission in Central Africa. In the 1860s a Christian Mission under Bishop Mackenzie was sent out from the two great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge under the name of the UMCA. UMCA missionaries settled in the Eastern part of the Shire Highlands in the South just as the invasions of the Muslim Yao slave raiders were beginning (Johnston, 1897). At the time the Yao inhabited much of the country between the Indian Ocean and Lake Nyasa. This was also the period when the Arabs from Zanzibar had begun to push their slave and ivory trading enterprises into the interior of Eastern Africa in the direction of Tanganyika, now Tanzania. As Johnston notes, in the Yao the Arabs found willing confederates in the slave trade and a people much inclined to Muhammadanism (Johnston, 1897).

The Arabs and the Yao thus had begun to dominate Nyasaland. The Northwest of the Shire Highlands still belonged to the Nyanja people, who were being converted to Christianity. At the beginning, the UMCA were concerned with the Yao invasions of the Nyanja people. Pauw explained that upon the UMCA arrival in the Shire highlands at Magomero in Southern Region, in the 1860s, they encountered and forcefully set free a group of 84 slaves. Pauw indicated that in fact Magomero was on the path of the slave-trading route. Therefore, the mission found itself committed to an armed campaign against Yao slavers and Magomero became something of a slave refugee camp. Moreover, within six months Bishop Mackenzie of the UMCA had nearly 160 liberated slaves under his care. Much criticism was levelled against Mackenzie and his party for the use of weapons and for interfering in inter-tribal disputes and the UMCA lost some influential support (Pauw, 1980: 18).

However, as Johnston states, the UMCA Mission did not succeed in defending their Nyanja converts from the attacks of the Yao. Moreover, the mission lost members from sickness and withdrew from the country at that time.
It will be remembered that the UMCA had been founded at the instance of Livingstone, but after establishing itself in the Shire Highlands in 1862, had been obliged to quit that country owing to the hostilities shown by the Yao (Johnston, 1897: 70).

The Universities Mission to Central Africa began their mission work again in Nyasaland in the 1880s. UMCA Mission was still interested in working with the ethnic groups in the neighbourhood of Lake Nyasa which were untouched. In 1881 Rev. Johnston and Charles Janson of the UMCA returned to Nyasaland to try to re-establish the mission station after the first attempts by Bishop Mackenzie failed. He had died near Chiromo in the Southern Region of Malawi in 1862.

When the UMCA returned to Nyasaland in the 1880s, they again encountered problems with continual raids by the Arabs and the Yao. To achieve greater protection, UMCA resolved to establish their headquarters on the Island of Likoma, which was about 8 miles from the East Coast of Lake Nyasa. The mission planned to build an “African Iona” on Likoma Island as a missionary centre resembling the Island of Iona on the West Coast of Scotland - this being an early outpost of Christianity. Bishop Chauncy Maples who joined Rev. Johnston became the Bishop of Likoma in 1895 but unfortunately he was drowned in Lake Nyasa a few months afterwards. An English architect, Frank George who designed and built the cathedral at Likoma, later revived the plan.

The policy of UMCA was to make education the instrument of the church’s mission. The teachers were evangelists first and foremost while teaching was a secondary consideration. Banda (1982) argued rightly that the mission schools’ curriculum was biased in favour of religious as opposed to general education. However, the mission opened a number of schools on the mainland both to the East and to the South West of the lake. Besides ordinary school instruction Rev. Johnston had already organised teacher education and was planning his floating college to train African teachers. It has also been stated that the mission station at Likoma Island progressed very satisfactorily.
In addition, to the head station other important stations were opened at Nkhotakota, Mponda, Malindi and Fort Johnston (now Mangochi).

However, the mission was short of school equipment because of its continuous refusal to accept government aid for its schools (Banda, 1982). Accepting government aid meant that the government would run the schools. UMCA also resented the idea that every teacher in a school must be qualified. UMCA believed that so long as the headteacher was qualified the school should receive a grant in respect of him and of any other qualified teachers that might be on the staff. They never accepted that eventually it would not be possible to have uncertificated teachers as assistants. UMCA also noted that other missions were not getting enough money in exchange for the government’s demands.8

Education did not progress well in areas such as Fort Johnston because although the UMCA did good work it was a small mission and had limited resources. Moreover, it was not so well established as the Presbyterian Church and did not have many missionaries.9 UMCA was also different from other missions because it never followed the Educational Code drawn up by the colonial government (Banda, 1982). UMCA minutes states that it was difficult to comply with government’s ordinance because there were few Moslems who attended village schools. Moreover, the hours demanded both for village and central schools were longer than the mission could manage. The minutes noted that:

The education we are able to give them at this stage is of necessarily of the most primitive kind, and that for various reasons, among which we would mention non-receptivity, undisciplined village life and child labour...In view of

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8 7/UMCA/1/2/9/1/1 Education. Includes Board of Education minutes of meetings 1927 March 11 – 1930 July 30, Malawi National Archives (MNA).
these facts are simply could not pledge ourselves to carry out the code in these small schools.\textsuperscript{10}

In addition to the UMCA's refusal to follow the Educational Code it appears that the UMCA was not keen to include industrial training in its curriculum. Banda (1982) notes that it was out of necessity that they provided a form of industrial training, as they needed carpenters, builders and gardeners in their mission stations. Banda speculates that the UMCA members were concerned not so much with industrial work but intellectual development. There is evidence that neither Rev. Johnston nor Bishop Chauney Maples of the UMCA believed in industrial training. For instance, it has been indicated that before his death, Bishop Chancy Maples had written an article criticising the industrial "principle" in mission work. Although discussions about industrial education were very important at the time, the debates about the importance of female education were not highlighted.

The headquarters of the UMCA were moved from Likoma to Mponda in Fort Johnston in 1952, a station which was opened in 1896. UMCA had a number of schools to the east, the west and on the lake itself. Pauw (1980) raised the important question of why the UMCA sought to evangelise predominantly Muslim areas such as Mponda in Fort Johnston and Nkhotakota where there could be little hope of many conversions. Two reasons have been given in explanation of this. The first reason is that the success of the Scottish Mission in the South and the North of the country had left a vacuum along the Islamic lakeshore, which the mission, with the Zanzibar background, felt able to handle. Secondly they saw themselves as being at war with Islam in the battle for people's souls (Pauw, 1980: 20).

\textsuperscript{10} 7/UMCA/1/2/9/1/1 Education. Includes Board of Education minutes of meetings 1927 March 11 – 1930 July 30, MNA.
Other missionaries who came to Malawi were from the Dutch Reformed Church Mission. The Dutch Reformed Church is the Church which the Dutch colonists brought with them to South Africa in 1652. As a result of the difficulties which the DRCM faced due to a shortage of ministers, ministers from Scotland were recruited. Pauw (1980) pointed out that the arrival of Scottish ministers in South Africa is of particular importance for the missionary enterprise of the Dutch Reformed Church in Malawi. The Dutch Reformed Church was the Church that was originally established as a branch of the Livingstonia Free Church of Scotland Mission (Banda, 1982). Its promising students used to be sent to Khondowe for further training (Pretorius, 1967).

The Dutch Reformed Church Mission opened its first mission station at Mvera in Dowa District in Central Region in 1889. In 1895 the first girl’s home, under a European matron, was opened. By the year 1910 more stations were established at Nkhoma in Dedza District, Mphunzi, Mlanda and Kasungu. The mission also took over some schools, which were once under the control of the Livingstonia Mission.

The mission’s principles of curriculum, whether in main stations or in village schools, were based on the fact that they wanted to instil a through knowledge of the word of God into the minds of the scholars, and also to prepare them for agriculture and simple village life (Banda, 1982: 8). The detailed statement of the policy, which was endorsed in the 1935 policy statement, laid down the principles and methods of its mission work. Pauw (1980) mentioned that the policy started with the task of proclaiming the Gospel, and the gathering in of souls for the kingdom of God. However, it also cautioned that Christianity must not rob the nation of its language and culture, and, therefore, education should be based upon traditional culture.

Other active missionary activity included White Fathers (1891); Zambezi Industrial Mission (1892); Nyasa Industrial Mission (1898), Providence Industrial Mission (1900) and South Africa General Mission (about 1900). These missions were established in the Southern Region. The early mission activities influenced a few Africans in
Nyasaland who founded independent African missions. Africans were involved in church work as well as schoolwork. For instance, John Chilembwe founded his own mission in 1899 (a branch of the Providence Industrial Mission) in his home in Chiradzulu in the Shire highlands. This was after he attended one of the schools run by Scottish missionaries in Blantyre in Nyasaland and also after completing his training in America. Within a few years outstations of the mission were established and schools and churches built (Hulsbomer and Belker, 1991).

Until 1913 the colonial authorities were pleased with Chilembwe’s work. He helped the class of “under-privileged black” people with practical work. Hulsbomer and Belker explain that “by means of education and independent economic activity he laid the foundation for the emancipation of Africans from Europeans” (Hulsbomer and Belker, 1991: 22). The Providence Industrial Mission schools, as Shepperson and Price (1958) noted, were the most important and probably the most effective. As a result, a few educated Africans formed their own independent schools. Up to the World War I, as Lamba (1985) notes, African education and female education, enjoyed an impressive profile overall in official circles. Shepperson and Price mention that:

There was one certain element in Chilembwe’s teaching at this time, which if it was by no means absent from the other missions, did not seem to have the same note of urgency for them as it did for Chilembwe: the training and development of African women (Shepperson and Price, 1958: 173).

Chilembwe was following an example of the Blantyre missionaries who had encouraged the education of African women from the mid 1890s. Chilembwe’s wife was actively involved with women’s education. She taught day school which included sewing classes. Chilembwe’s letter to the Foreign Mission Board Secretary of the National Baptist Convention in America in 1912 noted the activities carried out by his wife such as discouraging early marriage among young girls. He added that:
The world will not go forward as it should till women have been taught and have learned to take the place God has ordained for them as man's helpmate—his equal, not his slave (Shepperson and Price, 1958: 175).

However, Chilembwe encountered problems in financing his educational, church work and other schemes. “Chilembwe’s letters to his American headquarters were full of urgent appeals for more money, because his own people could raise comparatively little for his ambitions” (Shepperson and Price, 1958: 175). One could argue that Chilembwe depended upon external aid to finance his educational work. Chilembwe’s interest in female education was short lived as he was assassinated as a result of his 1915 uprising.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the Livingstonia Mission had established a renowned educational system and trained hundreds of African teachers. Africans included Charles Domingo and Yesaya Chibambo who were educated at the Overtoun Institution in Livingstonia. Charles Domingo carried out the work of the Seventh Day Baptist Church in the Chitipa area in the North independently. In 1911, he wrote a letter to Joseph Booth in America saying that people in one of the villages asked him to have a school to train their sons and daughters (Ross, 1996: 133). Yesaya Chibambo, according to Ross, was the first recipient of the Honours Diploma for Schoolmasters. In 1921 he wrote a letter to the Livingstonia Mission Council in order to register dissatisfaction with the conditions of service applied to African employees of the Mission (Ross, 1996: 155).

One of the issues he pointed out was that among all the Mission workers, the teachers were the people who suffered most due to the working conditions. For instance, teachers lacked enough materials for their work. Shepperson and Price (1958) noted that some Africans resented the discipline and the standards of the Scottish mission schools, which did not offer a quick and easy road to the status they desired. The overall result was a multiplication of independent African schools and churches.
This early account of the missionaries' activities in Malawi provides an overall understanding of the missions’ educational policies. It is evident that in developing educational work there was little debate on gender policies. Missionaries went to Nyasaland with their own agenda and without investigating the type of education which was suitable for both women and men. The next section aims at exploring further how the communities responded to the development of schools and self-help projects. It is hoped that the past history will help in understanding the present situation of communities’ attitudes towards self-help projects such as the development of village schools.

Communities’ Involvement in the Establishment of Schools

When missionaries started establishing schools in Malawi from 1875, communities played a dominant role in the construction of schools in villages. It was made clear from the beginning that the policy of the Church of Scotland was for the communities to build churches and schools. The church emphasised that:

We will not send a teacher unless you build schools and pay for the teacher.\textsuperscript{11}

The extent to which the communities were involved in self-help projects was reported in \textit{Life and Work} in 1903. The Church of Scotland gave a description of the school as being built by the people themselves. It was stated that:

Several villages generally combine together to build a school, in some convenient place as a centre. On Sundays the school is used as a meeting house and there the Gospel story is told to people (\textit{Life and Work}, 1903: 2).

\textsuperscript{11} Interview with Rev. Tom Colvin on 11\textsuperscript{th} February, 2000.
In 1904 the educational department of the Blantyre Mission reported the enthusiasm of communities for having schools in their villages. It noted that:

Many new schools have been opened by us at the request of the people of various districts, and as these requests are more numerous than we can at present undertake to accede to, and the districts from which they come are so widely apart, we feel confident that a general desire for education is passing over the people as a whole (Life and Work, 1904: 3).

It is important to emphasise that Nyasaland had a long-standing African tradition of communal working that was there long before missionaries went there. Africans had a tradition of working together in communal tasks such as clearing paths and agricultural activities for the benefit of the whole community. No payments were made, as they were responsible to the community. Rev. David Scott emphasised the policy of self-help. He insisted that the community should build a school and find a teacher to teach, and that the church was going to pay for the teacher. Communities were willing to do the work because of their tradition of working together.

Rev. David Scott, therefore, only used already existing traditional communal activity. He developed what was African community activity.

Communities' involvement in the development of schools continued over the years. Up till the 1950s people were desperate to have schools in their areas because they saw men and women who worked as clerks, although there were not many girls working at the time. Therefore, communities competed in building schools. Only communities which came forward with that effort were given some assistance towards building more classrooms to add to the basic format of three classrooms.

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12 Interview with Dr. Andrew Ross on 22nd February 2000.
13 Interview with Dr. Kenneth Ross on 18th October 2000.
14 Interview with Dr. Andrew Ross on 22nd February 2000.
The church did not force people and it made it clear that the church will not work where people did not need them.\textsuperscript{16}

The education department of the Blantyre Mission offered money to the committee formed in villages to be used in paying builders and carpenters. The condition was for the communities to mould sufficient bricks and provide labour before the department released the money. The committee then applied for the money and suggested a building plan. The mission would then give money for three classrooms. The communities saw the advantages of education, and they asked for more money to construct more classrooms. The money was used by the communities to pay for the carpentry, and buy cement and window frames. This procedure was the same for teachers' houses.

The communities were very keen and the mission had far more applications from the village schools. Self-help projects were the basis in all fields, i.e. agriculture. Moreover, self-help became a slogan and was widely accepted.\textsuperscript{17}

The Annual Report for 1938 has indicated that the Ekwendeni Station of the Livingstonia Mission in the North had successful years in increasing in enrolment rates because of the spirit of self-help. The report mentioned that this was as a result of making the community responsible for the school. It was reported that the chief and his people were responsible for the building and upkeep of the school, and for the attendance of the children. Moreover, rules were stiffened in that if the school was not looked after, it would be immediately closed (this is in dramatic contrast with the present situation of schools in Malawi which will be discussed in Chapter Six). The fact that no schools were closed showed how the community valued education.

\textsuperscript{16} Interview with Rev. Tom Colvin on 11th February 2000.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
It was seen that supervisors were actively involved in raising the standard of teaching in village schools (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1938: 21). Pauw also indicates that a self-help slogan was emphasised within the DRCM. The local communities built most village school buildings (Pauw, 1980: 314). However, the communities’ involvement in the development of schools was not impressive among the Yao Muslims.

It can be argued that the Yao Muslims did not advance communities’ involvement in educational developments by the UMCA to the extent of other missions, because of their resistance to western education. Bone (1987) made it clear that by the time missionaries entered Malawi in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries found the Koran being taught in madrassas (Koranic schools) in certain towns around the lake. For instance, in 1891, at Mponda, it was discovered that there were twelve madrassas classes with their own mwatimu (teachers) (Bone, 1987: 28). Moreover, chiefs who were converted to Islam backed the construction and building of mosques. Furthermore, as Bone mentioned, sheikhs opposed the setting up of mission schools.

Elston (1971) describes how the UMCA took a different angle from the Church of Scotland in the establishment of schools. The difference from other missions like the Church of Scotland and the DRCM, where the communities asked the missions to have schools in their areas, was that the UMCA, missions had to explore and negotiate the possibilities of having schools with the chiefs. Elston explained that the procedure was for the missionaries to first pay an exploratory visit to the new area, perhaps taking some cloth for presents and barter, and to sound out the chief or headman about establishing a school in the village. If the responses were favourable, then a married teacher would be sent to begin the work. Schools would be held outside the borrowed hut, that became the teacher’s house, with some school equipment. The procedure was that:
If the work flourished a school would be built, otherwise the teacher would be withdrawn to another area (Elston, 1971: 48).

As already mentioned the function of the UMCA schools was mainly religious rather than educational. Elston mentioned that “for the few years that the pupils came under the influence of the mission, what the child was taught of religion was vastly more important than that he should know how to read and write (quoted in Elston, 1971: 48-49). Therefore, suspicions of the connection between education and Christianity were the driving force behind Muslims’ reluctance towards educational developments. In this regard, Muslims were adamant in preserving their religious status. This attitude also affected advancement in women’s education.

Elston explained that the UMCA missionaries saw how women feared the thought of becoming Christians; for this meant cutting themselves off to a certain extent from their fellows and breaking with customs which meant so much to women (Elston, 1971: 50). Women Muslims’ attitudes were noted as early as 1910 when Fr. Ker of UMCA wrote that:

> As to general work I do believe we are beginning to move in this almost desperately and despairingly difficult district...the women and girls remain our great difficulty, refusing to come themselves and opposing others doing so...what a barrier Muhammadanism is to our work (quoted in Blood, 1955: 28).

The account of UMCA’s work among the Muslims revealed some negative response towards education, which affected both men and women. Blood mentioned that the difficulty of the work at Mponda was in no way diminished as time went on and in 1914 Mponda was described as “almost the hardest station in the mission” (Blood, 1955: 63). However, missions such as the Church of Scotland show that both men and women were involved in construction of schools. The question remains of whether this involvement impacted upon female education. At this point it is important to explore further the
developments of female education and to examine the missionaries' attitudes towards its advancement.

**Developments of Female Education by Christian Missions**

This section will start by pointing out that in the literature reviewed referring to the early years of missionaries’ educational work it is suggested that boys were the first pupils to attend village schools. For instance, in 1897 it was reported that there were 302 boys attending the Overtoun Institution in the North but the report did not specify the existence of girls at the Institution. Other missions such as DRCM and UMCA all confirm the fact that it was boys who first received schooling in Malawi. One can speculate that the communities’ attitudes and a lack of understanding of the importance of female education might have been the driving force towards this resistance. Lamba (1984a) argued that when Christian missionaries introduced education to Africans in village schools, it was mostly men who were interested in or given the chance of attending these schools.

However, mission policies also played a part by not particularly emphasising education for girls. For instance, the UMCA’s policy specifically mentioned that: “our highest aim in educating the boys is to fit as many as we can for the position of teachers and evangelists when they go out from us” (quoted in Elston, 1971: 48). The omission of female teachers constrained girls’ education, as women teachers were needed to act as role models to girls.

Therefore, initially, female education was limited to preparing girls to become good Christian wives, with limited access to professions such as teaching and nursing (Rotberg, 1965; Lamba, 1984a). According to Lamba, missionaries worked in close contact with the Africans. As a result, they noticed the activities that were carried out by women comprised mainly caring for children and domestic responsibilities.
Therefore, apart from reading the Bible, their curriculum was centred upon their activities as mothers.

Lamba argues that the limitations of the first missionaries' curriculum were due to adaptation of the British way of life before the World War II. He argues that the British rated their women as intellectually inferior to men, "their intelligence adequately serving only domestic demands" (Lamba, 1984a: 150). It can be rightly argued that in the Scottish missions the curriculum for girls was adapted to a Scottish way of life and attitudes. For it was not until the 1920s, after the World War I, that women in Scotland were becoming teachers and, therefore, moved into teaching professions. Women teachers were sent into Africa to act as role models to girls.\(^\text{18}\)

It is evident from the literature reviewed that disparities between boys and girls started showing in the early years after the establishment of schools. It has been reported that by 1910, the UMCA had 61 schools with enrolment of 2,357 boys and 1,381 girls. The Livingstonia Mission had 518 schools with enrolment of 24,472 boys and 16,714 girls by 1920. The DRCM reported 193 schools with an enrolment of 11,016 boys and 9,021 girls and the Blantyre Mission had a total of 104 schools with enrolment of 3,660 boys and 774 girls. However, reports do not show figures of those retained in schools. Therefore, the presentation of the enrolment rates does not necessarily mean that all enrolled pupils completed their schooling.

Reports also show that the problems affecting schooling were in part, due to attendance rates. The constraints on female education were also due to communities' attitudes. For instance, in *Life and Work* the Blantyre Mission complained of a lack of attendance in village schools. The average of attendance was much lower than enrolment figures, particularly so for girls.

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\(^\text{18}\) Interview with Dr. John McCracken on the 29\(^\text{th}\) March 2000.
Parental attitudes towards education have been mentioned as an early contributory factor for low attendance in schools. The educational department at Blantyre Mission in Nyasaland reported that:

Now when we consider that this is in a land where education is not only not compulsory, but that the parents do not exercise any control whatever over their children, ("They are our children" they say, "not our slaves, and can please themselves") these figures compare not at all unfavourably with the average home results obtained under far different conditions (*Life and Work*, 1904: 9).

The past history reveals that the communities' lack of efforts and encouragement in sending children to school contributed to low attendance rates in schools. Communities' attitude towards pupils' schooling continues to affect retention rates in schools, as explored in Chapter Six. Missionaries encountered problems in convincing the communities about the importance of schooling. Missionaries admitted that: "To teach is nothing: but one has first to convince the headmen and then boys and girls one by one that there is any use in being taught". Furthermore, missionaries found themselves in a trap when the villagers asked them: "what's the good of going to school, we get no pay for it" (*Life and Work*, 1894: 9). This question continues to be relevant even today in Malawi. Explorations in Chapter Five reveal that parents appear not to be interested in the development of schools, as they are not paid to do so. Moreover, parents, non-enrolees and drop-outs, repeatedly suggested that if the government provides food, clothes and educational materials children would be enrolled in schools.

However, there were more pressing issues such as a lack of supervision and inadequate teachers in village schools and also cultural attitudes which affected the effectiveness of village schools. In addressing these issues the Educational Commission to East Africa interrogated the conditions of education in East Africa. One of the purposes was to "investigate the educational needs of the people in the light of the religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions (Jones, 1924: xiii). It is, therefore, important at this
point to discuss the Commission's Report in Africa. In this Report Jones discusses the predicament of education in East Africa. It is also a significant account in which, amongst many other issues, girls' and women's education in the early 1920s in Nyasaland is discussed.

The Phelps-Stokes Report on Education in East Africa

Due to the work of the missionaries, interest and concern for education in Africa were given special consideration during the first decade of the twentieth century. Lewis (1962) suggested that a more critical attitude toward the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of the provision of education in Africa was regarded as an important aspect of civilisation.

Miss Caroline Phelps-Stokes established the Phelps-Stokes Fund in 1911. The purpose of the Phelps-Stokes Fund was for the research and the publication of the results of the research in the education of the black people both in Africa and the United States. The Commission was set up and comprised representatives of both the American and the European missionary societies working in Africa. Thomas Jesse Jones, an American of Welsh birth and the Educational Director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, was the chairman of the Commission. It also had the President of the Jeanes Fund, Dr. James H. Dillard and an African representative, James E. K. Aggrey. The Commission also comprised the special woman's representative, Mrs. Vischer, who prepared a special chapter on education of women and girls. This indicates that female education has been a longstanding problem.

The Phelps-Stokes Trustees, in co-operation with various governments and missionary societies, had already sent a Commission to the West and South Africa in 1920-21. However, the East Coast was not included in the survey because of limited time and resources. Following Conferences held in England in the spring and summer of 1923, it
was agreed that the survey of East Africa under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund should be carried out. Participants agreed that they wanted "to explore the experience of the work as to what was the best and most helpful form and type of education that they would provide to the Africans for the purpose of giving light to New Africa" (Jones, 1924: xix). The Commission to East Africa was authorised to proceed by the Trustees of the Phelps-Stokes Fund at their meeting on November 21, 1923.

The Trustees of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the members of the Educational Commission to East Africa believed in the power of education as a factor towards civilisation.

They believe that there is no boy or girl in the world who cannot be helped to a higher, better and more useful life through the right kind of education (Jones, 1924: xv).

This belief indicates that there was evidence of some concern about the importance of girls' education in order for them to participate in the development of civilisation. According to Jones, the Trustees and members of the Commission commented that the type of education then being provided in Africa, Europe and America was not the best for the masses of the people.

The most important task of the Commission to East Africa was to try to find the types of education to fit the needs of the black people, the masses, and of the black leaders of Africa. "The members of the Commission were convinced that all education must be of a character to draw out the powers of the African and to fit him to meet the specific problems and needs of his individual and community life" (Jones, 1924: xvii). On the other hand women’s education was referred to as of “special needs” (see Jones, 1924: 339). In this regard female education was seen as significant in improving home management. In addition, educated women were needed as teachers in village schools and nurses especially for maternity work in hospitals.
The Commission visited a number of schools in the towns and rural areas in Nyasaland and other countries in East Africa. The report noted that the investigation of African education was prompting the Commission to emphasise the adaptation of education to the needs of the community. The real tension of the Commission was between the adaptation and modernisation of the community. It was, therefore, suggested that "the first responsibility of the Commission was to eliminate aims that were obviously antagonistic to the best interests of the Africans and of the Colony and to harmonise those aims that are natural, reasonable and desirable in the development of Africa and Africans" (Jones, 1924: 7).

Government, missions and settlers were ready to agree that the development of character was a vital requisite in all-educational activities. The Commission posed the development of character as a challenge because they believed in the power of education to mould the minds, characters and habits of the youth. To develop character it was recognised that there would be "the formation of right habits that deepen through practice into principle and the influence of religious teaching with its expression in personal, school and community life" (Jones, 1924: 12). The old concept of education, as Jones noted, was mainly of transmitting the cultural knowledge of the past; thereby supplying the information that would give the recipient a cultivated mind. The modernisation of village schools to suit the development of the community life in this respect was challenging.

The impressions of the change of bush schools inspired the Commission to recommend the introduction of the Jeanes School in Africa. The Jeanes School was an institution borrowed from the work with rural blacks in the Southern States of the United States of America. The Jeanes School was important in training women teachers for girls in schools, infants and women in villages. The next section will explore issues directly related to female education as discussed in the special chapter on the education of women and girls in Jones's report.
The Education of Women and Girls in the Phelps-Stokes Report

The Commission, as mentioned earlier, was interested in looking into female education. Jones's report includes a chapter on the education of women and girls, which was prepared by Mrs. Vischer who accompanied her husband with the Commission in East Africa. Mrs. Vischer was able to gather information and other material from women missionaries. It is seen that despite the limitations of female education the attitude of missions was slowly changing. It was reported that missionaries were increasingly conscious of the need for fuller and more advanced provision for the training of women as teachers, evangelists, social workers and nurses. The missionaries acknowledged the importance of women teachers in schools as a tool for encouraging girls' education and they called for the training of women teachers to be increased.

The need for this change was illustrated by the statement by a woman missionary in East Africa that it was wiser for education to develop simultaneously for boys and girls rather than for one to wait on the other (Jones, 1924: 347-348). Indeed Jones's report indicated that women missionaries put considerable effort into supporting women's education. The report focused on the importance of the education of women and obstacles and difficulties that hindered the achievement of girls' and women's education, not only in Nyasaland, but also in other countries of East Africa. Women missionaries argued that the need of preparing the African for leadership of the masses and for participation in the widening opportunities of modern life applied to both men and women (Jones, 1924: 341).

Women's education was seen as an important aspect in improving the living standards of the community, which included home management, and decreasing infant mortality rates. The traditional position of women in African society was also seen to be influential. It was reported that women took the lead in religious matters, household duties, in the field and in schoolwork. Moreover, missionaries found few differences in intelligence between girls and boys.
Despite the position of women in African society, the Commissions (both to the West and to East Africa) noted with regret the neglect of adequate provision for the education of women and girls (Jones, 1924: 342). For instance, it was reported that most girls hardly attended school beyond the two-year village school. Constraints were related to the cultural practices and customs imposed upon women. It was seen that "the grasp of custom closed more firmly round the lives of women than of men" (Jones, 1924: 346).

Another obstacle to girls' and women's education in Africa was the attitude of the Africans themselves. Mrs. Vischer reported that in one ethnic group, men objected to the opening of a girls' school because women "already knew too much." The Commission endorsed, from their own observation, Mrs. Vischer's finding of a widespread reluctance of conservative parents - especially fathers - to allow the education of their girls.

In their eyes education will make their daughters abhor and rebel against conditions accepted in the past. These included the customary arbitrary disposal of girls in marriage for a price arranged in their childhood, the perpetuation of polygamy, the heavy burden of field work, the disability and subserviency imposed on women in social life, and the lack of opportunity for self-expression (Jones, 1924: 348).

Thus parents believed that traditional beliefs were in competition with western education and that western education was going to change their daughters' attitudes towards traditional practices. There is continuing relevance today of the competition between traditional education and beliefs and formal schooling as explored in Chapter Six. The Jones's report confirmed such parental fears when it reported that the conflict between traditions and western civilisation had been accentuated in the past by the provision of an education too little related to the actual life of the home and the community. Therefore, the Commission argued that it was presenting an education which was related to the community life that would encourage the interest of the parents and also to guide
the younger generation of women to find the true field for the utilisation of their knowledge.

What the Commission represented in the report continues to constitute an interesting area of study even today. As discussed in Chapter One constraints to female education continue to affect access to and retention of girls in schools. The Jones’s report addressed issues concerning resistance to girls' and women's education and considered education within the context of African social and economic conditions. This helped African countries to identify the importance of female education in Africa, and brought to light issues which prevented women from achieving literacy skills. The next section examines further Nyasaland’s educational issues which were identified in the report.

Nyasaland’s Educational Issues as Recorded in the Phelps-Stokes Report

The report’s analysis of Nyasaland revealed that approximately 240,000 school age children were expected to be in school. However, only 146,800 were reported to be actually enrolled by the various missions because of poverty and the inadequacy of many of the schools. This was attributed to the lack of aid from the government or the assistance of a Director of Education to the missions’ work (Jones, 1924: 190). The report also noted that the Nyasaland Educational Code, which was drawn up in 1910 by the United Missionary Conference, was too complicated and that its content was not suitable. For instance, its emphasis was on literary subjects and neglected subjects relating to health, agriculture and crafts, these being directly related to community life.

Educational statistics in Nyasaland indicated that enrolment rates increased in the 1920s. However, more boys than girls enrolled in mission stations and village schools. For instance, the Church of Scotland in Blantyre reported that there were 14,908 pupils in the system, of whom 10,760 were boys and 4,148 were girls. Commenting on this disparity between boys and girls, Jones suggested that:
The small proportion of girls probably reflects both the indifference of the Natives to the education of women and also the failure of the Mission to give adequate emphasis to this phase of their work (Jones, 1924: 203).

However, lack of teachers, especially women, in village schools also continued to contribute to the low enrolment rates for girls. Jones’s report noted that the increasing educational interest of the colonial government might result in larger financial resources so that the Institution could provide more instruction and training for the teachers of the small village schools (Jones, 1924: 208).

Other missions such as the United Free Church of Scotland Mission which was situated among the Ngoni in Northern Nyasaland was reported to have made good progress in educational, industrial work and in the improvement of African life. However, reports of the Livingstonia Mission also noted that boys largely attended the primary school, and only a few girls attended the Girls’ School.

Despite the under representation of girls in some mission schools, Jones’s report noted that missions created activities for women and girls. Curriculum for women included sewing, cookery, hygiene and the treatment of simple diseases. It showed that the Dutch Reformed Church also developed its work among girls and women in Nkhoma in Central Region which was comprised mainly of the Nyanja ethnic group. Jones’s report does not verify figures for girls who enrolled in schools by the DRCM Mission. However, Pauw (1980) argued that the DRCM succeeded in enrolling a higher per cent of girls in its schools. He noted that as early as 1906 the number of girls enrolled amounted to 44.5% of the total school enrolment. Again, caution should taken into account here, because the number of pupils retained is not mentioned and yet there were social cultural constraints which affected the retention of girls in education in the Central Region.
It is almost certainly the case that the work of women missionaries in the DRCM led to increased enrolment rates for girls. From the beginning the work amongst women and girls was supported by the Women’s Missionary League of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. The lady workers were mostly teachers whose task was to assist at station schools, help with the training of village school teachers and maintain contact with them at their schools, or lady workers whose responsibility was with girls in boarding homes, village evangelism and women’s instruction classes (Pauw, 1980: 199). Wives of missionaries also participated on a voluntary basis in those activities, and later, more especially, in the Church Women’s Organisation (Chigwirizano) and the instruction given to girls at puberty (Chilangizo) which had taken the place of the traditional initiation ceremonies.

It is evident that the DRCM succeeded in getting girls into school because of the work of the women missionaries and women teachers. The training of local women teachers and supervision of the village schools had an impact in accessing girls into schools. Missionaries also tried to keep girls in schools by eliminating some aspects of the initiation ceremonies for the Nyanja girls, which contributed to a lack of retention. Pauw adds that the Christian impact on society was great because of “the significant role played by women in the matrilineal Nyanja society. Both Christian and pagan girls were taken in, as far as possible in equal numbers” (Pauw, 1980: 200). However, it should be mentioned that there was still some resistance by the community to missionaries’ views about traditional practices of initiation ceremonies which will be explored in this chapter.

The work among women and girls at the DRCM was also limited to their activities in their homes. For instance, “the aims of the girls’ homes were to seek to lead them to faith in Christ and build up a good Christian character by impressing upon them principles of obedience, orderliness and helpfulness, while also training them as future wives and mothers of Christian families and as useful members of society (Pauw, 1980: 200). The Phelps-Stokes report mentioned that in such homes girls were trained in
basic skills in housecraft such as washing, iron, cooking. A further development was the training of nurses for a mission hospital and a clinic at Nkhoma.

The DRCM also involved both men and women in its informal education. Its emphasis was on agriculture and simple village industries. The work was planned to enable both men and women to become home workers. Basic skills for men included wood and ironwork, weaving, basket and mat work and many other kinds of village industries. The effectiveness of these programmes is questionable, especially in the area of agriculture, because there was a lack of teachers and instructors knowledgeable about agriculture. Jones reported that lack of trained teachers was a major problem in all missions across the country.

Jones also noted that the Universities Mission to Central Africa had a higher proportion of girls attending schools than the other missions. Jones (1924) reports that out of 7,592 pupils who were enrolled in 194 schools, 4,544 were girls. These figures prove that more girls participated in school than boys. However, it should also be noted that the UMCA was established on Likoma Island in the North of the country mostly inhabited by the Tonga people. Jones noted that at Likoma, the schools had 1,000 girls in attendance. This contribution from Likoma Island to the total number of girls participating in schooling (4,544) was proportionally greater than the numbers contributed by the mission schools at Fort Johnston and Nkhotakota considering that Likoma Island is much smaller than the catchment area associated with the latter. Blood notes that at Likoma “one of the most hopeful signs of the educational work was that there were as many girls in school as boys. But in the rest of the diocese, as indeed in the Mission generally, girls’ education lagged well behind the boys” (Blood, 1962: 38).

Jones’s report attributed the enrolment for girls at Likoma Island to “the very capable women teachers” (Jones, 1924: 201). UMCA made efforts in training women teachers which was a good strategy in attracting girls to schools. The Phelps-Stokes report
indicates that women, both single and married, obtained preliminary certificates and some were studying for the third and fourth certificates. Having women teachers in schools proved to be essential in accessing girls into schools, but the DRCM’s interweaving of formal and informal education was also important. Figure 2.1 shows a photograph of women teachers at Likoma.

Figure 2.1: Some Women Teachers at Likoma.

Another reason given for the UMCA’s success in attracting more girls to school was the unusual control that the mission had over the people especially on Likoma Island through its ownership of all the land (Jones, 1924). Banda, however, argues that it was
also due to the fact that as the Island was small, there were limited occupations, and the mission was seen as a suitable social meeting place where young people could find some form of activity (Banda, 1982: 3).

Murray’s studies on his visit to Africa in the late 1920s also illustrated the importance of adult education. He mentioned that in African society women suffered from educational segregation and this had adverse impact upon the community. For instance, illiterate women might be a stumbling block in the education of the children and in the development of the men themselves. Murray [1929] (1967) argued that education would have to include both men and women and, still more important, it would have to develop in men a sympathy with women’s education (Murray, [1929] (1967). Mrs. Donald Fraser, a woman missionary of the Free Church of Scotland in Nyasaland stated that the moral responsibility of Christian parents should be emphasised for the proper training of their families.

In this way they can bring up their family under their own roof, shielded from constant association with undesirable companions, kept from close contact with foul dances and public beer drinking, sent regularly to school, and accustomed to Christian worship in private as well as in public (Cited in Jones, 1924: 29).

Citing the benefits of women’s education Mrs. Fraser stated that appreciation of the benefit of education was slowly increasing among the women. “Their school was no longer composed of old ladies wrestling with their syllables, but was showing an increasing percentage of young mothers of families who seek knowledge because missionaries impressed on them the necessity of being educated if they do not wish their children, who regularly attend school, to despise their mothers on account of their ignorance” (Cited in Jones, 1924: 31).

Despite the impressive results on women’s education for particular missions, it is difficult at this point to assess and evaluate achievements of female education in
Nyasaland Protectorate during the 1920s. Jones's report expressed a lack of attendance by girls in schools and the lack of quality in mission schools. It is evident from Jones's report that the quality of schools was not up to the standard. In addition, there was no involvement of the Protectorate's administration in assisting missionaries' efforts in running the schools.

The report showed that women missionaries were concerned about, and became more aware of, the illiteracy problem among women and the consequences that followed such as the appalling high rate of infant mortality (Jones, 1924: 339). The report, therefore, appealed for the effective education of women. The report suggested that the weight of responsibilities borne by women required the most serious and thoughtful consideration by all concerned with the welfare of village life. According to Jones, experienced missionaries observed the heavy strain that was imposed on the life of a woman, with duties such as supplying and preparing food, gardening and other household duties, all of these making the education of women a necessity. The report noted that:

It is expected that social adjustments by which some of her tasks will be transferred to the men of the household will evolve, naturally, if a right attitude is created through education related to actual home and community needs (Jones, 1924: 339).

The achievements of social adjustments of transferring some of women's duties to men as suggested by Jones could possibly have been made if all the parties involved were willing to adjust. Involving men and women, home and school, the individual, local leaders and the community as a whole could have made these adjustments. Jones's report repeatedly urged the need for preparing the Africans for leadership of the masses and for participation in the widening opportunities of modern life in which both women and men should be included. Up to this period the missionaries controlled schools in Nyasaland. This impacted upon the quality of the village schools mainly because of a lack of supervision and evaluation, by the missionaries.
Murray's later visit to Nyasaland reported one mission which had nearly seven hundred village schools, yet there was only one European supervisor. These schools were not supervised frequently and lacked resources (Murray, [1929] 1967: 80). Jones's report mentioned that the failure of the schools in Nyasaland was the failure of the government to organise and correlate the splendid educational work of the missions with the various phases of colonial life. Moreover, there was no Department or Director of Education to confer with the Missions, to encourage them in their work, or to help them relate their influences to each other or to colonial needs (Jones, 1924: 216). These observations led the Commission to make recommendations for the colonial government to create the Department of Education. The recommendations stated that:

The first provision for education that should be made by the government is the appointment of a Director of Education and the organisation of a Department of Education, whose first duty shall be the evaluation of the education activities now maintained in the Colony (Jones, 1924: 216).

The next section, therefore, looks at further developments in education by the colonial government and explores changes in educational policy. The promotion of this and identification of constraints on female education will also be discussed.

- The Colonial Government's Initiatives and Educational Policies on Female Education

As the result of the Phelps-Stokes Report, there were further developments in girls' and women's education when the colonial government increased its involvement in education although missionaries controlled mission schools. Ormsby-Gore, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa (ACEA) in UK, reported that in 1924 the committee had engaged in the examination of educational activities in all Colonies, Protectorates, and Mandated Territories in East and
West Africa. The committee came to the conclusion that it was appropriate to issue a public statement and policy that would be a useful guide to all those engaged, directly or indirectly, in the advancement of education in Africa.

They were of opinion that such a statement will be particularly welcome to Directors of Education and to missionary bodies, who were playing such a large part in educational activities (Colonial Office, 1925: 2).

The Memorandum of 1925 on the Education Policy in British Tropical Africa commented on the necessity for girls' and women's education in Tropical Africa in general. However, the generalisations about difficulties in female education may be misleading since each country in Africa has differences in local tradition. The Memorandum argued that:

> It is obvious that better education of native girls and women in Tropical Africa is urgently needed, but it is almost impossible to over-state...the difficulties of the problem (Colonial Office 1925: 7).

As already discussed, the difficulties affecting female education included cultural practices which regarded women as inferior to men. In this regard education for women and girls was not viewed as important. The conflict lay between western education and traditional upbringing of women. Another factor was a lack of women teachers to act as role models in village schools.

The educational policy that was developed for Tropical Africa was geared towards education for the whole community and adaptation to rural life. In respect of the agenda on community and adaptation, the ACEA simply took on the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Report. The first task of education, as stated in the Memorandum was “to raise the standard alike of character and efficiency of the bulk of the people” (Colonial Office, 1925: 4). This view recognised the importance of mass education in
the community. It was indicated that educational opportunities should be geared towards elementary education for boys and girls, beginning with the education of young children and adult education. It recommended that:

The administration of each colony should keep adult education constantly in relation to the education of children and young people (Colonial Office, 1925: 8).

The importance of co-ordinating adult literacy and primary school education was emphasised in the Memorandum, and has also been noted in Chapter One when reference was made to the work of King (1991) and Chlebowska (1990). The Memorandum further suggested that education of the whole community was important, as this would, in return, encourage the older people in the education of their children. This supports the opinion of educationalists, as discussed in Chapter One, that adult literacy plays a vital role in education of children. The aim of community education was to equip men and women with skills that would promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of local industries, the improvement of health, the training of people to manage of their own affairs, and the inculcation of true ideals of citizenship and service.

Educational policy with regard to girls and women in Tropical Africa was focused on the teaching of personal and domestic hygiene, in public health, in the care of the sick and the treatment of simple diseases, in child welfare and the care of the home. It was suggested that qualified women teachers would teach these subjects. The statement on Education in Tropical Africa, issued by the Advisory Committee of the British Colonial Office, indicated the need for extending education not only to girls but to adult women, with a view to strengthening the relations between older and younger generations and lessening the peril of revolt and social disintegration (Colonial Office, 1925).

Social disintegration was associated with children losing much that the old traditions had given them, and the older generation becoming estranged through their resistance to
cultural climate of the new education. It was, therefore, proposed that "side by side with the extension of elementary education for children there should be enlargement of educational opportunities for adult women as well as for adult men" (Colonial Office, 1925: 8).

The recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Report resulted in the government's creation of the Department of Education in 1926 (Pachai, 1973). In 1927 missions gathered at the Native Education Conference in Nyasaland to discuss the colonial government's proposals for the educational policy and problems. Missionaries were optimistic about the new educational policy because they maintained that education was necessary for the prosecution of evangelical work. Moreover, educationalists at that time agreed that education had to be founded on religion.

The government's proposal stated that "the scheme of education in the country was to be aimed at producing good, contented and loyal African citizens" (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 10). In this regard, the speech of Governor Sir Charles Bowring at the Conference noted that such a scheme of character training encompassed the proposal made by the Advisory Committee on Native Education which emphasised that "the greatest importance was to be attached to religious teaching and moral instruction" (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 11). Sir Charles Bowring, therefore, assured the delegates that the government would have little difficulty in agreeing that religious instruction must hold a place in the curricula for all types of schools.

The governor also commented upon the low quality of schools and particularly a lack of adequate trained teachers in mission schools. It was suggested that applications to open

19 The government was concerned about educated Africans such as John Chilembwe who laid the foundation for the emancipation of Africans from Europeans. The Chilembwe rising of 1915 was planned to overthrow the government and the old system. Threatened by the Chilembwe rising the government was, therefore, concerned with the independence of small local schools. The Commission of Inquiry into the Rising commented in Paragraph 44 of the Report "that in the absence of adequate supervision religious instruction may possibly be made a vehicle for undesirable political propaganda by native teachers" (see Shepperson and Price, 1958: 372).
new schools should not be made until qualified teachers were available. Lack of supervision in schools was seen as a contributory factor in the low quality of schools. He argued that:

The efficiency of schools cannot be maintained without frequent inspection and that constructive criticism, which an experienced inspector can give (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 13).

As a result of the problems, which have already been mentioned, encompassing a lack of supervision in village schools, the governor informed the delegates that the institution of a “Jeanes” School was proposed by the Education Department to train supervisors. The Jeanes School recommendation came straight from the Phelps-Stokes Report because of the government’s worry following the Chilembwe rising in 1915. The Chilembwe rising of 1915 was disastrous because Europeans became suspicious of African education and educated Africans.

When the Phelps–Stokes Commission visited Nyasaland in 1924, it urged that the primary need of native education was efficient and constructive supervision of village schools. Its opinion was that this could best be attained by the provision of visiting teachers similar to those employed by the Jeanes Fund in the Southern States of America, and called “Jeanes Teachers”. The Jeanes Teachers of America, named after the lady who provided the fund for their work and maintenance, spent all their time in the improvement of the small schools for blacks in the rural districts of the South. The object of the Jeanes Training Centre in Nyasaland was similar to the work of Jeanes Teachers of America but was modified to suit the local conditions. Sir Charles Bowring suggested that the government would secure additional funds for the establishment of a government “Jeanes” School. He suggested that the purpose of such a school was that:

Teachers could be trained for future work in any school, be it a government institution, a school attached to a Christian mission of whatever denomination, or a school
set up by the Muhammadan native population who might be reluctant to have their children at a school managed by a Christian mission (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 43).

At the Native Education Conference Rev. E.D. Bowman noted that the British Colonial Office recognised the value of the educational work done in the past by missions and hoped that the government would co-operate with the missions in future developments. However, Laws argued that the importance of religious teaching should be considered with regards to co-operation between missions and government. He also pointed out that the missions were funding the maintenance of buildings and the cost of equipment. The argument was that it would not be proper for the government to take control of schools whilst the missionaries continued to support such schools financially. The conference also drew out issues connected to female education. It was suggested that:

The various educational authorities should consider to develop girls’ education in the areas under their control by making a few suggestions as to ideals to be aimed at and how far these are possible and advisable in the present social and economic conditions of this country (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 36).

The debate on girls’ education was whether girls should be educated with boys throughout the educational system or only up to a certain stage and thereafter separately. Miss How who presented a paper on girls’ education suggested that in practice it was impossible to teach girls as efficiently as boys if they were kept in a separate school. This was due to a lack of adequate trained female teachers. It was also argued that a male teacher who had both a boys’ school and a girls’ school would give attention to the former over the latter. Another issue concerned the training of girls in boarding schools, or in their homes, because of the activities young girls carried out at home.

Miss How noted that children of five and six minded the smaller ones and helped in various household duties. Other opportunity costs of girls included cooking, pounding, and fetching water and firewood (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 37). The above
concerns about female education continue to affect girls' education in schools even today. Teachers' attitude towards girls in mixed schools is evident in primary schools. There is still the tendency of focusing more on boys than on girls. Child labour and opportunity costs also still continue to impinge upon girls' schooling. These issues are further explored in Chapter Six of this thesis.

Realising the value of influences from the home, the ladies' committee at the 1927 conference regarded the education of women as essential in any sound scheme of education. The delegates at the conference were, therefore, encouraged to continue with the provision of co-education and to have boarding schools for girls where special facilities for vocational training would be provided. Recommendations included the opening of centres for training women as nurses and midwives (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 39).

The setting up of the Education Department enhanced the colonial government's efforts to establish a training school called the Jeanes Training Centre, which was opened at Domasi in Zomba in 1929. In 1928 the generous offer by the American Carnegie Corporation to provide, for a period of five years, a grant of £1000 a year for Jeanes work made it possible to finance this new government scheme. The Jeanes training school was then the only government school in the Protectorate. All other schools were under mission management (Bowman, 1945). Before Jeanes training was begun in Nyasaland the Principal had studied, in America, the work of the American Jeanes visiting teachers and home demonstrators in the rural districts of the Southern States.

Many of these supervisors were women, but the low standard of the education of the women in Nyasaland and the restrictions of tribal life made it impossible to begin at that time to train single African girls for this type of work. It was realised that the Jeanes system as applied in America must be carefully adapted and expanded to suit African conditions (Bowman, 1945: 97-98).
Nevertheless, there were a number of problems in running the Jeanes’ Institutions in Africa. Commenting on the first Jeanes School in Kenya, King noted that there were pressing problems of staffing the institution which was meant to pioneer the educational revolution in Kenya. As King noted, "as the Jeanes School was to embody the new approach, with Jones's "Simples" of health, agriculture, home, and recreation, the staff must be convinced that there were valuable features in African notions of health and agriculture which could be developed, and African patterns of home life and recreation on which the village school syllabus could build" (King, 1971: 153).

The change of the village school syllabus to suit Jones's notion of adaptation to community life by tackling issues such as health, agricultural and industrial skills needed the combination of research into traditional African methods and western knowledge; and, as King pointed out, the consequent development of an education congruent with the African past. Problems affecting Jeanes’ Institutions were confirmed at the Jeanes Inter-territorial Conference in 1935 which was held at Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. Representatives of Jeanes Centres in Kenya, Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland attended the conference. During the discussions the chairman of the conference, Dr. Loram, said that in many parts of Africa little attempt had been made to enlighten the chiefs who had often been against educational progress. However, Nyasaland’s main contribution was the scheme for training chiefs and their wives and families. In this regard Loram believed that Nyasaland scheme together with other Jeanes training methods pointed out one way of bringing the African masses into a new way of living.

The experiment of bringing to one centre for joint training chiefs and headmen and their wives, of various ethnic groups and from widely separated districts, together with the adult men and women workers in their schools, villages and homes, had been a complete success from the point of view of contacts, co-operation and friendly relations (Bowman, 1945: 100).
The Centre selected the previously mission-trained teachers and retrained them to become teacher supervisors of the bush schools. King, commenting on the parallel Jeanes’ development in Kenya, noted that:

Dr. Dillard, president of the Jeanes Fund,...had stressed in Kenya that the most outstanding problem in the school system was that of the little bush schools, and that change there would affect the great majority of the school population... This argument was influential in both the government and missionary circles (King, 1971: 151).

In connection with this argument, the objectives of the Jeanes Training Centre were: improvement of class-room instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic; the adapting of school subjects to African life and environment; the enlargement of the scope of village school education; the creation of the school as a community centre and the provision of training in home craft and child welfare for wives of students in training (Pachai, 1973: 175). The main purpose of the Jeanes School was rural re-construction, using the village school and the home and family life of the Jeanes supervisor and his wife and family as its centres. It has been argued that the adaptation of the conventional school subjects to African life and environment was important as it prepared Africans with skills, which were suitable in the local conditions (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1928).

The advantage of the Jeanes School was that it encouraged wives of teachers to gain literacy skills who in return would teach their fellow women and girls. Women's subjects were, of course, domestic economy, midwifery and child-welfare. Hence adult literacy activities started to emerge from the Jeanes School. The Centre also trained chiefs, councillors, village headmen and their wives in various subjects mostly geared towards administration and development of their areas. After completing the two-year course a man supervised village schools in his area and he and his wife were engaged in community work (Colonial Office, 1932). This was a supplementary government addition to the mission supervision. Trained women proved to be a great asset after
their return to their homes. Some commenced classes for the women in child-welfare, cooking and sewing (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1938).

The educational reports showed the consistency in promoting women’s education but still limiting them to household activities. The Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonial Office in London set up a sub-committee on girls’ education on behalf of all colonies. The sub-committee consisted of women educationalists who laid down the principles of education for girls and women. The curriculum for girls was to be based on two principles that:

(a) The majority of girls will become wives and mothers and it is important that their education should be directed towards their future sphere of home making.

(b) Specialised work of teaching and midwifery and the stress laid in the school syllabus on agriculture and handicrafts will enable any woman to earn a living by following such industries as pot-making and mat-making, soap-making, market-gardening etc. (Colonial Office, 1932: 34)

This report showed that women educationalists also shared the same views as the colonial government of educating an African woman for home management. Furthermore, the report omitted to emphasise the need to train girls for teaching professions, and so this accentuated the lack of adequate number of female teachers.

It is also interesting to note that there was a continual emphasis on encouraging adult education with the aim of fulfilling the policy of mass education. For instance, the Memorandum on the Education of African Communities further reinforced the involvement of adults in boosting education to assist in the growth of rural communities. The emphasis was on the education of the young women and men. Considering the socio-economic situations of rural communities, the Memorandum suggested that the primary task of African education must be to assist in the growth of rural communities
that are established on the land, progressing economically and socially and producing both the crops required for their subsistence and, so far as markets and transport facilities permit, crops for export to enable them to pay for the import of commodities necessary for adequate nutrition and an improved standard of living (Colonial Office, 1935: 3).

On the 22nd of May 1941 the Advisory Committee on African Education decided to constitute a Sub-committee to consider the best approach to the problem of mass literacy and adult education and to make recommendations. The committee recognised that it was important to co-ordinate the efforts of the various agencies which included Africans themselves, in achieving mass education. The Advisory Committee urged that the improvement of community life depended upon the training of the whole community, and that measures must be taken to achieve this. An important point mentioned by the committee, was the neglect of female education in the past which was probably a major hindrance to the achievement of female literacy, and which had contributed to the illiteracy rates among African countries including Malawi. The committee pointed out that:

In the past there has been a tendency to emphasise from time to time the importance of one or other section of the community. The obvious place to begin was with the boys. The girls presented special difficulties and problems. The adult was left to the desultory efforts of individuals without any general aim or policy (Colonial Office, 1943: 6).

Following the devastation of the 1939-45 World War II, Nyasaland's colonial government formed a committee that consisted of metropolitan, and colonial economic and social planners. According to Lamba (1985) education was given a top priority in colonial Nyasaland's ten years development plan. The Post-War ideas on education were embodied in the Five-Year Education Plan produced mainly by the Nyasaland Advisory Committee on education. The report by the committee in 1944 covered all areas of primary, secondary, vocational and higher education for Africans, Europeans,
Asians and the coloured community. Education was crucial in participating in development activities.

Lamba (1985) noted that in 1944 it was estimated that 133,393 boys and 82,929 girls were in African schools. It should be noted that the African population as estimated in 1942 was around 2,140,00 of which 922,900 were under 18 years of age and of whom 481,600 were boys and 441,300 were girls (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1946: 40). The Development Report made suggestions to improve African education with the introduction of free primary education. The goal was to provide education to reach all African children living at home. The report stated that:

We consider that government should ultimately accept responsibility for the free primary education of the juvenile African community, using approved existing institutions where it is desirable to do so and assuming full control and entire financial responsibility...Free but compulsory, universal education should be the ultimate aim for primary courses. We consider it desirable that primary schools should be provided within the reach of all African children living at home; and that attendance at government schools should not be enforced where efficient Mission schools are already available (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1946: 40-41).

The aim was to introduce compulsory universal primary education with encouragement for female education. Such encouragement included the recognition of the value of the work of trained African women. Commenting on female education the report stated that:

It will be a matter for close investigation to what extent the lag in female education can be made up in the general improvement in educational facilities recommended in this report; and to what extent special measures for the encouragement of the education and training of women and girls will be necessary (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1946: 40).
Africans’ impatience for educational progress was reaching breaking point and the Nyasaland African Congress deputation led by C. J. Matinga saw the Secretary of State in London in 1948 to discuss further issues, mainly about education. The Acting Director of Education in Nyasaland, A.G. Fraser, observed that educational development in Nyasaland needed both a more efficient primary system and for Africans to reach higher levels of education through the improvement of teachers (Lamba, 1985).

However, a proposal for free primary education was not implemented during the colonial period. Economic pressures on the colonial government had prevented the abolition of school fees and instead favoured an increase in fees. According to the Education Report the government later felt that “whilst it was impossible to introduce free education at the time, it was considered that it would be inconsistent with modern practice to increase the rate of fees levied” (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1949: 16). As a result, it was decided to make no change in the maximum rates of school fees to be permitted in the next Five-Year Plan.

Reports, therefore, already reveal hopes of the introduction of free primary education. However, this policy was not put into practice because of the growth of the population, and the limited funds which the colonial government had to invest on education. The colonial government did not have an adequate budget for schools instead it offered grants to missions. Moreover, the annual grants given to the missions were not enough and did little to improve the quality of schools (Shepperson and Price, 1958). In addition, from the 1940s the population of young people was rising. The government was also improving the quality of senior primary schools and of teachers and decreasing the number of unassisted schools. It was felt that unassisted schools were not providing literacy skills because many pupils, especially girls were dropping out.

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20 Interview with Dr. Kenneth Ross on 18th October 2000.
21 Interview with Dr. John McCracken on 29th March 2000.
The Post-War Development Plan Committee’s awareness of problems facing female education was demonstrated by its endorsement of the government’s plan to invite female educationalists from Britain to visit Nyasaland with a view to setting the framework upon which female education should be conducted. The Colonial Office of Enquiry into the education of women and girls arrived in Nyasaland on the 30th August 1947. It consisted of Miss F.H. Gwilliam, Assistant Advisor on Education to the Secretary of State, and Dr. Margaret Read, Head of the Colonial Department of the Institute of Education, London University.

In common with others who studied the education system in Nyasaland, Freda Gwilliam and Margaret Read noted the difficulties caused by the poverty of natural resources, poverty of the inhabitants, reduced opportunities to earn cash wages and also the financial shortages of the government so there were few resources to be spent on the social services i.e. the shortage of qualified staff, and the discouragement to girls by the slow rate of promotion through classes (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1960: 6). As Lamba (1985) suggests, Freda Gwilliam and Margaret Read highlighted the enormous problems in female education. All these difficulties were still very much affecting the colonial education system. Moreover, problems in female education were continually documented in educational reports.

A Protectorate-wide survey, covering existing primary school facilities in every district, was carried out and resulted in the accumulation, on a local basis, of vital information about what was needed for the development and consolidation of the primary school system (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1951: 58). As a result it was possible to draw up an agreed expansion programme for each district, detailing the development to be carried out each year from 1950 to 1954. In 1950 the government also made recommendations based on the survey of all assisted schools in the country. The problems which affected schools were enrolment and attendance rates.
The government reported that poor attendance and short sessions with resulting retardation continued to be serious problems in the village schools. It was argued that the "best schools were in those areas where the people themselves, including the village headmen, took most interest in education" (3).\textsuperscript{22} Factors which militated against regular attendance were cited as food scarcity, ill health, the need by Africans for child labour on the plantations, tribal ceremonies and the unattractiveness of many of the schools. Missionaries were concerned that a lack of participation of girls in schools would lead to many Christian men marrying heathen women, which the missionaries resented. Missionaries also felt that they managed to reach fewer girls in villages than boys.

The government issued tough measures as a result of low attendance in schools. The government recommended that every child should be required to attend school for at least fifty days in each term in order to qualify for re-admission in the subsequent term, unless the absences were due to sickness or other good cause explained to the satisfaction of the manager. In addition, no headteacher should admit a pupil to his school on transfer from another school unless the pupil submits a satisfactory statement regarding his attendance and progress, signed by his previous headteacher. It was suggested that no junior primary school or village primary school should qualify for a grant-in-aid unless the average attendance in sub-standard B was at least twenty by the school year 1951-1952.\textsuperscript{23}

Table 2.1 shows the average attendance of pupils in different missions. The Roman Catholic Mission (Marist Fathers) managed to enrol more girls than other missions. This can be argued as a result of the work of the White Sisters who encouraged girls to enrol in schools. It has been indicated that "the White Sisters continued their good work in boarding and day schools for girls at their various stations" (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1946: 5).

\textsuperscript{22} PCS 3/2/1: Provincial Education Officer, Southern Province and Education Surveys: 1949 March-1958 May. MNA, Zomba.
\textsuperscript{23} PCN/1/11/7: Education General 1945 May-1951 February. MNA, Zomba.
Table 2.1: Schools Maintained by Missions Assisted by Government, 1949

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
<th>Average Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Controlled Churches</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Scotland (Blantyre)</td>
<td>6,479</td>
<td>3,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Scotland (Livingstonia)</td>
<td>11,157</td>
<td>4,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Reformed Church</td>
<td>7,899</td>
<td>5,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanes Training centre</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marist Fathers</td>
<td>15,985</td>
<td>8,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyasa</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East African Union of Seventh Day Adventists</td>
<td>4,452</td>
<td>1,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMCA</td>
<td>3,540</td>
<td>2,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Fathers, Katete</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Fathers, Likuni</td>
<td>4,870</td>
<td>2,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambesi Industrial</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,246</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,424</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nyasaland Protectorate, 1949: 28
(Figures for male, female and average attendance vertical totals are not accurate).

It is also noticeable that at this point in the educational history of Nyasaland, the number of girls was almost exactly 50% of the number of boys. Observing the problems of over-age pupils in schools the government emphasised age-limits for pupils. The government stated that the minimum age admission to sub-Standard A should be six years and the maximum age should be under eight years. In this regard no child should be admitted to Standard IV who had attained the age of fourteen years and similar age limits should be introduced in the case of girls at the beginning of the school year 1951-1952.24

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24 Ibid.
Indeed the policy of age limit posed the problems of increase in adult illiteracy rates as a result of refusing to enrol over-age pupils. On the other hand, it was argued that restrictions on age limit would lead to a reduction of wastage caused by over-age pupils who left school for marriage or to seek employment (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1951). The question of an age limit is relevant today. Most girls drop-out of school when they reach puberty, usually as a result of early marriage. Those who start school late drop-out in junior classes before they have attained literacy skills.

A number of educational issues including that of an age-limit for pupils, were also discussed at the Annual General Conference of the Nyasaland National Teachers’ Association (NNTA). Delegates to this conference comprised the Nyasaland National Teachers’ Associations from Southern, Northern and Central Provinces including the senior education officer. The age-limit of pupils was clearly debated. Delegates argued that the age-limit was introduced too early and that in the future the Protectorate might have two groups of inhabitants, the literate and the illiterate classes. As a result of the inevitable friction which might appear in the future it was decided that in districts where many children did not turn up, the NNTA should organise visiting groups to chiefs and parents in order to get them interested in education, thus maintaining cooperation between teachers and chiefs in education. It was also argued that the age-limit be modified and relaxed up to the end of the junior primary school course.25

Delegates at the conference felt sure that the government could not take away the age-limit. Therefore, discussions took place about forming evening schools where the unfortunate over-aged children could learn. However, problems arose of how the government was going to employ and pay teachers for such schools. In addition, they proposed to have technical schools where children who were dismissed from schools could be trained in technical skills. In 1951, the government reported that age limits were being lowered to eight years and extended to include girls with an emphasis that no

girl previously admitted to an assisted school and whose progress was satisfactory was to be turned out on account of her age.

A lack of adequate teachers in schools was also pointed out at the conference. It was noted that some teachers were given two schools to teach. This was difficult where schools were far apart. This also led to women teachers quitting their profession because this imposed too much work on women who were already engaged in other tasks in their homes. Lack of school facilities was discussed at the conference. It was noted that some village schools had no teachers’ houses and inadequate classrooms for children. Children learnt in churches built by villagers. Delegates suggested that committees of chiefs, village headmen and people should be formed to look into the question of erecting school buildings and teachers’ houses and be responsible for their maintenance.26

Issues which were raised at the conference continue to affect the quality of primary schools today. The shortage of teachers, especially women, and school facilities are evident and profoundly impact upon retention of pupils. In the 1950s, NNTAs in the country were delineating issues which impinged on participation of pupils in schools. For instance, the National Teachers’ Association in the Northern Province made proposals to Christopher Cox, an Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to the Director of Education in which the Association noted that more teachers and schools should be made available for primary education in the province.

In this regard it was proposed that more teacher training centres were to be established. The National Teachers Association argued that, with the advent of age-limit laws, more children of the right age went to school where they became victims of class-limit due to the inadequate number of classrooms. Therefore, the Association recommended that increasing the number of teachers and schools could solve the problems of inadequate

26 Ibid.
One of the recommendations was that primary education should be free and compulsory. The Memorandum stated that:

This is the only feasible way to enable every child from any family to be literate in a rapidly developing country such as Nyasaland.

The Memorandum pointed out that the building of teachers’ houses, should be improved so as to attract more teachers who would otherwise join other departments. The association saw it as important to have well-stocked libraries in senior primary school so as to let children develop book-reading habits. It was also suggested that the government should consider opening more secondary schools to cater for children who had completed a primary examination course but were too young to take up employment.

The Memorandum showed that the association in the North was aware of the factors which continued to affect participation of pupils in schools. The Memorandum did not specifically include recommendations regarding girls’ schooling. However, issues which were discussed in the Northern Province also affected the Central and Southern Provinces. This can be seen in a Plan for the Development of African Primary Education 1954-1959. In this report, it was admitted that the primary school system had not worked satisfactorily over the years. One of the factors which affected the schools system was the issue of fees. The Plan stated that:

Where fees have been charged they have been based on rates ascending from the lower to the higher classes, thus providing a direct incentive to the wastage which is one of the most serious problems in the primary education system. Where partial or no fees have been charged instruction has frequently suffered thorough the failure of the parents of the pupils to provide cash for essential materials (Nyasaland Protectorate 1954-1959: 7).

28 Ibid.

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Commenting on education for girls it was found out that in 1953 the enrolment of girls in primary schools was about one-third of the total. This indicates that enrolment rates of girls decreased to 30% between 1949 and 1953. It was, therefore, recommended that every effort must be made during the period of the plan to bring this proportion towards the target of one-half. Further developments in educational policy were recorded in the minutes of the Northern Province.

The Nyasaland National Teachers' Association (Northern Province) raised a number of issues during the tour of Christopher Cox. They stated that: school fees should be abolished since poor parents could not afford to pay them; that the reason for the class limitation rules were not understood and children had been unjustly deprived of places at school because of its operation; that Mzimba District should have a community school and that more community schools were needed; that the government should find teachers for such schools; that community schools should be established with financial assistance to cater for (a) pupils with no schooling and (b) over-age children with some schooling; that the quota of teachers in training at Domasi Government Training Centre should be increased to allow teachers to be trained for community schools.

The proposals of the NNTA in the Northern Province indicate that the educationalists were aware of the problems affecting schooling for pupils. Proposals for free primary education were again discussed at these conferences, which showed the concern of fees as a contributory factor to a lack of access and retention in schools.

From this historical background one can argue that missionaries' work brought them into contact with both women and men, and hence they realised the importance of education for girls and women. It also exposed them to the socio-economic and political facts of life in Africa and Nyasaland in particular.

It has been seen that whilst there was some interest in girls' and women's education, nevertheless female education was generally limited to grooming girls for their future as mothers and wives for Christian men. Educational reports reveal that the curriculum was centred on home management including, to some extent, the teaching and nursing professions. The following section aims at delineating historical factors which have continued to affect participation of girls in schools. These constraints were observed by missionaries and included in the Annual Reports.

HISTORICAL CONSTRAINTS TO FEMALE EDUCATION

Socio-Economic Factors

Past history reveals that economic conditions were not favourable especially for people living in villages. Communities were affected by both structural and conjunctural poverty. Material poverty, as indicated by Iliffe (1985), affected practically all nineteenth century Malawians. Iliffe quoted Margaret Read's anthropological studies of the Ngoni which argued that the standard of living was not shown in the consumption of food but in the possession of accumulated goods. However, conjunctural poverty due to famine and drought frequently affected the communities. For instance, seasonal hunger intensified in the country during the late 1880s owing to inadequate rainfall. Furthermore, Iliffe noted that locusts exacerbated the situation between 1894 and 1902 causing widespread and severe famine between 1894 and 1898 and again in 1900. There were further serious shortages of food between 1909 and 1913. People's lives were devastated again with serious famine in the South in 1922 and in the North in 1925.

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30 Structural poverty is a long-term poverty of individuals due to their position in the socio-economic structure and conjunctural poverty is the temporary poverty of larger numbers caused by crisis.
31 Iliffes' material on The Poor in The Modern History of Malawi has been extensively used in this section.
Whilst the structurally "very poor" of pre-colonial Nyasaland were so because they were helpless and lacked family support, colonialism introduced a new form of potentially grave poverty through alienation of resources. Illife suggested that the first major impact of colonialism on poverty in Nyasaland was to deprive certain able-bodied people of the resources required to meet their minimum needs in their home areas. This produced new categories of the very poor among the most unfortunate workers and their families. However, colonialism also brought new pattern of care for the poor and new means to avert conjunctural poverty.

"The pattern of poverty altered in detail during the first half of the twentieth century but the very poor remained chiefly those who were incapacitated and deprived of family or community support" (Illife, 1985: 253). As early as 1885, the appearance of migrant workers in mission stations in the South indicated new categories of the poor. Ten years later migrant workers were so numerous that local food supplies could not support them. It has been reported that in the 1940s, village surveys showed that as a result of immigration, large numbers of people in the South had very little land and those evicted from European estates were unable to find unoccupied land.

Iliffe has not mentioned the impact of socio-economic conditions upon schooling. However, there is evidence that structural and conjuctural poverty affected the education system. It is seen that parents across the country could not afford to pay fees because of poverty. For instance, in the early years of the century the Blantyre Mission reported that: "the payment of the modest fee of six pence per year was not relished by the villagers who had so long been taught for nothing" (Life and Work, 1908: 6). This led to drop-outs for both boys and girls. It was reported in 1907 that about ten schools were closed as the numbers willing to pay the fee were not large enough to justify the continuation of schools.

Educational reports in subsequent years continued to reveal that fees is a hindrance to pupils' education, especially where girls are concerned. For instance, the report of
1940 shows that girls were more affected because whilst boys could manage to earn in the holidays the few pence necessary for school fees and slates, girls were required for domestic duties in the home (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1940: 4).

The 1949 famine affected most parts of the country especially the South. Vaughan (1987) explains that there was severe shortage of food in the South. In this regard men migrated in other parts of the country in search of food, especially the Central Region which was not affected by drought. It has been indicated that some men never returned to their wives but stayed away in their home areas until the famine was over, or took extra wives in the places to which they had gone to find food. According to Vaughan, "1949 is thus remembered as the year of many divorces" (Vaughan, 1987: 34). For those women whose husbands were labour migrants in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, the famine also proved a test of their marriages. Some of the women were better off than others if their husbands sent regular remittances. Wives who were not assisted by their husbands during this period suffered and had to rely on the help of the relatives.

Reports show that many men at work in South Africa neglected women and children. For instance, in Fort Johnston it is clear that many children and young mothers were neglected and left without any means of support (Vaughan, 1987: 35). Lack of resources impacted upon schooling as parents and mothers were not able to pay school fees. The Provincial Education Officer for Southern Province reported that:

The vast majority of parents neither pay the school fees of their education nor clothe them. The children have to work in order to obtain money to pay their fees and to buy clothes. If a boy finds that his shirt or shorts are worn out, he is ashamed to continue attendance at school in this state, and absents himself from school to go to work for long enough to earn the price of the garment he requires. The consequence too often is that in spite of his thirst for knowledge he loses so much time that he cannot make it
up and fails in the examinations at the end of the year (7).\textsuperscript{32}

Pupils' enrolment was also influenced as a result of the famine in 1949. Enrolment rates deteriorated during this period because of lack of food and other essentials. During 1949 schools especially in the South were very affected by shortage of food due to the drought. "The dominating note of the school year was a fight to minimise the effects of famine tending to upset all education work" (20).\textsuperscript{33} The drought and consequent shortage and high cost of foodstuffs caused much embarrassment to mission boarding schools (16).\textsuperscript{34} The government contemplated the closing of some of the boarding schools in the country, but the government and the schools tried to avoid this by increasing the acreage of their school gardens and by planting special quick growing crops to ease the situation. Day pupils also suffered and their parents struggled to get food from other districts.

Later in the late 1950s and 1960s people had enough food to eat - mainly beans, fish and vegetables. Hunger was not a big problem. At that time the population of Malawi was about four million and people had enough land to cultivate. However, people had a shortage of cash in order to pay for school fees, buy bicycles and radios. The Blantyre Synod tried to encourage girls to go school, but if the communities had to make a choice, they opted for boys' education.\textsuperscript{35} It can be argued that the increase in population has also contributed to economic crisis in Malawi. Andrew Ross who worked in Malawi in the 1950s explains that:

When I went back to Malawi in 1997, I observed that people were much better and had more things than the 1950s. But also people did not rely on land cultivation. For instance, in the past, people in towns would go to their

\textsuperscript{32} PCS 3/2/1: Provincial Education Officer, Southern Province and Education Surveys: 1949 March-1958 May. MNA, Zomba.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Dr. Andrew Ross on 22\textsuperscript{nd} February 2000.
villages and return with a bag of maize. But instead, now villagers were expecting money from the jobs in towns because of over-population.36

Ross has also indicated that in the late 1960s the Blantyre Synod introduced family planning. However, former President Banda rejected the project because he was afraid that it would politically weaken the country. Banda stated that it was a plot by the west to weaken the nation. Two nurses who began a family planning project were later deported. The population, therefore, increased over the years to about an estimated 12 million at present. As a result, migration for men and women continues as they seek jobs within and outside of Malawi and this affects pupils’ schooling.

Schooling and Emigration

Migration of men started in colonial days when, because of economic difficulties, young men who achieved literacy skills migrated from rural to urban areas within the country and outside the country, particularly to South Africa. There was also an increase in the number of men who migrated with their families and settled in urban areas. Young girls, women and children also migrated to urban areas looking for domestic jobs with white settlers. Iliffe noted that Department for Child Welfare became more aware of child labour in the country and challenged the authorities to provide protection. It has been seen that European estates employed many children in the tobacco industry and tea estates in the South, so that in 1890 a teachers’ conference had to urge that no child under 3 feet 6 inches tall would be employed (Iliffe, 1987: 269).

Educational reports over the years repeatedly noted the extensive use of child labour which continues to impact upon pupils’ schooling and especially girls’ education. Moreover, the tobacco industry will be seen to continue to affect pupils’ retention in schools even today (as discussed in Chapter Five). The adverse effect upon schooling is

36 Ibid.
that pupils drop-out of school to work in the estates. Lack of retention in schools is also the result of young girls who help their parents with different tasks at home. Some girls leave their homes and engage in domestic jobs in urban areas. Hence employers do not give them the chance to continue with schooling. These complications are fully explored in Chapter Six.

Missionaries who introduced schooling in Nyasaland did not perceive the complications caused by economic issues. When Nyasaland was declared a British Protectorate in 1889, Laws believed that there was going to be an increasing demand by Europeans for trained African labour with new skills. Hence the establishment of the Overtoun Institution at Khondowe in Northern Region by Laws as a centre of post-primary education where manual instruction and technical skills were taught, in addition, to subjects for teachers and pastors. "The institution was intended to create the conditions in which European activity could flourish in the North but commercial expansion was taking place elsewhere, leaving Khondowe uncomfortably isolated" (McCracken, 1977).

What Laws did not consider was that the Northern Region of Nyasaland could not offer jobs for trained Africans. The Livingstonia Mission’s agricultural experts could not plant coffee as an export crop and wheat as a crop for local consumption. As a result, no cash crops were being exported from Northern Region. Few significant improvements in agricultural techniques had taken place even among tenants on the mission’s estate. McCracken argued that:

The Institution was still the principal local metropole in the area; the only significant market for maize and vegetables; the only local employer of labour with the exception of the Department of Public Works (McCracken, 1977: 144).
The skills taught at the Overtoun Institution were not being utilised in the surrounding area. Therefore, migrants from the Northern districts formed an important source of labour. As Krishnamurthy notes:

Mission educated Tonga and Ngoni workers had been coming down for wage employment from the earliest days of European enterprise and had also settled down on or near the estates (Krishnamurthy, 1972: 392).

The Southern Region of Nyasaland had commercial firms and cash crops such as tobacco, coffee and tea. The British colonists who had arrived in Nyasaland before the establishment of the colonial government had obtained a large part of the available land. Pryor (1990) suggests that estates were concentrated in the Southern Region of the country, where most of the land was suitable for export crops such as tea. The increased volume of labour migration from the Northern Province is indicated by the speed with which apprentices trained at the Institution were seized upon by commercial firms from Blantyre and further afield (McCracken, 1977: 139). Men trained in the industrial departments were scattered from Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, to the goldfields in South Africa. McCracken noted that:

Livingstonia's economic role was still primarily one of providing trained artisans for European employment with the drawback (as far as the Nyasaland settler community was concerned) that most of her graduates preferred to work in Tanganyika or in Northern Rhodesia rather than in the Shire highlands where wages were notoriously low (McCracken, 1977: 140).

The industrial principle that was denied by the UMCA was quite valuable as young men secured jobs in commercial firms. However, this caused emigration of men which will be seen to have impacted upon pupils' schooling. Young Ngoni men were encouraged to attend schools with the hope of emigrating to the Southern Region or outside Nyasaland to look for employment. Read (1959) pointed out that:
The cessation of warfare, the coming of schools and of a money economy, the urge to find wage-earning work and the opportunities offered by the labour recruiters to emigrate - these were a series of events which radically altered the prospects and outlook of young men (Read, 1959: 114).

The Ngoni fathers encouraged their sons to attend schools regularly to equip boys to go and get wage earning jobs for various reasons.

This urge to earn money, in addition, to meeting demands for taxes, was strengthened because the cattle to be handed over at marriage had now to be bought from other herds or at least eventually replaced by purchase, instead of, as formerly, being captured at war (Read, 1959: 114).

Teachers who were trained by missionaries also migrated to Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika and other parts of Africa looking for jobs. The government reported that the two problems which affected the educational system were the emigration of the young adult males and the lack of adequate support for education from public funds (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1939: 4). The report further stated that the two problems were connected, since inadequate grants led to the departure of teachers for other territories, but emigration had other even more serious results for education. For instance, the absence of the father of the family led to indiscipline among the children. Moreover, women were left in control of children and the home with limited resources (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1939). The DRCM and UMCA also reported that the failure of the food crops made it necessary for many of the boys to leave home and seek employment elsewhere (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1939: 13).

The Education Officer in Northern Province also commented that it was very regrettable that so many pupils left the Senior Primary Classes without going into suitable employment. Moreover, many of the boys had no idea how to put to use their little education and latent ability. The Standard VI leavers who failed to get to Secondary Schools seemed to consider that they had been the victims of circumstances, and some
of them idled their time away in their villages (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1952: 15). This confirms the argument that the Northern Region had no jobs to offer for pupils who completed their primary schooling. Increased migration within and outside Malawi was also aggravated by limited resources and low wages, since people could not afford to pay the “hut tax” demanded from the government (Pachai 1973; McCracken 1977). McCracken commented that:

So little cash entered the five northern districts through the sale of agricultural produce, the commission reported that hut-tax demands from the government and communal obligations could be met only through extensive emigration (McCracken, 1977: 239).

The migration of African labour to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia and the Blantyre missionaries’ pressure on the Nyasaland government, led the government to introduce the opportunity for Africans to cultivate cash crops. The Nyasaland government introduced an economic policy of encouraging peasant production as an alternative to migration. Even as early as 1904, Sharpe, the Nyasaland Commissioner, started giving tax rebates to encourage African cotton growers.

However, there were obstacles especially in the North to participation in peasant production. For instance, the supply of seeds demanded by African growers was not fully met. In addition, Africans had to walk for several days to reach the nearest European ginnery (Krishnamurthy, 1972). According to Krishnamurthy (1972), remote districts especially in the North were neglected because of lack of transport. Another problem was that the “land question” caused serious conflict of economic interests between Africans and Europeans.

37 In Nyasaland a tax used to be levied on all huts in a village and on males apparently over the age of sixteen if they did not have huts. Widows were exempted from this tax, but the wives of labour migrants were not (See J. C. Mitchell, The Yao of Southern Nyasaland, in Colson, E. and Gluckman, M. (eds.) Seven Tribes of British Central Africa OUP 1951, 292-353).
European settlers owned arable and fertile land which led to the situation where the European land owners leased the land to some Africans charging them rent or making them work in lieu of rent (Lwanda, 1993). Moreover, as a result of emigration especially of people moving from the North to the South, the high and increasing population density kept tensions over the land problem high throughout the interwar period (Pryor, 1990: 32). Pryor further notes that the colonial government began to buy land from Europeans to turn it over to Africans.

Krishnamurthy noted that in 1903 it was estimated that about 6,126 Nyasa workers crossed the ferry at Beira to go to South Africa (Krishnamurthy, 1972: 396). Thereafter, there was a gradual increase of Nyasas emigrating to countries outside Nyasaland. In 1947 it was estimated that the number of Africans absent from Nyasaland and working or seeking work in other territories was 150,000 of whom 50,000 and 84,000 were in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia respectively (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1948).

There was also a continual increase of migrants seeking jobs in urban areas. As a result there were demands for more schools in urban areas. In 1962 the government reported that with the growth of centres of administration, commerce and industry in urban areas many Africans left their homes and became permanent residents there. As a result, there was demand for more schools. This demand was not easy to fulfil, as it was expensive. Migration of men can have a negative effect on school attendance of children where men are key decision-makers on the question of schooling for their children.

Past history indicates that migration put a strain on women who had to take on full responsibilities at home while their husbands were away. The women who were most affected were those whose husbands migrated outside Malawi to work in mines and stayed away from their families for a long time. In female-headed families where there are limited resources, it has been seen that priority is always given to boys' education
rather than girls'. It has been noted that this is due to harmful cultural practices and beliefs which emphasise the importance of educating a boy.

Socio-Cultural Factors

Past history shows that there was evidence of cultural practices, which the missionaries indicated as being the major constraints to schooling. This was expressed at the Native Education Conference in 1927 where missionaries reported that girls started their "education for life" at a very young age. For instance, it was reported that children of five and six minded the smaller ones and helped in various household duties. The report noted:

This early responsibility may not be ideal from one point of view, but from another it means that quite early a girl realises her duty to the community. It does not occur to the village girls that day after day they can loiter and run about in the bush or to other villages as the boys do; there is pounding or cooking, or water and firewood to be fetched, or babies to be minded (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1927: 38).

In 1944 the UMCA reported that the attendance continued to be affected by the parents' demands on the girls' time to help at home and also by work which was available in the dry season and which enabled them to get sufficient money to clothe themselves (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1944: 5). The educational report of 1946 indicated that wastage in schools was due to customs, which required children to engage in different tasks in their homes. The report stated that:

African social organisation still interferes to a very great extent with the enrolment and attendance of young girls in all kinds of schools. It is acknowledged that African women in rural areas especially have far too much work to do and custom demands that their daughters must also
spend the greater part of their daily lives in assisting them. Such a custom dies hard and school, with all that it ought to mean for them and for their future as wives and mothers does not enter into the lives of thousands of small girls in the northern areas (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1946: 5).

These cultural factors which were noted by missionaries, and were already alluded to Chapter One, are in part a result of initiation ceremonies where girls are encouraged to engage in such tasks at home. As early as in 1906 the Blantyre Mission reported that boys and girls’ attendance was interrupted by the traditional dances which were associated with initiation ceremonies. Blantyre Mission reported that:

These promising young children who are learning in our village schools are taken away, and, accompanied by their elders who have been through the ceremony, proceed to the bush. A grass hut is speedily erected and the children stay there for one month, sometimes two or even three months to be “danced” (Life and Work, 1906: 20).

It was reported that when children were taken away to be “danced” (initiated), missionaries became powerless as they could not encourage the parents to send their children to school. Moreover, it was difficult for the old people to give up customs, especially as a boy or a girl who was not danced was thought to be very ignorant by the people in the village. The chief was also desirous that the young people in his village should be danced as the parents of the children paid him for each child who was initiated.

The early missionaries also detected the initiation ceremonies of the Yao. Johnston (1897) described how girls as young as eight to eleven years were taken away to the bush by elderly women and kept there for more than a month. During this period girls were instructed in household duties and their obligations to their future husbands. As Johnston noted, the sexual aspect of marriage was thoroughly explained. He also mentions that forcible vagina dilatatio by mechanical means was carried out in an
operation which the girls were enjoined to bear bravely. They were told that this had to be followed by cohabitation with a man. The Yao regarded this as a necessity to render the girl marriageable before the age of puberty (Johnston, 1897: 410).

However, Mgeni (1996) explains that the practice of circumcision for girls ended in July 1959 when girls who were circumcised died after three days. The case was reported to the government and the chief and the woman adviser were imprisoned and circumcision of girls was stopped forthwith. According to Mgeni (1996), the initiation ceremony called nsondo continued but without the actual circumcision taking place.

Johnston did not indicate how such practices affected schooling for girls. However, it has been indicated in Elston (1971) that the UMCA mission observed that such customs meant so much to both boys and girls and that girls looked forward to such initiation ceremonies and the associated dances. Elston also mentioned that Christian missionaries always opposed African initiation ceremonies.

Missionary objections were directed against the suggestive display and gesture of some of the dances, and the practice amongst some communities for the initiate to have sexual intercourse with a friend or nominated person as a culmination of the initiation ceremony (Elston, 1971: 51).

It is clear from educational reports that initiation ceremonies for girls impacted upon girls’ schooling. It was indicated that girls in particular dropped out of school because of early engagements or marriages. Marriages put an abrupt stop to the education of girls (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1938: 24). For instance, the UMCA reported that in one of the stations in Malindi (Mangochi District) the strong custom of early arranged marriages for girls hindered girls’ education (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1944: 5).

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38 This information was obtained from the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Malawi. It is based on unpublished paper of MGENI, M. (1996).
Another form of initiation ceremony was conducted among the Chewa of Central Region. Female initiation ceremonies were considered very important among the Chewa because that was where sex education was taught (Phiri, 1997). The aim for such ceremonies was to prepare girls for marriage and their future roles as mothers. The Chewa had four stages of initiation ceremonies for women; the first ceremony marked the end of childhood and the beginning of womanhood. This was called chinamwali and was conducted as soon as a girl reached puberty. The anamkugwi (traditional instructors) gave instructions to girls about their new status of womanhood. Girls were kept in seclusion for one month. The sexual rites were performed between the initiates and unknown men (fisi) to mark the end of the puberty initiation. If the girl was married then the husband performed the duties of the fisi. Other initiation ceremonies were performed on married girls, newly weds and at the first pregnancy.

Phiri (1997) and Pauw (1980) have both pointed out that the DRCM were against chinamwali as they regarded some aspects of the chinamwali to be unbiblical. For instance, as outlined at the conference of women missionaries in 1949, it was noted that there were many things in the ceremonies which were in conflict with the demands of Christianity. According to Phiri, the Church thought of banning chinamwali in order to rescue Christian girls. “The banning of chinamwali was due to its association with the nyau, the association of chinamwali and low attendance of girls at school and the belief that chinamwali was sinful; for instance, missionaries objected to the sexual initiation by the fisi” (Phiri, 1997: 55-56).

The association with the nyau, which is mainly related to boys’ initiation ceremony, was that such a ceremony was to turn boys into sexual men and predatory members of nyau. This transformation took place at the graveyard where boys passed blindfolded through the cavernous body of the antelope, symbolising their death as children and their rebirth.

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39 Fisi (hyena) is a name given to a man who performs sexual intercourse usually at night to the initiates during the initiation ceremonies.
40 Nyau is a ritual of the Chewa ethnic group in Central Region, which involves masked dancers. Gule wamkulu is the dance which is performed by the male initiates.
as beasts. Each initiate would sacrifice a chicken by impaling it, lick its blood from the stake, tear its feathers from its body, and eat its flesh. With this act the initiates became wild beasts in their own right (Kaspin, 1993: 43).

What the DRCM did was to introduce another form of chinamwali called chilangizo (Pauw, 1980; Phiri, 1997; Lamba, 1984b). As Lamba pointed out, "this creativity marked the origin of the church ulangiza (counsel)" (Lamba, 1984b: 386). The chilangizo ceremony involved the same stages of puberty, marriage and pregnancy. The only difference was that traditional instructors, i.e. namkungwi were replaced by alangizi. "Alangizi" were village Christian women who instructed girls on the sanctity of the body and behaviour towards men and the elderly. Missionaries thus removed some of the aspects of traditional initiation ceremonies.

Kaspin argued that missionaries did not succeed in eradicating nyau practices but identified for Chewa the means to retaliate against European incursion (Kaspin, 1993: 37). In fact what the missionaries did was to solidify such nyau practices. Although some Chewa were drawn into the orbit of the missionaries' influence, some chiefs reacted to Christian proselytising by recruiting more members to nyau. They authorised more chiefs to own nyau courtyards, lowered the age of entrance from eighteen to eight, and required the performance of nyau on any and every occasion.

As a result nyau proliferated under missionary pressure, limiting the flow of potential recruits to the missions, while expanding the ranks of nyau chiefs and nyau members (Kaspin, 1993: 37).

In 1934 the government claimed that it took drastic measures with village headmen to stop nyau activities in Lilongwe District. It reported that:

In the Lilongwe District the Vinyao dance has been practically stopped. It will be remembered that the Mission urged the government to stop the dance or else
put it under strict control, because it militated against all education and moral principles... The government did not see its way clear to accede to the request though the Mission could prove by statistics that hundreds of lads were drawn from school at the age of puberty (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1934: 13).

The government's strong opposition towards the nyau practices was noted in its comments in which it stated that:

The Native Authorities of the Lilongwe District have recently held a meeting with the smaller village headmen and have decided to control the activities of the Vinyao because "when a dog becomes mad and does damage, it is the duty of the owner of that dog to kill it". The Vinyao was compared to such a mad dog doing damage, retarding progress, economic, educational and religious and which, therefore, should be killed (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1934: 13).

However, the nyau initiation ceremonies in Nyanja - dominated areas continued despite missionaries' and the government's opposition. These practices had an impact on participation of girls in schools. A letter from the District Commissioner in 1951 mentioned the impact of chinamwali initiation ceremonies upon girls' schooling. His concern was that nyau continued to be danced for many months despite orders established by Dedza Council of Chiefs, which were not followed. The rules, which the chiefs were given, were that:

There will be no kind of "Unamwali" which is known to be nyau without first obtaining permission from a Native Authority; there will be no play of "Chinamwali" which forbid children of 6 to 16 years of age to go to School in the area of a Native Authority, and whosoever shall be found in such group will be guilty of this order; any Native Authority shall have the power to stop the play of nyau that it should not be danced because of stopping children from going to school in the age of 6 and 16 years
and or take [sic] them that they are breaking the order
which has been established.41

The District Commissioner of Dedza District urged the national authorities to take tough
measures against those who allowed children from the ages of 6 to 16 years to engage in
nyau activities and argued that the owners must be accused in court. He ended by
noting, "If you do not want such games they should not be played in your area as per
order; you have the power under this order to refuse the issue of permit. You have the
authority".42 The prevalence of the nyau initiation ceremonies can be argued to be a
factor that affected schooling for boys and girls, even if early marriages and pregnancies
were more common causes of girls dropping out from schools.

The Dutch and UMCA missions operated amongst peoples with more matrilineal
practices. In addition, to the impact of initiation ceremonies upon schooling they also
reported that parental attitudes affected pupils’ schooling. For instance, the Educational
Secretary of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission reported that the chief problem of
poor attendance in schools was due to a lack of encouragement at home (Nyasaland
Protectorate, 1952: 15). Elston mentioned that boys attended the UMCA missions
without the approval of their parents. When they went to school boys worked hard but
during their visits to their parents they were told they were fools to miss all sorts of
attractions at home (Elston, 1971: 50).

Educational reports have not specifically mentioned the impact of initiation ceremonies
and other cultural attitudes amongst the Ngoni and Tumbuka in Mzimba District.
However, Margaret Read’s study provides a background of cultural practices of the
Ngoni children and the impact upon their education.

42 Ibid.
The way Ngoni children (in Mzimba District) were brought up was different from that of the Chewa in the Central and Southern Region. Ngoni boys were trained to be warriors in preparation for fighting with their fellow Ngoni from different clans, and the Tonga and Tumbuka in the North. They were always ready to defend their land from intruders. Since most Ngoni possessed cattle, young boys also looked after cattle whilst young girls were trained to do domestic duties and look after their younger brothers and sisters. When children reached three and four years old, boys and girls were encouraged to form separate playgroups.

When boys and girls reached puberty, private rituals were performed. These rituals marked the passage of girls and boys from children and immature groups into mature groups. Boys were placed in what were called dormitories where they learnt to be warriors and were involved with looking after cattle. It was a preparatory school for the regiment, and the herding of cattle was the basis of the curriculum (Read, 1959: 91).

Girls continued to live with their parents especially with their mothers when they reached puberty. Unlike the Chewa and Yao in the South, the change of puberty for Ngoni girls was regarded as marking only one of the stages in the development of growing girls. The rituals performed were not geared towards immediate marriages. The rituals were to separate girls from younger girls and for them to take on more domestic responsibilities and household duties. These duties probably caused mothers and grandmothers to oppose girls' schooling as Read suggested. However, the changes which missionaries were introducing to a culture like the Ngoni, caused strong resistance to schooling from local leaders and parents.

The history of the Ngoni reveals the early resistance to establishment of mission stations and schools. When missionaries entered the Ngoni land with the purpose of establishing mission stations, the Ngoni became suspicious and they were not sure of the motives of the Christian missionaries. On other hand:
The Ngoni were willing to accept the missionaries as one more set of religious practitioners; on the other hand, they were extremely suspicious of the educational role of the mission (Thompson, 1995: 48).

Several reasons contributed to the resistances. Thompson further mentioned that the Ngoni were suspicious about the missionaries because of the uncertainty about the precise nature of what the missionaries had to offer, the volatile inter-tribal situation in the area around Ngoni during 1890s and internal divisions among the Ngoni themselves. According to McCracken (1977) one of the Ngoni leaders, Chief Mmbelwa:

...was less interested in what he could gain from the missionaries than in what he would lose if he did not isolate them from his rivals (McCracken, 1977: 90).

Thompson (1995) explains why the Ngoni particularly feared mission education. According to Thompson, Margaret Read’s research in the 1930s revealed that the Ngoni had a genuine fear that if they lost their military power the whole basis of their kingdom would be undermined. They also feared that educating and withdrawing their youths from the cycle of raiding would destroy the economic supremacy of the Ngoni. In addition, the Ngoni also had a strong belief in the value of their system of social and political controls, and thought that the new learning would weaken their traditional way of life (Thompson, 1995: 48). Whilst the first school was established in Malawi in 1875 at Livingstonia, it was not until 1886 that the leaders of the Ngoni began to fully accept the village school through negotiations with the missionaries. However, the progress of education throughout 1888 was slow and school attendance was reported to be very poor.

The Ngoni, therefore, delayed the process of establishment of village schools and slowed the process of the acquisition of literacy skills for both men and women. Thompson noted that Margaret Read’s explanation of the Ngoni’s acceptance of mission education was:
...a growing awareness of the outside pressures upon their state, the realisation by Mmbelwa that friendship with the mission might provide a bulwark against such pressures, and the dimly emerging recognition that Ngoni supremacy could no longer be maintained primarily by a policy of raiding (Thompson, 1995: 49).

The development of education occurred in 1889 with the opening of the new station at Ekwendeni. In 1896 the headquarters of the mission was transferred from Njuyu to Ekwendeni. Thompson noted that this marked the end of the period of close missionary alliance with Mmbelwa alone among the Ngoni chiefs, and the beginning of an era of closer association with what was, in effect, the number two chieftaincy in the Ngoni hierarchy. The school opened at Ekwendeni in November 1889 and, according to Thompson, attendance shot to 169 in the first week. However, within a month the attendance dropped to between seventy and eighty because of the traditional patterns of the Ngoni. Boys in particular left school to take part in a war raid before returning to continue their studies.

However, Ngoni Christians played a big part in helping the change of Ngoni attitudes towards Christianity through the school system and in the day to day relations of village life. According to Thompson (1995), the education system expanded during the next five years. The number of schools and enrolment rates increased. The Ngonis were not, however, the only peoples to initially reject educational advancements. The next section will explore the impact of western education on Yao Muslims and their attitude towards education.

Religion: The Yao Muslims

Historically, there have been close links between religion and the development of education. The emergence of major creeds such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam led first to the religious texts and the teaching of literacy and ultimately in each case to
the development of wider systems of schooling and scholarship. This section attempts to discuss how the establishments of mission schools affected Mangochi District, which is predominantly occupied by the Yao Muslims. It considers how Muslims reacted to the establishment of the mission schools and the impact the missionaries had on the Islamic community. This reflects the migration by the Arabs from Tanzania to the Southern Region of Nyasaland towards the Lake shore areas. The Yao Muslims settled in Machinga, Mangochi and Nkhotakota districts.

In the 1870’s before the Scottish missionaries established their mission stations in Nyasaland, Salim bin Abdallah from Zanzibar\textsuperscript{43} settled in Nkhotakota on the west shore of Lake Nyasa where he established a successful commercial staging post and agricultural settlement (McCracken, 1977). Like other Arabs in Central Africa, he traded in slaves, and ivory and other tropical products. The converts to Islamic faith helped the Arabs run their businesses and maintain their territories. It is not clear whether Arabs who emigrated to Nyasaland in 1840s established village schools. There is no indication by Alpers, (1972) and McCracken, (1977) of such an intention.

The Yao in the Southern Region of Malawi were Muslims living in the lake shore areas. The Yao have been pre-eminently identified as a people for whom Islam is synonymous with being Yao. However, Alpers (1972) states that:

The Yao chiefs...declared for Islam because they regarded it as the most amenable way of modernising their societies, especially of acquiring literacy for their people (Alpers, 1972: 174).

The Yao chiefs were thinking of starting Islamic schools which would fit in with the Islamic faith and culture in contrast to the Christian mission schools. Muslims preferred to have their own schools where the Koran was taught.

\textsuperscript{43} Zanzibar has an interesting historical connection with Oman. The Imam of Oman originally ruled Zanzibar.
The Yao chiefs also had very many forums for the new economy and culture introduced by the Arabs. By the mid 1870s, the Yao from Mozambique had migrated into Nyasaland and created a number of territorial chieftaincies near the South end of the lake. In 1880s Muslims were more aware of economic activities due to exposure to Arabs from East Africa and Zanzibar. Moreover, mwalimus (teachers) brought Islamic education, dress, style and the new economy thus emerged. There is also evidence of teachers coming into Fort Johnston in the 1880s. Developments and conversion to Islam came just at the same time as Christian missionaries. As early as 1880s some chiefs communicated by letters. Therefore, there was competition between Muslims and Christians.

When missionaries tried to settle at Cape Maclear near Yao settlements, they frequently visited two powerful Yao Chiefs: Makanjira and Mponda. These chiefs were suspicious about the missionaries' motives. Chief Mponda was particularly distrustful of the motives of the Scottish missionaries. However, Young and Laws were treated favourably by the Yao chief because of the Scots' medical assistance to the local people. But according to McCracken (1977) the acceptance was limited to the most marginal of activities.

Although chief Mponda treated Young and Laws with courtesy, he remained deeply suspicious of the missionaries' intentions (McCracken, 1977: 56).

Early resistances were also connected to economic interests of the chiefs. Welcoming missionaries meant the abandonment of slave trade and trading of ivory which missionaries resented. As already discussed, the mission at Cape Maclear failed to make a significant impact on the Yao in the lake shore areas. Most of the scholars who were attached to the mission moved up to Bandawe in the Northern Region. The mission school established at Cape Maclear failed to draw pupils from the Yao and as a

44 Interview with Dr. John McCracken on 29th March 2000.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
result, numbers attending school dropped from an average of forty to about eight in June 1882 when the missionaries moved up North (McCracken, 1977). The Yaos' resistance to missionaries' educational advances was strong to the extent that by 1928 out of a total population of over 55,000 in Liwonde District, less than a thousand were attending an officially recognised school. The prominent Yao chiefs notified the government that they wanted government schools for their children, but not mission schools (Pachai, 1972).

In the minutes of 1930-1932 the UMCA reported how it was difficult to convince the Yao Muslims to go to schools. The UMCA argued that the difficulty of working with the Ordinance and to carry out the code was that the Yao Muslims did not participate in schooling. The minutes stated that:

Now the Yao, at present, are certainly not going for education of the western sort. Far otherwise! In most of out schools among them you would find a very small number of scholars, not exceeding a dozen or, at the most, 20.47

The minutes mention only boys attending schools and not girls:

Nor could we guarantee to put in each school of 10 boys or 20 a fully qualified teacher, mainly because we could not afford to do so and also because it would be extremely bad for the teacher himself to have no work to do (so to speak).48

In 1938, the government stated that “the Yao, a Mohammedan tribe, have long been regarded as the most stubborn opponents of Christianity and education” (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1938: 22).

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47 A letter explaining the education situation in Muslim dominated areas. Found in UMCA 1/2/9/1/2. Education: Includes minutes of advisory committee on education sessions 1930 July 1-1932 June 22. MNA, Zomba.
48 Ibid.
The Manager of Schools of the Malindi Station in Fort Johnston which were under the UMCA also reported difficulties in convincing the community about the value of education. He reported that:

The work among the Mohammedan Yao...in this district still continues to be very difficult and slow, though there are signs of improvement. The people, as yet, do not see the value of education, though most of the village chiefs seem to be becoming much more sympathetic and keen on schools. But they do not seem to possess the power to enforce their desire for schools upon their people (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1938: 22).

The Yao chiefs requested the colonial government to establish schools, which would teach the Koran. But the government schools also failed to overcome the suspicion of the Muslim communities towards any institution thought to be connected with Christianity. Both missionary and government educational opportunities were rejected.

Even the government schools established in 1928 failed to overcome the suspicion attached to any institution thought to be connected with Christianity, and by 1934 they had been abandoned altogether. The Yao near the lake, though not those further South in the Shire highlands, were divorced, to a significant, extent from educational opportunities (McCracken, 1977: 56).

The Yao lack of interest in mission schools and their suspicion of government schools have contributed to the continuing existing problem of illiteracy especially among the Muslim Yao. The problem of Yao resistance to western education and the impact on the community was cited in the Committee of Inquiry into African Education in 1962. They reported that the Yao resisted the influence of western ideas and education, which had its origin in the evangelistic work of the Christian missions. The committee reported that:

They now face the realities of the situation and demand education, which must be centred on the Muslim faith and
Muslim schools, which were established by the Yao, had their own difficulties. Schools lacked funds required for maintenance and there was no cohesive organisation for management. According to the report, it was also difficult to find qualified teachers because of the limited facilities offered to Muslim students. According to McCracken (1977) Muslim education of reading the Koran continued. Indeed there are a number of government schools in Muslim dominated areas but the tradition of learning the Koran is still important in the Muslim faith. The history of resistance among the Yao Muslims has continued to affect pupils’ schooling. It will be discussed in Chapter Three that the rates of drop-out are higher in Muslim dominated areas. The past history, therefore, reveals that constraints to female education are not new. In addition, educational policies and the tradition of missions be they Christian or Islamic limited the progression of female education.

SUMMARY

Literature research and discussions on girls’ and women’s education in this chapter have revealed that constraints to female education in Malawi have indeed a historical dimension. This chapter has delineated a number of issues that affected girls’ participation in education. What the missions and the colonial government represented in the educational reports continues to establish an area of investigation even today.

Past history reveals that the tradition of the missionary educational tradition combined with the prevailing cultural environment limited the advancement of female education. Missions were more interested in vocational training than preparing women for challenging professions because of the grants from the colonial government. However, some missions such as the DRCM and UMCA succeeded in recruiting a higher
percentage of girls in schools. The UMCA success was due to the training of female teachers who, therefore, acted as role models to girls. On the other hand, the DRCM’s introduction of a reformed initiation ceremony for girls and a combination of formal and non-formal education also played a role in accessing girls into schools.

This chapter has also drawn attention to three regions in which different cultural practices, social economic, religious and environmental factors affected girls’ participation in education particularly in the case of mission schools. What is of interest, however, is the reason for the constraints to female education being perpetuated into the present era. Discussions in Chapters One and Two have revealed that the process of adaptation to change and new set of values through schooling contradicts traditional values. Burns (1965) mentioned that many of the social issues with which Africans are concerned to day, arise from the adjustments they have had to make to a western way of living rather than from differences between one African culture and another.

It is evident from the past history that fees were seen as a hindrance to pupils’ especially girls’ access to schools. The Nyasaland Advisory Committee on education suggested proposals for compulsory universal primary education. However, this policy was not put into practice because of the economic conditions and limited resources such as qualified teachers. Moreover, problems in female education were continually documented in educational reports.

A study of the period 1950 to 2000, however, indicates how girls’ education has changed in focus. Chapter Three will, therefore, examine the achievements of female education and the new developments of the policy of free primary education in Malawi. The policy has been introduced with the view of increasing access, especially of girls, to schools. However, considering the historical resistances, which have been covered in Chapters One and Two, the new policy raises a number of questions that will be explored in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN MALAWI

1950-2000

INTRODUCTION

Chapters One and Two have shown that in the past there have been concerns in regard to female education. It has been seen that despite the efforts made towards female education, girls have always lagged behind boys in terms of access to, and retention in, schools. Chapter Two has revealed that constraints to female education in Malawi have indeed many historical dimensions. This chapter will delineate further the different enrolment rates of girls and boys until the present time. Indeed, one may note that whilst some progress was achieved in girls’ and women’s education through the work of early missionaries, it is in the period 1950 to 2000 that major advances have been made and problems have arisen.

Achievements during the Colonial Period

In the 1950s primary education was still predominantly in the hands of the Christian missionary societies. However, the Native Authorities and the local communities were also involved in conducting and maintaining a few primary schools in several areas. The Annual Report for 1951 reported that the colonial government watched with interest the development of “community schools” as they were the direct result of efforts made by the people themselves to establish and run schools for their children. These schools were registered by the Education Department and were subject to its inspection. The Annual Report has not indicated the impact of community schools (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1951). However, statistics for 1951 reveal that more boys than girls were enrolled in the government aided schools (this covers mission schools as well). In addition, educational reports of the 1950s indicate that school wastage was the major
problem affecting the school system. As was seen in Chapter Two, from the 1920s and 1950s the colonial government was becoming more aware of the poor quality of primary schools.

In 1958 African members of the Legislative Council put forward a motion for an Inquiry into African Education. In 1960 the Committee of Inquiry whose Chairman was Professor J. F. V. Phillips began its work. Among the objectives of the Inquiry were: (a) to examine the existing educational system, its administration and the method of its financing and, (b) to appraise the demands made on the educational system by the requirements of the government and of the economy of the Protectorate (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1962: 11).

The subsequent report noted that two of the major problems that dominated the whole field of education in Nyasaland were the low standard of education at all levels, and financial requirements. The low standards of the primary schools were attributed to poor teaching, aggravated by inadequate supervision and inspection; lack of school furniture and insufficient teaching material and textbooks. Other problems included wastage in schools, the age of entry and class promotion, the provision of qualified teachers and the stimulation of local initiatives (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1962: 57).

The report indicated that many of the schools were without furniture and entirely dependent on unqualified teachers, many of whom had only a few years of schooling. Retention of pupils in schools was reported to be the major set back. Wastage was higher amongst girls than boys throughout the 1950s, as Table 3.1 shows.

Figures in Table 3.1 reveal that of all children who entered a primary school, little more than half went beyond the first year, while less than a third completed three years of schooling. Wastage was even higher in unassisted schools. Commenting on girls' education the Committee acknowledged the increase in enrolment rates for girls in the 1950s, though this was then affected by the severity of the drop-out from schools.
Table 3.1: Wastage in Junior Primary Schools in Assisted Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Standard A</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>65,202</td>
<td>48,653</td>
<td>113,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Standard B</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>37,901</td>
<td>23,700</td>
<td>61,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>23,408</td>
<td>12,449</td>
<td>35,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard II</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>19,431</td>
<td>7,871</td>
<td>27,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>19,441</td>
<td>6,323</td>
<td>25,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, constraints to girls' education continued to affect the retention of girls in schools. The report noted that the resistance was mainly due to: (a) conservatism of the parents; (b) the belief of parents with limited resources that girls' education would yield no financial return on their outlay, so that they preferred to invest what money they had in the education of their sons; (c) parents' dislike of seeing their daughters taught by men, as often happened in co-educational schools; (d) parents' wish to see their daughters marry as early as possible, and (e) parents' view that the school curriculum for girls engendered a dislike for the traditional occupations of rural life (Nyasaland Protectorate, 1962: 56).

These factors affected girls' education, as it was reported that in some areas, such as Mangochi, enrolment rates for girls were only one third or less of the total enrolment. Past history, therefore, reveals that these culturally related factors contributed to the insufficiency of female teachers. It is suggested that having female teachers encourages girls to go to school; the teachers act as their role models. Restrictions on female entry to education, therefore, perpetuated the problem. As discussed in Chapter One these factors have continued to affect girls' schooling even to the present.
Given this concern, the Nyasaland government delineated its understanding of the key issues:

- Shortage of funds for capital, and recurrent expenditure, particularly for girls' senior primary schools.
- Shortage of adequately qualified local women teachers.
- The conflict between home and school, because often what was done at home was the very reverse of what was taught at school.
- A school curriculum taking inadequate notice of African culture.

(Nyasaland Protectorate, 1962: 87)

The report recommended that the gap in educational attainment between men and women must be bridged because, as the first teachers of their children, educated mothers could do much to raise the national standards of living. Moreover, the education of females should put them on an intellectual level with men, train them to think for themselves, and to express their thoughts so that they could hold their own opinions and argue them logically. Adult education was also viewed as important for women who missed schooling entirely. It was recommended that wives of students on courses inside the country should accompany their husbands and be given suitable courses at the same time.

The Annual Report of 1963 reported that the number of girls entering schools increased steadily from the year 1950. However, a high proportion of girls withdrew from school before completion of their course (see Table 3.2). This low retention of girls in primary schools affected the number attaining literacy skills which would enable them to be employed as teachers. Table 3.2 reveals that the intake in Standard One in assisted schools continued to increase in the 1960s but the completion rates in Standard Eight were still very low. For instance, enrolment for girls in Standard One was 11,919 in 1955 but eight years later in 1962 from the same cohort of pupils only 1,998 reached Standard Eight.
Table 3.2: Enrolment of Girls in Various (Assisted) Classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Std. 1</th>
<th>Std. 8</th>
<th>Form I.</th>
<th>Form II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2,102</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td><strong>11,919</strong></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>14,018</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>14,346</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>11,119</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>13,947</td>
<td><strong>1,998</strong></td>
<td>304</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>16,998</td>
<td>2,552</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Report points out that although there was an increasing interest in the education of girls, withdrawal of girls from school was a constraint in girls’ educational progress, for reasons which included early marriage and work at home. The problem up till the 1960s was not only of retention of girls in schools but also their access into schools. Table 3.3 below shows that the number of girls entering primary schools was lower than that of boys.

Table 3.3: Pupils Entering Primary Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>47,597</td>
<td>33,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>55,472</td>
<td>40,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>56,900</td>
<td>41,938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

49 The reader will note that these figures are not identical to figures in Table 3.1 on page 117.
As has been seen, educational statistics during the colonial period reveal that gender disparities existed in primary schools. However, there were variations in the proportions of girls to boys entering primary schools. For instance, a few missions such as the DRCM, already discussed in Chapter Two, were able to attract as many or more girls into schools than other missions. Nevertheless, the retention of pupils, and especially girls, remained an area which needed special attention. When Malawi became independent from Britain in 1964 President Banda’s government was aware of this colonial legacy. The next section explores the progress of female education from President Banda’s government to the present United Democratic Front (UDF) government.

**Female Education in Malawi: 1964-2000**

In 1961 the manifesto of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) promised the provision of universal education and that the MCP would take steps to see that all children who went to primary schools finished their primary education without hindrance. The MCP also saw the problems affecting educational attainment in Muslim areas. This is seen in the MCP manifesto, which stated that:

\[ \text{The Party when in power will pay special attention to those parts of the country like the Moslem areas of Fort Johnston (now Mangochi) where education has been deplorably neglected (Malawi Congress Party, 1961).} \]

Although the MCP made proposals in its manifesto, enrolment rates in the 1970s to 1990s show the persistence of lower enrolment of girls than boys in primary education. The Muslim areas also continued to have lower enrolment rates for girls. However, President Banda’s government did not include gender policies in its first and second Education Development Plans although there was evidence that girls were lagging behind boys both in access to, and retention in schools.
Indeed, female education in Malawi, as in the case of other developing countries, has not been progressing well over the last three decades. Historically, girls in Malawi have not gone to school in as great numbers as boys; drop-out rates are higher for girls at both primary and secondary levels, and achievement rates are lower for girls, especially in mathematics and science. Over half of enrolled girls leave school during early primary grades before they attain full literacy (World Bank, 1995: 5). The reasons for low enrolment and completion of primary education cycle are derived from factors affecting retention of pupils in schools.

According to official statistics, the enrolment rate in primary schools differs by gender; boys' enrolment rate is higher than that of girls. There is not a big difference in the initial intake in Standard One of both boys and girls, but females gradually fall away as they move up the school. By the time they are in Standard Eight the proportion of girls is around 32% of initial enrolment, most of them having dropped out of school (Malawi Government, 1992; Hyde, 1993b). Table 3.4 on page 122 illustrates that enrolment of girls at Standard One improved slightly from 1980 to 1988. However, there was a drop in numbers in Standard Five and Standard Eight within the same cohort. Girls' continuation by Standard Eight was very low. The cohort numbers given in the table also include repeat students in the totals.

Statistics reveal that in Malawian schools the retention of girls is lower than that of boys. As mentioned by Kadzamira (1998a) almost half of the pupils entering Standard One since late 1980s have been girls; however, they comprise less than 40% of the total enrolment in Standard Eight in 1994/95 (see Table 3.5 on page 122). The Ministry of Education, Sports, and Culture (MOESC) (1996a) stated that two major problems affecting girls' education are their low continuation and low achievement compared to boys.
Table 3.4: Primary School Enrolments by Gender and Standard, 1980 -1988 (Assisted and Unassisted Schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>STANDARD 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>STANDARD 5</th>
<th></th>
<th>STANDARD 8</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female %F</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female %F</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female %F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>232975</td>
<td>106430</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>64144</td>
<td>4645</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>234816</td>
<td>108691</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>61041</td>
<td>23910</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>262361</td>
<td>121401</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>64515</td>
<td>25601</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>236476</td>
<td>110375</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>66617</td>
<td>27383</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>204200</td>
<td>95109</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>71545</td>
<td>29513</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>238584</td>
<td>110091</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>72832</td>
<td>30325</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>250741</td>
<td>118014</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>74956</td>
<td>31596</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>265990</td>
<td>126622</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>78090</td>
<td>33572</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>285075</td>
<td>135983</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>88139</td>
<td>38745</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3.5: Proportion of Girls in Each Standard 1980-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Std</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980/81</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984/86</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990/91</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992/93</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) noted that it has increased the interest to promote girls' and women's participation in economic development of the country. However, it was still evident that chances for girls' and women's participation in economic activities were very limited (MOEC, 1991: 2). The limited access to education opportunities available to the girls and young women contributes to this. The MOEC stated that:

The majority of girls and young women have low levels of literacy compared to men (MOEC, 1991: 2).

Kainja (1990), argued that socio-economic changes have worsened the situation of the vulnerable members of society, which are the children and women. Urbanisation, migration of men and restrictive structural adjustment policies have left women stranded, with little support and increasing responsibilities, and ill-equipped to cope with the evolving problems. The Malawi government mentioned a number of problems that influence women’s socio-economic status: these include low levels of education, large household size and structure, negative attitudes towards women and their activities in general (Malawi Government, 1992: 4-5).

As pointed out by Kainja, (1990), in Malawi women actually form just over 50% of the population, and they also form the backbone of the rural agricultural economy. Failure to invest in women's education which would eventually increase agricultural production, has severe implications for national development (Malawi Government, 1992; Kainja, 1990). Studies conducted in Malawi have indicated that women's role in agricultural activities has increased. In addition, to food production, the women are expected to work hand in hand with the male folk in cash cropping.

Studies conducted in Malawi rarely look and examine the differential impact of policies on the sexes or draw implications about differentiation for the education and productivity of sex groups (Kainja, 1990: 9).
Women's illiteracy reduces their access to credit, land and co-operative facilities, their access to development programmes, their access to knowledge and information which may improve their lot and that of their families, and their direct dealings with the modern sectors of the economy (Kainja, 1990).

Educationalists and researchers in Malawi have pointed out a number of factors that have affected pupils' retention in schools and particularly girls. Socio-cultural practices are frequently mentioned as one of the constraints towards girls' schooling. The Malawi government stated that whilst other constraints may affect both boys and girls, socio-cultural factors impact more on girls than boys (Malawi Government, 1992: 7). It has been noted already that various beliefs, attitudes and cultural practices tend to hinder girls' education; for instance the initiation ceremony “chinamwali” for girls.

Initiation ceremonies mark the beginning of womanhood for some of the girls. NIPILAR/UNICEF quotes Liwewe (1998) by stating that “in Malawi, some of the initiation ceremonies expect and permit the boys who are undergoing initiation to rape girls who are also being initiated” (NIPILAR/UNICEF, 1999: 5). Liwewe refers to “various initiation ceremonies” and states that “most of these initiation ceremonies have a disastrous effect on the girl-child mentally, physically and socially and this has tremendous impact upon their schooling” (Liwewe, 1999: 39). Moreover, some of the instructions contradict the expectations of the schools. The initiation ceremonies are not compatible with school schedules. Kainja (1990) points out that conflict exists between traditional schools which conduct initiation ceremonies and formal schools. Initiation ceremonies mark entry into adulthood but school culture tends to treat pupils as children. Liwewe has narrated what girls go through during the initiation ceremonies.

When a girl becomes of age, she is taken away from her mother's home. The older women tell her about the facts of life, and teach her how to be hygienic. In addition, she is supposed to experience her first sexual encounter. This
sexual encounter is a forced one, where she is expected to sleep with a man that she may not even know. In some cases the man may be a religious leader in that village. If there are several girls who are going through this training at puberty, the same man has to sleep with all of them (Liwewe, 1999: 39).

The unwanted result of forcing girls to indulge in sexual practices at the initiation ceremonies and encouraging them to indulge in sex is to increase the prospects of becoming pregnant and catching illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. Liwewe states that “for a girl who is inexperienced and is young and getting involved with older men, these activities are more likely to result in the girl getting sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS” (Liwewe, 1999: 40).

Other socio-cultural practices have affected the performance of girls in schools, which tends to be lower than that of boys, although they are taught by the same kind of teachers, and study the same syllabus (MOEC, 1991). Chapter Two discussed in detail the way education is affected by the way children are brought up. Parents, for example, are concerned that schooling affects the future role of girls in society. The MOEC (1991) pointed out that traditionally a girl was trained to be a wife and a mother and to take up the responsibilities of home care and childcare. On the other hand a boy was trained to be the leader of the family and thus the breadwinner. This attitude has caused parents to support sex differentiation in the education of boys and girls. These differences start at home and in the community.

Throughout Malawi’s history, as Nyasaland and now, it appears, girls are taught at a young age to carry out different tasks in the home. Such opportunity costs have been identified as a contributory factor affecting girls’ education. The MOEC (1991: 3) stated that the communities have always encouraged girls to carry out the domestic chores. The impact upon girls’ schooling is that:
For those girls who go to school, parents sometimes give very little help or encouragement to study and after school girls are expected to help the family with household chores (MOEC, 1991: 4).

Kainja (1990) and other educationalists in Malawi point out that parents educate girls differently from boys because parents, relatives and neighbours perceive the role of girls to be entirely different from boys. According to the MOEC (1991), sometimes parents may also be reluctant to send their daughters to schools if their sons remain unemployed after completing formal education, because the problem of unemployment both in urban and rural areas might also affect their daughters.

Unfortunately, differences in the upbringing of girls and boys have affected the school systems in Malawi. Hyde (1992) and Kainja (1990) have shown that traditional perceptions of girls' participation in education have influenced schoolteachers and policy makers. For instance, the curricula for girls have promoted subjects such as home economics, nutrition and child care; secretarial and nursing studies are designed for girls only whilst boys are encouraged to take up science subjects. Teachers too influence the choice of subjects for girls. "Teachers think that girls lack the analytical ability and logical thinking that is required in science subjects and are slow learners" (MOEC, 1991: 5). The school systems and the communities have both perpetuated the traditional position of women in a society and, therefore, their educational prospects and their involvement in socio-economic activities are limited.

Kainja and Mkandawire noted other causes of drop-out including (a) voluntary drop-out due to pupils' lack of interest and motivation; (b) pupils who are expelled because of failure of achievement in school and (c) opportunity costs which either lead directly to drop-out or else a process of absenteeism, followed by poor performance or failure and finally drop-out (Kainja and Mkandawire, undated). Pupils, especially those whose parents are illiterate, lack interest and motivation because of parental attitudes. Girls have been ejected from school because of pregnancies. Lack of resources, poor home
environment, unstable household conditions and lack of role models have all contributed to higher drop-out rates for girls.

A number of studies have shown that socio-economic factors are the main cause of drop-out rates being higher among girls (MOEC, 1994). Kainja (1990) and Malawi Government (1992) cite school costs as one of the principal obstacles to girls’ education. Before the introduction of free education in 1994, many pupils left school because they could not afford school fees and materials (MOEC, 1991). According to MOEC, a number of Malawian survey studies state that one of the most frequent explanations for dropping out of school given by students, parents and teachers is inability to pay school fees. The annual cost of school fees (Malawi Kwacha 3.5, about $0.35) and related expenses for uniforms, materials and incidentals, required cash which some families could not afford.

The Malawi government has pointed out that within the family girls received less help than boys in school fees, books, pens and uniforms. The Ministry of Education and Culture (undated) mentions that besides material and financial support, girls also lack psychological support for educational advancement. For instance, the environment in which the Malawi girl grows up does not induce the girl to work hard at school and aspire for higher education and non-traditional careers. The studies, therefore, show that socio-economic forces affect schooling particularly for girls in poor communities, which has led to a lack of retention in schools.

Religion has been identified as a factor contributing to higher drop-out rates, in addition, to socio-economic factors. A report on the factors affecting the education of girls in Zomba which is mostly dominated by the Muslim Yaos found that Muslim children attended Koranic school for two hours after regular class (Davidson and Kanyuka, 1992). Some of the children lacked concentration in government schools but were keen to attend the Koranic School. Yao culture also has strong traditional norms that affect
girls' education, such as initiation ceremonies, which mark the beginning of womanhood.

Hyde and Kadzamira (1994) and Davidson and Kanyuka (1992) report of the higher rate of drop-outs and illiteracy among girls who have been brought up in the Yao culture. In the 1981-82 and 1985-86 academic years, the primary schools in Zomba registered only a 1.54% increase in enrolment in comparison with a national increase of 13.25%. The total enrolments in 1988 were 23,400 for boys and 18,784 for girls. According to Davidson and Kanyuka, Zomba had the highest drop-out rate, at 26.24%, in Malawi. The research was done in Zomba because of the high drop-out rate of pupils, especially girls and the fact that it is dominated mostly by the Muslim Yao.

Factors affecting girls' education and their higher levels of illiteracy have also affected the growth of illiteracy among the adult population. The efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Malawi were intensified in the 1980s. In 1982 the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs and Community Services (MOWCACS) started a pilot functional literacy project. Agricultural Development Divisions (ADDs) were located in each of the three regions of the country (Malawi is divided into three regions, Northern, Central and Southern). The pilot project started with an emphasis on the development of curriculum and on training personnel and between 1983 and 1985 literacy activities were extended to more districts in these three regions.

With the experience from these pilot projects, the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) was launched in 1986 with the aim of covering the entire country. In the initial stages of the programme, UNDP and UNESCO assisted Malawi in developing the structural framework for launching functional literacy activities. Other international organisations such as UNICEF, and United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) came to Malawi's aid in these programmes.
The aim of the NALP, as stated by Mwale (1991), is to increase literacy levels among adults in order to make them self-reliant in all aspects of life. Self-reliance requires literacy for successfully undertaking, farming, small enterprises, childcare, home improvement, health, family planning and income generating activities. Literacy programmes in Malawi are agriculturally oriented because the country's economy depends on farming. Programmes are targeted on rural areas where illiteracy rates are very high.

NALP's intention was to cover about 2,000,000 adult illiterates by 1995. However, statistics on adult literacy show that there has been little achievement. A 1994 report stated that about 58% of the population are illiterate. Of these 64% are women (National Commission on Women in Development, 1994: 25). It has been noticed that over 80% of learners are women and that the training curriculum has until recently laid emphasis on traditional functions for women. However, women are unable to complete their classes. Practical barriers to their participation include family hostility and community attitudes, local and ancestral customs about women's role in society, frequent pregnancies, lack of child care facilities and activities such as funerals and initiation ceremonies (Munthali, 1995).

Little research has been carried out in Malawi to assess the achievements of adult education, and there are no specific materials on women's adult education. President Banda's government showed very little interest in women's education or gender equity issues. Research on girls' education in the 1980's revealed gender inequalities in terms of access, persistence and achievement, but it was not utilised either by government or donors in their education policies and programmes (Swainson et al., 1998). Banda was not interested in advancing basic education because of the fear of being politically challenged by educated people. Moreover, after thirty years of Banda's rule, primary education in Malawi was still dogged by inadequate, ill equipped schools, insufficient numbers of teachers, high drop-out rates due to the inability of parents to pay school
fees, failing statutory exams and a simple lack of books and pencils (Lwanda, 1993: 177).

Women's achievement in adult literacy programmes has also been affected by a lack of teaching and reading materials for learners and semi-literates (Munthali, 1995). As a result most adults relapse into illiteracy after attaining their basic literacy skills. Post-literacy materials including low cost newspapers in rural areas are important in helping adults further develop their abilities and, in turn in helping their children cultivate a love of books. Proficiency in reading and writing are ultimate goals for such programmes.

THE NEW REGIME'S ADVANCEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY

In the last decade there have been interesting developments in educational policy of free primary education (FPE, hereafter) in Malawi. Malawi committed itself to the provision of Education for All as a strategy towards alleviating poverty. Following Jomtien in 1990 and through GABLE's activities the government of Banda had introduced a school fees waiver scheme for the academic year 1991-1992 as a way of phasing out fees. It began with elimination of tuition fees for girls for Standard One and had reached Standard Four by 1994. In 1994, upon winning the presidential and parliamentary elections, the United Democratic Front (UDF, hereafter) government immediately acted on its promise to advance education for all Malawians (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998).

The UDF government is committed to its long-term strategy of increasing the participation of girls in education. This is closely linked to improving the quality of, access to and equity in the provision of education services. Equity according to the Malawian government is defined in terms of geography, education distribution and gender balance. Gender issues emphasise girls' particular needs and their security in schools. In Malawi, education has taken a key role in the broad policy of "Growth Through
Poverty Reduction” (MOESC, 1996a: 3), by seeking to make the educational system in Malawi equally accessible to all people and providing a relevant and efficient education for children, especially girls.

Universal Primary Education in Malawi

Universal Primary Education (UPE) remains a declared objective in most developing countries (Bray, 1980). Several African countries have either attempted or are attempting to launch campaigns to achieve UPE. For instance, Kenya made the first four years of schooling free in 1974, and subsequently removed fees from the other primary grades. Nigeria, Tanzania and Bangladesh launched Universal Primary Education (UPE) programmes in 1976, 1977 and 1980 respectively. Malawi launched UPE as late as 1994.

Common objectives of universalisation programmes can be identified in developing countries. Firstly, since universalisation campaigns are usually very popular, they are often launched to gain political support. Secondly, the projects frequently seek to reduce regional urban-rural and male-female imbalances. Thirdly, a minimum level of education is widely seen as a basic human right for all citizens and finally education is commonly seen as an investment in "human capital" which is an essential component of development (see Bray, 1980: 1-4).

In Malawi the idea of UPE was initially presented at the Symposium on Functional Literacy which was held in Mangochi in 1987, but started taking hold in 1992, after the publishing of the Pastoral Letter from the Archbishop of Blantyre, the Rt. Rev James Chiona, and his six colleagues at the Episcopal Conference in 1992 in Malawi. On 8th March 1992 a Pastoral Letter signed by all the Catholic Bishops was read in every Catholic Church in Malawi. The letter was sharply critical of the prevailing system and called for far-reaching economic and political change. Suddenly the truth about the
situation in Malawi was clearly spoken and from that day people were set free to speak openly about the problems facing the country (Ross, 1996: 203).

Malawians supported the contents of the Pastoral Letter and opposition political parties started emerging. Banda's government reacted by initiating the elimination of fees for girls from Standard One to Four in primary school. As already mentioned the UDF present government reinforced the universalisation campaign by promising free education upon its election in 1994. The next section of this chapter discusses the launching of free primary education in Malawi. The general objectives commonly held by other countries in launching universalisation projects seem to be applicable in Malawi. It will be seen that the overriding motive for the campaign was political.

Developments of the Free Primary Education Policy

Since independence in 1964, Malawi has recognised education as the catalyst for economic development, a means of promoting national consciousness and a way to raise ethical standards and social justice (Hauya and Makuwira, 1996: 30). Two development policies regarding economic development and national cohesion were introduced in 1968. Therefore, school agriculture was based on the belief that this would support the development of the industry by involving young people who dropped out of school. However, Foster (1965) provided some insights on the debates regarding agricultural studies. He gives an example in Ghana of how parents invested money in the education of their children in order to enable the latter to leave farming, because of the limited economic possibilities. Also literates were reluctant to enter agriculture, perceiving that taking this up was an admission of failure. Hauya and Makuwira note that the second policy was the elevation of Chichewa to a national language. In 1968 Chichewa became the medium of instruction for grades I-IV, and a compulsory school subject for primary and secondary levels (Hauya and Makuwira, 1996).
During Banda's government, primary education was very much politicised. As Hauya and Makuwira (1996) explained, "one of the social-political goals in the 1985-1995 Educational Development Plan was to support and serve the precepts and cornerstones of unity, loyalty, discipline and obedience in a spirit of unswerving loyalty and dedication" (Hauya and Makuwira, 1996: 31). In this regard the Malawi Congress Party leadership tended to emphasise the need for youth to be guided by, and be submissive to their elders, and teachers. This intervention, according to Hauya and Makuwira, explained why classroom practice and teacher training were teacher-centred and formal. For instance, the school system has been inflexible, always sticking to timetables, discipline boundaries, rigid syllabus content, strong, authoritarian teacher control, and assessment of all learning. Examining the recent chaos of schools in Malawi, this system has positive features, as expressed by teachers in Chapter Six.

The policy for primary education during President Banda's regime was that of open access to primary schools. This policy meant that pupils who had an interest in education, and were able to pay school fees, were free to enrol in any school in the country. It has been indicated that enrolment in primary schools increased from about 350,000 in 1964 to 1,066,642 in 1988 (MOEC, 1990a). However, it has been argued that the proportion of the population enrolled in primary schools did not increase because of the substantial increase in the number of children in that age group. The UDF government, which came to power in 1994, noted that during Banda's regime payment of school fees was a big hindrance for pupils who came from very poor families (MOEC, 1994). However, there were more pressing factors such as the cost of school uniform which affected pupils' schooling.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Community Development and Social Welfare (1997) stated that lack of school fees was used as an excuse for not sending, children especially girls to school. UNICEF/Malawi Government (1996) reports that

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50 During President Banda's era, the four cornerstones of the Malawi Congress Party were unity, loyalty, discipline and obedience. These cornerstones infiltrated all educational institutions and documents.
just over one-half of eligible Malawian children were enrolled in primary schools before the introduction of free primary education. Furthermore, the school system lost about half of its students before they acquired adequate literacy skills. This had a negative effect on national development as well as on personal growth.

The new Malawi government also stated that 60% of the Malawi population live in poverty (MOEC, 1994). Poverty has extended to urban areas because migrants from rural areas hope to work and to access better opportunities in terms of health, education, and exposure to a broader range of choices (UNDP, 1997). However, these expectations are not achieved. This is mainly due to a lack of employment opportunities and economic problems, which are affecting the country as a whole. For instance, UNDP reported that the majority of residents in urban areas now live in high density and low income traditional housing areas which are illegal, unplanned and unserviced squatter settlements. Moreover, urban authorities do not have the capacity to respond to the spread of unplanned and unserviced settlements, and to the serious deterioration of the environment due to increased pressure on resources, human habitat and social and economic infrastructure.

The declining economic conditions are affecting communities both in urban and rural areas across the country. In this regard the present UDF government viewed the introduction of free primary education as a strategy of alleviating poverty. The next section will explore the thrust of this initiative in Malawi.

The Launch of Free Primary Education

Past history as discussed in Chapter Two reveals that there have been earlier ambitions to initiate UPE in Malawi even in the late colonial period. During Banda’s regime proposals for UPE were also discussed at the 1987 Symposium on Functional Literacy. The meeting drew together officials from the government, private sectors, and aid
agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF. The Symposium discussed issues concerning the education system in Malawi, and the illiteracy problem was on the agenda.

It was acknowledged that illiteracy was a major problem and an obstacle to development. However, it was seen that the breadth of this problem varied according to sex and geographical location (Ministry of Community Services, 1987). The causes identified were inadequacies in the formal education system and high drop-out rates especially among women. It was, therefore, agreed that it was necessary effectively to address the needs of both formal and non-formal education in the fight against illiteracy. The following resolutions and a Plan of Action in education were agreed:

- Having observed the inadequacies and inherent inefficiencies in the education system, which include shortage of classrooms, high drop-out and repetition rates, high cost of fees collection, under representation of girls, curriculum-related problems and the quality of teachers/teaching, it was resolved that a review of the system should be undertaken with a view to reducing illiteracy.

- The Ministries of Community Services and Education and Culture in collaboration with the Department of Economic Planning and Development should examine the present operation of the education system.

- The Ministry of Education and Culture should consider the introduction of free compulsory schooling up to Junior Primary level (Standard Five).

- The Ministry of Education and Culture in collaboration with other Ministries/Departments and organisations responsible for various forms of training should encourage girls and women to pursue education in technical fields so that they can fully participate in national development (Ministry of Community Services, 1987: 2).
The paper on education, which was presented at the Symposium, analysed the incidence of illiteracy by socio-economic and geographical categories. For instance, illiteracy was seen to be higher among farmers in the Lilongwe Land Development Programme. Variations of illiteracy rates throughout the country were also noted at the Symposium. It was reported that the North was relatively better off with an illiteracy rate of 63% followed by the Central Region at 79.6% and lastly the South with 80.1%. These were comparable to the Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) and Net Enrolment Rates (NER) amongst school going population. GERs by district revealed variations ranging from 105-158% in Karonga, Rumphi, Zomba (urban) and Mzuzu. Mangochi, Machinga, Dedza and Lilongwe (rural) and Mchinji ranged from 28-41% (see map on page 182). Moslem areas were also found to have very low average literacy rates of 15.3% which according to the Ministry fell to 10.1% among women (Ministry of Community Services, 1987).

The Symposium emphasised the following inefficiencies in the formal education system, especially at primary level: low enrolment rates, high repetition rates, over age enrolment rates, under representation of girls and regional disparities in enrolment. It was found that the education, occupation and sex of the head of the household seemed to be most important factors that contributed to resistance to education, particularly of women. Religion of the family was also identified as another factor explaining school attendance patterns. The paper presented at the Symposium also regarded school fees as a major factor affecting primary school attendance.

The Symposium raised various issues concerning formal and informal education in Malawi. Top priority was given to the need to find strategies to boost women’s literacy. Although the issue of introducing UPE was raised, the Symposium was reluctant to recommend the introduction of UPE in Malawi in 1987 with immediate effect. The following reason was given.
Recognising the desirability of Universal Primary Education as a stated long-term objective, the paper cautioned against hasty implementation. Instead careful planning and supporting measures should be introduced in order to avoid the experiences of other countries such as Nigeria where UPE resulted in a diluted quality of education and over-stretching of resources (Ministry of Community Services, 1987: 23).

Thus UPE ideas which were proposed at the Symposium were not immediately introduced in primary schools in Malawi. Pupils continued paying fees, buying reading materials and uniforms. The quality and quantity of schools were deteriorating, increasing the level of illiteracy particularly in girls and women.

The idea of UPE in Malawi was on the agenda again in 1990 when the Ministry of Education presented a paper on the proposals of the launching of UPE at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand. The document, which was prepared by the Ministry of Education for the conference, stated that:

It is intended that by 1995 the primary system should have a net enrolment ratio of 75% with universal education as the ultimate goal (MOEC, 1990a: 1).

Although the document mentioned the year 1995 as a target of reaching a 75% net enrolment ratio as a result of universal education, it raises questions of how these calculations were arrived at since President Banda's government did not anticipate the launching of FPE in the Jomtien meeting in 1990. Moreover, in 1987 Banda's government had been reluctant to pursue the idea of FPE. It can be argued that the document which was presented at Jomtien by Banda's regime was not of a serious nature because it was not until 1992 that the government phased out fees for girls in Standard One to Four. This was due to local political pressure and USAID's initiatives in its Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) programme. Moreover, the policy of UPE was not declared during Banda's regime.
The document also suggested that it intended to reach 2 million adults, especially women, over 15 years of age by the same year, by providing basic literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to improve their quality of life and to contribute to the social and economic development of the country. According to the MOEC (1990a), basic education in Malawi was seen as the attainment of literacy and numeracy and the provision of the essential knowledge, attitudes and skills that help people to become more self-reliant, to make a living, to continue learning and to contribute to the development of their families, villages and the country.

The Ministry of Education and Culture pointed out that despite economic constraints and a rapid population growth, recognition of the urgent need to meet the basic learning needs of children, youths and adults was inevitable. The document presented a vision of a country, which was determined in the shortest time to raise the educational level of all its inhabitants with special emphasis on women and girls' education since female education had lagged behind in the past. The Government of Malawi appeared to realise that the achievement of education for all in Malawi could become a reality only if there were co-ordination of the formal primary system together with non-formal education (MOEC, 1990a: 1).

Further initiatives of development in education were noted in the Pastoral Letter already mentioned. The Pastoral Letter pointed out the low quality of primary education system in Malawi and other political issues which threatened President Banda's government (Ross, 1996). The Pastoral Letter spoke of the urgent need for economic and political change. One of the proposed changes was the right to an adequate education by the provision of schooling, which would seek excellence while aiming to provide education for everyone. The Pastoral Letter stated that illiteracy was one of the principal causes of poverty and lack of development.

It cannot be said that we have succeeded in promoting the creative potential of our citizens while there remains a
The Pastoral Letter recognised that the illiteracy problem in Malawi could not be solved by state initiatives alone but by involving parents; and it urged them to send their children to school. This is what the Letter noted:

Improvements will come about in the educational system only if there is mutual trust and genuine partnership between the different interested groups in society, i.e. parents, teachers, the church and the state (Cited in Ross, 1996: 208).

The poor quality of primary schools was acknowledged in the Letter. It was recognised that the standard of education was falling and that overcrowding of pupils and lack of teachers had affected the efficiency of the primary education system in Malawi. As a result of the publication of the Pastoral Letter and the threats from the former Banda's Malawian Congress Party regime, there were public protests that included strikes in support of the Bishops' Letter. This was followed by formation of opposition political parties who challenged the MCP on its poor economic record.

Political developments also had an impact on educational policy in 1994. During Malawi's first multi-party election campaigns in 1994, the United Democratic Front (UDF) promised to waive fees for all primary school students. It also promised to put its emphasis on poverty alleviation policies. Education was, therefore, viewed as an important strategy in enhancing this policy (MOEC, 1995). Investment in education is said to be associated with increased agricultural productivity, higher incomes, lower fertility rates, improved nutrition and health. The new government, the UDF which was installed in 1994, put poverty alleviation as its first priority and the provision of basic education as a key component of its poverty alleviation strategy (MOEC, 1995). The government also put special emphasis on promoting female education, noting that women were lagging behind in achieving literacy skills.
Indeed the importance of female education has been certainly acknowledged in Malawi in recent years. The World Bank (1996a) reported that Malawi was making serious attempts to improve the condition of girls' education. Proposals included the construction of more schools and more housing for teachers, the removal of direct costs for girls, the provision of more and better educational materials, the gender sensitisation of the teaching force, and the mobilisation of the community in favour of girls' schooling.

When Banda's regime abolished fees for non-repeating girl students in Grades One through Four, during 1992-1994, the World Bank (1996a) noted that education was not made totally free, since parents still had to buy notebooks, pencils, and other educational supplies and pay the school maintenance fees and for uniforms. The present UDF government directed that primary education be provided free, that is, all pupils should not pay school fees (MOEC, 1994). Free primary education was implemented in September 1994. FPE policy means that:

Government is to provide all basic materials for learning which include pencils, rulers, erasers, notebooks; the contribution parents should make is the areas of nutrition and encouragement in schoolwork (Hauya and Makuwira, 1996: 32).

In addition, to the above, Hauya and Makuwira have indicated that the uniform policy is rather relaxed in that no child is suspended for lack of uniform though some school heads had previously done so. The provision of all basic learning materials for pupils by the government meant that more external aid was needed in order to meet the demands for learning and teaching materials and other school facilities. It is against such background that the move by the UDF government towards the provision of FPE attracted a number of donor agencies with the aim of funding educational projects. It could be argued that the new regime is in fact more donor dependent than the old. The next section of this chapter aims to discuss the role of multilateral and bilateral agencies
and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the advancement of FPE in Malawi and promotion of female education.

The Role of Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies and NGOs in EFA Programmes

As a result of the economic constraints in Malawi, external aid has played a dominant role in assisting various projects in all sectors. For instance, the World Bank has long been active in assisting Malawi’s education sector. Since 1967 the World Bank has committed itself in aiding educational projects. Six projects have been completed since then. A number of donor agencies have also been involved in supporting educational development in various ways both before and after the introduction of FPE. MOEC (1990a) reported that UNDP and UNESCO continued funding the primary school curriculum review, which started in 1988. The review aimed at improving and sustaining the relevance of primary education to life and environment and its effectiveness in the provision of literacy and basic functional skills. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported a one-year programme, which upgraded untrained primary school teachers.

Other donors have in the past supported the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP). For instance, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) funded the institution for management and administration of NALP that included printing as well as audio-visual facilities. The German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and UNDP funded the writers' workshops, which involved production of post literacy reading materials. However, it has been argued that although Malawi’s education system benefited considerably from the assistant of the Bank and other donors, this support did not produce the desired benefits. “This limited success was due in part to lack of committed by the former government to education as well as the lack of a well-conceived and comprehensive policy framework” (World Bank, 1995: 3).
Non-governmental organisations have also played an important role by providing back up services through the construction and running of schools and rehabilitation centres for the handicapped. They also provided basic health education through out-reach programmes. MOEC (1990a) acknowledged having thirty NGOs, which were grouped under the Council for Social Welfare Services, each having in one way or another an educational component. The Christian Service Committee of Malawi, World Vision International and the Muslim Association of Malawi are some of the principal member organisations that provide facilities for education and sometimes pay school fees for needy children.

Upon the implementation of FPE policy, aid agencies made fresh commitments of assistance. The policy was praised by international donors although some were sceptical at first, given Malawi's previous lack of investment in primary education and of the resources necessary for such a big change (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998). However, the severe financial constraints confronting the education sector required bold measures. These included: provision of resources to the sector and improving the poor quality and low efficiency in schools.

Both internal and external agencies have actively been involved in the FPE reform and implementation processes. Among the internal actors, government ministries and agencies as well as NGOs and local communities have been involved in the initiative (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 12). As discussed in Chapter Two religious organisations controlled and assisted in the development of schools across the country. However, after the abolition of fees for primary education in 1994, the Government of Malawi took control of the unassisted schools linked to the different churches. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture has since been in charge of paying the teachers, providing teaching and learning materials and taking care of facilities which belong to the different churches (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 14). For the first time in history this was a huge new administrative undertaking by the new regime.
In spite of that, the Government of Malawi, the Christian Council of Malawi and the Episcopal Conference of Malawi have entered into an agreement to jointly manage the operation of the schools. The Muslim Association of Malawi has also embraced FPE by including the mainstream curriculum in their education programmes. In the MOESC/UNICEF (1998) FPE document, the role of the churches in assisting FPE initiatives was not discussed. However, the present UDF government is putting emphasis on the quality of learning in schools to increase access to primary education for all school age children. To achieve this quality, primary education requires long-term investment in all aspects of the educational process, i.e. sufficient and appropriate buildings, well-trained and motivated teachers, relevant learning materials, an organised curriculum, appropriate assessment mechanisms, effective management at all levels and strong community involvement (MOEC, 1994).

The Overseas Development Administration of the UK (now Department for International Development) (DFID) and the Government of Malawi decided in 1995 to support a seven year Primary Education Sector Project (1995-2001), referred to as the Primary Community Schools' Project (PCSP), which fits within the long-term education policy of the Government of Malawi. The project is designed to identify and develop effective learning strategies suited to the realities of schools in rural and peri-urban Malawi by implementing the Ministry of Education/community partnership (ODA, 1995b). The project will not only focus on an improved quality of teaching and learning in up to 800 classrooms but will develop effective participation in education by the communities involved in a broader and integrated process of community and national development. The goal of funding the construction of community schools is to assist in achieving universal access to a complete cycle of quality, community-based primary education (ODA, 1995b).

The project is defined as "a process project". The process began with an Overseas Development Administration (ODA) commissioned review of primary education in 1992 by the University of Bristol. The Ministry of Education and the British
Development Division in Central Africa (BDDCA) organised a series of regional consultative workshops. A policy workshop with the theme of “Primary Education: Ways Forward” resulted in an action plan for primary education development. ODA proposed to support two major components, which were the development of community schools and the strengthening of support systems. A joint MOE/ODA team developed frameworks for two projects, and the report of a consultancy on the proposals for community schools led to the development of the present project (ODA, 1995b).

During the period in which the project was being designed, MOE was developing its Policy and Investment Framework for Education (PIF) 1995-2005: and the high level of donor-MOE collaboration meant that the project could be developed in the light of this Framework. The PIF sets out clearly the Malawi government’s intention to develop primary and secondary education as a major strategy in its priority aim of poverty alleviation (MOEC, 1995). ODA Project Memorandum acknowledges that the primary education system:

...is beset with serious problems in areas of access, equity, quality and internal efficiency, and sets a range of very ambitious targets in terms of enrolment and retention, pupil teacher ratio, pre-and in-service teacher education, provision of equipment and materials, the strengthening of support and supervisory systems, curriculum renewal and development and in terms of the partnership among government private sector, NGOs and the communities in improving the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of primary education (ODA, 1995b: 7).

Implementation of Primary Community Schools Project (PCSP) began at the end of 1995. It has been divided into three stages: consultation with stakeholders; establishment of community schools and lastly school and community development (Burke, 1997). However, the PCSP is facing some problems, which need to be addressed. One of the problems is getting the message across in rural villages so that people can participate in the development of community schools. Burke points out that
the PCSP faces a barrier through the long-standing association of participation with schemes for which they were required to provide free labour. Past history, as discussed in Chapter Two, reveals that communities participated in development of village schools. However, it will be seen in Chapter Six, that this spirit of self-help was killed off during Banda's regime because the Malawi Young Pioneers forced people to do community tasks. In addition, the communities were also forced to pay "compulsory tax".

Civil servants in government and small-scale farmers in rural villages all tend to see participation as an attempt to extract labour (Burke, 1997: 7).

Burke suggests that this barrier requires systems which will allow effective communication but also systems which will give people in communities adequate information about PCSP in the first place. However, communicating with women and men, girls and boys in poor rural areas is problematic. Most communication with people, who are often illiterate and have little access to radios, will be through face-to-face meetings. The best strategy would be to ask school committees to choose and monitor the best ways of communicating with the rest of their communities. Therefore, it is important for the government in co-ordination with DFID to find means of involving the communities in PCSP. This will involve primary stakeholders, women and men and boys and girls. Involvement of the community as a whole is important because this will give them the sense of ownership of the schools and thus create a desire to send their children, especially girls, to schools. In addition as Burke noted,

Care over the use of all-embracing terms like "community participation" helps assure that the needs of different people in the school catchment area are considered (Burke, 1997: 8).

The Policy and Investment Framework for Education is also being supported by the World Bank (through its Third Education Sector Credit and the Primary Education
Project) which will pursue an integrated sector approach to support a government-designed programme for the development and improvement of the sector as a whole. According to the World Bank (1995), through this approach, the International Development Association, the concessional lending arm of the Bank, will share in the financing of a time-slice of the government’s overall programme as specified in the Ministry of Education’s draft Sector Policy Framework Paper. Donor co-ordination is an important aspect of the integrated sector approach. Moreover, the World Bank has pointed out that most donors, who are active in the sector, support the approach and some have already committed resources to financing parts of the government’s programme (World Bank, 1995: 3).

The World Bank is currently supporting the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). MASAF has been designed and implemented under the Poverty Alleviation Policy Framework. Under the Poverty Alleviation Programme the task of alleviating poverty is seen as a shared responsibility of government, NGOs, donors, private sector, and the communities themselves (World Bank, 1998: 5). Through the community-managed and implemented construction and upgrading of primary schools and Distance Education Centres, the Community Subprojects will help improve learning through improved physical environment for the students. The provision of safe water and sanitary facilities at each MASAF-financed school will help improve the health of children, thus enabling better learning. According to the World Bank (1998) “the community-based approach is proving to be beneficial in improving the social capital of communities, so that they are more forthcoming in their demands on the sector to provide the necessary learning materials and teachers” (see World Bank, 1998: 6).

The German government through its German Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau) (KfW) have financed school and resource-centre construction programme and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) have financed Basic Education Project and the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Project (MIITEP). The US Agency for International Development (USAID)
supports girls' education through its the Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Social Mobilisation Campaign (GABLE-SMC) and related support. Other agencies which are supporting PIF are UNICEF, the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and the European Union (EU) which are also supporting educational development in various ways. NGOs such as Save the Children Fund of USA (SCF-US) and Action-Aid and smaller organisations such as PaperMaking Education Trust (PAMET) are developing interesting and relevant strategies to address particular areas of educational need.

The Norwegian Agency for Development and Co-operation (NORAD) and UNICEF’s assisted “Keeping Kids in School” (KKIS) was implemented in 1996 whose objective is to provide retention of pupils in schools, especially girls, by consolidating the gains obtained through free primary education. The KKIS project, which was a combination of both physical infrastructure and quality improvement components, addressed both equity and quality aspects of primary education. As UNICEF pointed out, the KKIS project adopted a strategy of generating broad based support for the idea of the rights of children to receive quality basic education and built a partnership between the government and communities to support free primary education (UNICEF/Malawi Government, 1998).

The major components of the KKIS project’s first phase were to (a) support the construction of school facilities; (b) provision of teaching/learning materials to children in the newly established community schools; (c) the training of senior teachers for leadership and a school based in-service programme; (d) the training of paraprofessional (locally short trained) teachers by providing regular short and long term courses and (e) training for all members of school committees and chiefs in the project area and to ensure that every paraprofessional teacher is supervised at least once every school term (UNICEF/Malawi Government, 1998: 6).
The strategy is to bring schools closer to home and foster a sense of community ownership alongside. The project aims at improving conditions under which children, especially girls, learn through provision of water and sanitation facilities. UNICEF indicates that some of the achievements of the first phase of the project are increased focus on girls’ education, increased community participation and improvement in school facilities. However, problems with the project were encountered at the district level as a result of weak management, implementation and monitoring capabilities, and lack of professional expertise in participatory training approaches at the district level. The second phase of the project has been designed to consolidate the gains made in the first phase of the project and to further improve the quality of instruction in primary schools (UNICEF/Government, 1998: 6-12).

**Policies on Female Education**

The imbalance in the low completion rate of girls compared to boys and the low selection rate of girls into higher education and secondary schools prompted the Ministry of Education and Culture to come up with a gender policy in education. The gender policy emphasises that "girls and women should benefit from all education programmes and projects and should be brought up to the same level of benefit with boys and men, i.e. there is a need to bridge the education gap between the two genders" (MOEC, Undated). "The objective of the gender policy of the Ministry of Education in Malawi is to increase access to quality, relevant and efficient education at all levels with emphasis on the primary level, to all children and youth of Malawi and also to ensure that there is equitable sharing of educational opportunities regardless of gender, race, religion, disability, and political affiliation" (MOEC, Undated).

One of the strategic initiatives of free primary education is to increase the participation of girls in education. As already discussed in this chapter, the participation of the girl child in education in Malawi has been lower than that of the boy child. Previously, lack
of school fees was identified as major problem by most studies (MOESC, 1996a). In order to increase access and retention of girls in schools, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with USAID has implemented the GABLE SMC project.

USAID (2000) notes that during the 1980s only 9% of all females in Malawi had more than four years of schooling. USAID urged the government to increase girls’ enrolment rates. The programme’s strategy for reducing repetition and drop-out rates was to improve the quality of basic education. With technical assistance from USAID, the ministry launched this Social Mobilisation Campaign to encourage girls to enter and remain in school. GABLE assisted with budgetary support, technical assistance and policy reform. As a result of GABLE’s project there have been some achievements in making the curriculum for primary schools more gender sensitive. A gender appropriate Curriculum Unit at the Malawi Institute of Education has been established (MOESC, 1996a: 15). The government also revised its policy of dismissing pregnant girls. It has been seen that girls are now permitted to return to school after their first pregnancy. Other USAID activities provide a number of incentives to women to continue on to secondary and higher education.

GABLE made an impact when it introduced a fee waiver for two years from 1992 to 1994 before the introduction of free education. For the first time in the history of education in Malawi of the number of new entrants (excluding repeaters) 51% were girls and 49% were boys. However, GABLE and free education have not been able to attract overage girls to enrol in schools. This is because girls who reach puberty drop-out from school and this is still a problem in schools today.51

On 1st November 1998 GABLE started the second phase of its campaign which is the Social Mobilisation Campaign for Educational Quality (SMC-EQ). This project is being funded by USAID. The Social Mobilisation Campaign for Educational Quality

51 Interview with Esme Kadzamira on 7th July 1999.
focuses on ensuring educational quality in primary schools for both boys and girls. It aims to overcome the lack of teaching and learning materials in schools.

The project will also involve dialogue with communities on how to attain educational quality and to empower communities to accept responsibility for influencing, implementing and achieving this through the exploration and utilisation of human and other local resources. At the moment the project is operating in the districts of Balaka, Salima and Mangochi (The Community Link, 1999). It is worth mentioning that these districts consist of the Yao Muslim dominated areas, particularly in Mangochi. One can assume that the choice of these districts is the result of illiteracy problems in the areas and a lack of retention in schools.

Unlike the former President Banda’s government, the UDF government has also included gender policies in the third Education Development Plan (EDP) (MOEC, 1995). The Government of Malawi has produced three EDPs since independence. The first EDP covered the period 1973-1980, the second EDP 1985-1995 and the third and current plan covers the period 1995-2005. The first and second EDPs did not cover gender policies. However, the first EDP, which was from 1973-1980, aimed to raise the gross enrolment ratio at primary level from 33.5% to 50% a target that was exceeded by 20% by 1980. The second EDP for 1985 –1995 talked of providing possible places and resources in schools for 85% of the primary school age population (Hauya and Makuwira, 1996: 31).

The current EDP (which is also known as the Policy and Investment Framework for Education) (PIF) has included gender specific policies with the aim of reducing the gender gap with respect to both access and retention (MOEC, 1995). Swainson et al. (1998) notes that most of the gender specific policies and strategies stated in the PIF plan are a result of the GABLE Programme. One can argue that donor agencies have been influential in the formulation of policies in the basic education sector.
The Policy Investment Framework for Education 1995-2005 has:

- Formulated a policy statement on education and gender issues and has started to seriously implement the convention on the Rights of the Child with the aim to promote the survival and protection of children.

- Produced a National Plan for the child's education within the existing educational system.

- Made a commitment to the girl child's education in Malawi.
  (MOESC, 1996a: 10).

Projects which are funded by the donor community, are also aimed at improving access to, and retention of girls in schools. For instance, Community Schools, which are funded by DFID and other agencies in Malawi, are being established in order to increase access to a 50/50 ratio and to improve retention of girls in schools.

Although the Ministry of Education acknowledges the increase in girls' enrolment during the 1992-94 period of tuition fees waiver, the World Bank (1996a) reports that the precise change in girls' enrolment is uncertain. Moreover, the consequences of the waiver of tuition fees for all seem to have been mixed. The general waiver increased enrolment substantially (according to government statistics) but reportedly affected community attitudes toward education. According to the World Bank (1996a), several principals and teachers affirm that parents feel that if education is indeed free the government should supply all materials. The World Bank further reports that there has been a marked tendency by parents to avoid any educational investment because they still buy uniforms and materials which are supposed to be provided free by the government.
However, to ensure that pupils, especially girls, are encouraged to go to school the government has also relaxed the policy of requiring that students wear uniforms. The cost of uniforms was about ten times greater than that of fees, which at most reached 7 kwacha (about $0.70). The World Bank (1996a) notes that relaxed rules on uniforms have also had mixed results. According to parents, it has been a relief not to buy uniforms. On the other hand, as the World Bank (1996a) states, many principals believe the fact that each school has its own uniform which creates cohesion among the students.

The Malawi government's efforts in ensuring girls' retention in schools also resulted in a change in the policy regarding pregnancy. Pregnancy has been cited in Chapters One and Two as a major cause of leaving school. In the past pregnant girls were expelled from school. The new policy allows a pregnant girl to withdraw from school for one academic year and be re-admitted upon application as long as the safe custody of the child is assured (MOESC, 1996a). Another programme, which has been introduced in order to retain girls in schools, is a "Why Wait Programme".

This programme according to the Ministry of Education is designed to "educate the school children, especially girls, on mode of development and sexual purity; and empower them to withstand social and sexual pressures. In so doing they are taught to live in sexual abstinence until marriage" (MOESC, 1996a: 17). This type of programme seems to be difficult for girl pupils to follow, as it contradicts the way the communities expect girls to behave. For instance, some communities encourage girls to indulge in sexual practices and, as already discussed, the first sexual encounter continues to be imposed upon girls at the initiation ceremonies.

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52 The programme is designed to educate boys and girls on the importance of abstinence until marriage in order to control teenage pregnancies and sexual diseases such as HIV/AIDS. "Toto" (which means no) AIDS club has also been introduced in all the educational institutions to intensify the provision of safety and security to girls and boys in schools (MOESC, 1996a: 18).
Another programme which the government has developed is the “School Feeding Programme”. This programme is aimed at providing food for children at school with the aim of aiding retention and participation. Hunger has been identified as one of the causes of lack of girls’ participation in school (MOESC 1996a: 20). This programme, good as it sounds, raises questions of how the government is going to provide food for children in schools and also how the food is going to be distributed. Neither has it been clearly indicated whether food will be given to all pupils in lower and upper classes.

Several other efforts are also taking place in Malawi to increase the number of girls in primary schools. The curriculum, according to the World Bank (1996a), has been modified to include gender-balanced material. The problem is that although education authorities are receptive to the idea of overcoming gender disparities in schools, no internal group is pulling all of these initiatives together and fostering greater ownership among ministry staff.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Community Development and Social Welfare (1998) has also raised a concern about the problems of the low educational attainment among girls and adults. Therefore, in the area of adult literacy, it has proposed to strengthen adult literacy programmes by: (i) Sensitising the women in micro-enterprise groups to join literacy classes; (ii) organising functional literacy classes; (iii) upgrading literacy into the formal education system; (iv) training and recruiting more literacy instructors; (v) producing and distributing easy reading materials; (vi) mobilising the communities by specific liaison with Ministry of Education; (vii) sensitising the parents on the importance of girls’ education; (viii) linking girls’, women’s education and literacy to every day life skills.
Implications of the Quality and Quantity of Primary Schools in Achieving UPE

Documentation on the quality and quantity of the free primary education suggests that there has been little progress over the years since Malawi obtained independence from Britain in 1964. In the report on the National Symposium on FPE1994 Kuthemba-Mwale mentions that for the past thirty years the Ministry of Education has tried to improve access and quality of education but very little has in fact been achieved (MOEC, 1994).

However, many educational participants such as parents, teachers, principals, and ministry officials believe that the implementation of the FPE policy, and the subsequent elimination of fees, has had a significant impact on enrolment (World Bank, 1996). The World Bank stated that there was an increase of 103% in total enrolment between 1993-94 and 1994-95, from 1.5 million to 3.1 million students. The government statistics for 1996 indicate that the enrolment increased from 1.9 million in 1993/94 to 3.2 million at the beginning of 1994/95 school year. However, the number of pupils also dropped to 2.9 million, which remained constant throughout 1995/96. Enrolment continued to decrease in 1995/1996 to 2,887,107 (MOESC, 1990-1997).

Enrolment for 1997 increased slightly to 2,905,950. The government admits that the start of FPE policy was not an easy task. For instance, there were too few classrooms to accommodate the influx of pupils and the majority of schools were in bad condition. In addition there were also too few qualified teachers to cope with the sudden increase (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998).

Table 3.6 shows the progression of enrolment rates for girls from 1980 to 1995. More girls enrolled in schools from the 1990s. As a result of the change of policy after Jomtien, the enrolment rates for girls increased dramatically in three years. The increase in enrolment figures in 1993 (which was due to President Banda’s phasing out of fees) was not as notable as the increase in 1994. This was because of the
government’s FPE policy which enabled children to enrol in schools. However, Table 3.6 shows that in 1995 enrolment of girls started decreasing again.

At this point it is unavoidable that one speculates upon whether Malawi’s introduction of UPE will turn out to be a single shot and 1994 turn out to be, as King described Tanzania’s UPE, the “bulge year” (see King, 1984: 16). King’s explanation of the Tanzania’s “UPE Bulge” raises questions in regard to the successes of Malawi’s UPE considering the financial constraints and other factors which continue to affect access to, and retention of pupils in schools. These constraints will be discussed and explored in Chapter Five and Six.

Furthermore, the World Bank (1995) also argued that while the “normal” access to schools has increased, “effective” access to education has not improved. For, the

53 Meaning that officials’ dilemma of there being a “UPE cohort” that would move through the school and then things would get back to normal.
quality of education has fallen and many young children do not have enough teaching and learning materials and have only a few, too few, young untrained teachers to guide them. Moreover, the quality of primary education is now even more compromised than before.

Class sizes are large, supplies are scarce and many teachers have received only limited training. In addition, repetition rates are very high, particularly in Standard One, resulting in serious repercussions for class size and distribution of classroom equipment, reading and teaching materials.

Though DFID and NGOs are supporting the building of some community schools, the government has a long way to go in achieving quality in primary education. UNICEF/Malawi Government (1996) stated that it was estimated that 38,000 additional classrooms and 25,000 more teachers must be added to the service to bring the teacher pupil ratio to at least 1:50 which is the current goal. The 1994 official statistics revealed the teacher-student ratio was estimated to be 1:72 (World Bank, 1996a). The situation pointed to an increasing tension between quantity and quality.

According to the MOESC (1996b), efforts are being made in every subsector of the system to improve access and equity, quality and efficiency. One of the areas with which the government is concerned is lack of sufficiently trained teachers. Some 4,000 retired teachers were called back to service, and another eighteen thousand paraprofessional teachers and untrained teachers were recruited and given three weeks of training before being sent to classrooms. The Interim Report by Kunje (from the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) in Malawi) and Stuart (from Sussex University) on evaluation of "untrained temporary teachers" (UTTs), found that UTTs needed more training to enable them to teach effectively (Kunje and Stuart, 1996).

Although the co-operating teachers (qualified teachers) (CTs) supported UTTs in team teaching, sharing preparation and general advice, the help offered was not effective
because their own training had been inadequate and some were themselves not familiar with the new curriculum (Kunje and Stuart, 1996: iii - iv). In addition, the resources in some schools were completely inadequate, with no teachers' guides and textbooks or even blackboards. Hence new teachers, regardless of commitment, struggled to deliver even basic instruction.

As already discussed the increase in pupil numbers has also caused problems, which are affecting the quality and quantity of primary schools. UNICEF/Malawi Government (1996) noted that high rates of repetition within the primary schools are also an indication that students are not receiving an education of a sufficient standard to enable them to succeed while schools also have inadequate resources. In addition, repetition rates could be a fault of the system, i.e. class sizes and facilities.

UNICEF/Malawi Government further reports that drop-out rates were high and the school system lost about half of its students before they reached a state of permanent literacy. Considering the donor initiatives in Malawi this is a worrying development and brings to one's attention the impact of the aid projects and programmes upon the school system and the practice in the field.

The Malawi government has argued that the policy of free education has brought about financial relief for parents, since 60% of rural Malawians are categorised as poor. Girls have benefited from this policy more than boys because, given the poverty situation of parents, the little resources they had were used more often to support boys' education than that of girls (MOEC, undated). Moreover, according to the government, a new policy of re-admission has helped girls who get pregnant to go back to school after having their babies.

Kadzamira (1998a) has shown that there are also significant variations in educational achievements amongst different income groups and amongst regions and between districts within the same region. The recent analysis of enrolment trends shows that for
1994/95 only half as many children from the lowest household expenditure group enrolled as from the richest group. Also the percentage of girls compared to boys enrolled in the lowest income group was lower than in the highest income group.

Table 3.7: Gross Primary Enrolment Rates by Income Group and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Expenditure Group</th>
<th>1990/91</th>
<th>1994/95</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Poorest</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1I</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11I</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1V</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-Richest</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Variations occur amongst different regions of the country. As discussed on page 136, the Northern Region in 1987 had the highest literacy rates and the Southern Region the lowest. Table 3.8 on page 159 shows that in 1995 the Malawi Social Indicators Survey (MSIS) found that net enrolment rates were significantly higher in the Northern Region than the other two regions, (even a year after the introduction of free primary education). According to UNICEF “there are significant regional differences in enrolment figures as well, with children in the North more likely to enter school than those in the Central and Southern Region.

One reason for this is that the primary schools are located within a convenient distance of villages in the North. 36% of children are less than one kilometre from a primary school, compared to 13% in the Central Region and 16% in the South. There have been
variations in the net admission rates amongst different districts within the same region. Table 3.8 for 1995 and Table 3.9 on page 160 are generally consistent with each other.

Table 3.8: Net Enrolment of 6-13 Year Olds (%), by District, 1992/93 and 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>1992/93</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitipa</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>89.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karonga</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mzimba</td>
<td><strong>90.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>90.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkhata Bay</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumphi</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedza</td>
<td><strong>38.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowa</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>87.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasungu</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilongwe</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkhotakota</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntcheu</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ntchisi</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salima</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blantyre</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikwawa</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiradzulu</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinga</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mangochi</strong></td>
<td><strong>49.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>86.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulanje</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanza</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nsanje</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyolo</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cited in UNICEF/Malawi Government, 1996: 91.54

54 Figures which are in bold are the case study districts.
Table 3.9: Net Enrolment (%) by District and Gender, 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitipa</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karonga</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mzimba</strong></td>
<td><strong>86.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>93.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkhata Bay</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumphi</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedza</td>
<td><strong>69.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>63.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowa</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasungu</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilongwe</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilongwe urban</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>84.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkhotakota</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ncheu</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nchisi</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salima</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blantyre</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blantyre urban</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikwawa</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiradzulu</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>89.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinga</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mangochi</strong></td>
<td><strong>85.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>85.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulanje</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanza</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nsanje</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyolo</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zomba</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zomba urban</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNICEF/Malawi Government, 1996: 94.\(^{55}\)

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\(^{55}\) Ibid.
UNICEF stated that “various districts had performed poorly in education and other sectors. The individual problems within districts have been aggravated by a lack of access to services and insufficient inputs into these districts” (UNICEF/Malawi Government, 1996: xii). In Central Region, Dedza District both in 1992/93 and 1995 had the lowest net admission rates whilst, Dowa which had the second lowest admission rates in 1992/93 had as high an admission rate as any district in 1995. In Southern Region, Mwanza has shown a small increase in net enrolment rates between 1992/93 and 1995, and consequently had substantially the lowest percentage rate in the Region in 1995 well below Zomba and Blantyre which showed enrolment rates in line with four of the five districts in Northern Region. Mangochi’s rate of increase in enrolment rate is interesting for a Muslim dominated district which has a history of resistance to western education and also lower literacy rates.

It is noticeable from Table 3.9 that gender differences after UPE are not large, although Chikwawa Mulanje and Thyolo in the South, and Karonga in the North, show 10% more male than female enrolments, and Mzimba in the North Region, and Kasungu and Mchinji in Central, and Mwanza in Southern, show 4.5% to 9.6% more female than male enrolments. Salima District in Central Region, which has a matrilineal marriage system, had 14% more females, but since Mulanje also has a matrilineal system further investigation is necessary. Factors which affect figures are the fact that only 51% of all 6 year olds enter Standard One\(^{56}\) at that age, that a considerable number of students repeat classes, particularly in Standard One, and that repetition rates differ between rural and urban areas. There may be variations within districts as each district is sub divided into zones with its own Primary Education Adviser, and also variations within zones, as each zone consists of a number of schools.

It is evident from Table 3.8 that implementation of FPE increased enrolment rates in 1994 but these are falling back somewhat, and the educational statistics for primary

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\(^{56}\) After independence the old mission schools designated Sub A and Sub B from beginning classes became Standard One.
schools reveal there has been higher drop-out rate amongst girls (MOESC, 1996a: 6-7). The Ministry of Education reported that research done under the GABLE Social Mobilisation Campaign identified the following factors impinging upon girls’ education:

- Late entry into school, which makes it more likely, that girls are going to drop-out at puberty, as there is pressure to get married.
- Poverty, especially in female headed households, which results in malnutrition.
- Lack of role models.
- Low value placed on girls’ education, which leads to early marriages.
- Betrothals.
- Teachers’ attitudes, in terms of excluding girls from active participation in class activities and sitting arrangements that do not favour girls.
- Use of girls’ labour by teachers in schools.
- Sexual harassment by teachers, schoolboys and the public, which makes parents reluctant to send girls to school is a major cause of drop-out.
- Girls are expected to do domestic work, unlike boys who are exempted from it, and are encouraged to engage in minor economic activities (MOESC, 1996a: 6-7).

The change of government from the old regime to the new democratic government has also seen the development of the language policy in education. During Banda’s leadership the language policies were detrimental to the development of Malawian indigenous languages (Kamwendo, 1997: 39). When Malawi obtained independence from Britain in 1964, the country had three official languages, i.e. Chinyanja, Chitumbuka and English. “English was the language of the colonial masters and the few “educated Malawian” (Moto, 1999: 57). Chinyanja and Chitumbuka were the liaagua francas of the South and Central Regions, and the Northern Regions respectively. Moto and Kamwendo pointed out that in 1968, at the Malawi Congress Party’s convention, delegates agreed to make Chinyanja the national language of Malawi. The name of the language was changed to Chichewa. The resolution stated that all other Malawian languages were to be used in their respective areas.
In essence all other Malawian languages were effectively banned languages in the official media and the national education curriculum (Moto, 1999: 58).

Kamwendo further points out that “the new national language became a symbol of national unity. In this regard, multilingualism was regarded as a threat to national unity. No attempts were made to develop and promote other languages” (Kamwendo, 1997: 39). English and Chichewa were, therefore, the two official languages which were adopted. Kamwendo argues that Banda’s regime did not push Chichewa into the key areas such as parliament and education. Moreover, English was widely used as the language of the government. Moto quotes the article that appeared in (This is Malawi, October 1968: 22) on Banda’s reaction when the delegates decided to accept Chichewa as Malawi’s national language in which he said, “Malawi could not do away with English” (Moto, 1999: 58).

Moto goes on to explain that the reason for retaining the colonial language was that by maintaining English as one of the official languages, the people of the country were helping their young people to know more about the world. However, the argument as presented by Moto, is that the majority of Malawians knew and still know a lot of things about the “world” largely through their mother tongue (Moto, 1999: 58). During Banda’s regime, at school level, Chichewa was used as a medium of instruction from Standards One to Four. From Standards 5-8, English featured as the medium of instruction. All the standards of the primary school had English as a subject.

The new regime has introduced the new language policy of teaching in a mother tongue. In 1996, the Ministry of Education announced that from the 1997 school session onwards, Chichewa would cease being the sole medium of instruction in Standards One to Four. Instead each school would use the language that is most dominant in its area as the medium of instruction.
The decision to use other indigenous languages, as media for instruction is meant to eradicate the problem that non-Chichewa – speaking learners used to have. These learners had to grapple with the Chichewa language first before understanding the contents of the lesson (Kamwendo, 1997: 47).

Different arguments are presented of the complications in regards to the language policy. It has been rightly argued that the child has the right to education, and s/he must be provided with education in a language s/he is very familiar with. On the other hand it has been argued that the mother tongue instruction policy will not work well. At the National Symposium on Language Policy Formulation, Hon. Brown Mpinganjira mentioned in the preliminary statement a number of problems which include: the distribution of teachers makes it difficult to group teachers speaking a particular language; retraining of serving teachers in mother tongue of their work area is costly; negative attitude, i.e. the teaching and learning of mother tongue in Malawi is looked down upon, and lack of instructional materials, i.e. pupils’ books, teachers’ guides and supplementary readers in mother tongues (Mpinganjira, 1999: 6). Mchazime also suggested that “a more cautious approach to implementation is to pilot instructional materials in a few schools first, revise the materials and finally use them in the full implementation phase” (Mchazime, 1999: 46).

The language policy in Malawi is already producing debate about how the government is going to reproduce materials in different languages whilst there is already a shortage of both learning and teaching materials for pupils. It also brings together questions concerning how children from different ethnic groups are going to cope with being taught in local languages with which they are not familiar.

57 The former Minister of Education.
It raises questions of how teachers are going to be trained and redistributed in areas where they can teach in their own mother tongue languages. It has been noted that, in Malawi, there is a shortage of trained teachers, and there are thousands of untrained teachers waiting to be trained. The language policy presents challenging issues on the implications for free primary education.

**Outstanding Issues on Free Primary Education Policy**

This chapter has shown that FPE initiative raises a number of questions. One should not simply assess the impact of FPE by portrayed enrolment figures but also examine the number of pupils who are being retained in schools. The Malawi government, donor agencies and NGOs are working together to increase retention. At the moment the government is facing social and economic problems which are affecting the development of the country. Evidently, economic problems have further affected the quality and quantity of primary education. Firstly, the process of building the community schools is slow and the target of reaching approximately 38,000 additional classrooms seems to be over-ambitious. There is also an inadequate supply of reading and teaching materials. Achievements of FPE might, therefore, be affected by the poor quality of the primary education system. Secondly, the introduction of FPE does not necessarily solve the problem of retention of pupils in schools. Studies have shown that a number of factors including poverty, poor learning conditions, demands for domestic and agricultural labour in peak seasons, and the low social value attached to being educated, have an impact on the retention of pupils in Malawian schools. In addition, as explored in Chapters One and Two, historically there has always been resistance to girls' education and enrolment figures have shown a gender bias. Therefore, it is important to assess if FPE is making a difference to the achievements of female education.
In addition, the accuracy of enrolment figures needs evaluation. For instance UNICEF/Malawi Government (1996) noted that the surveys for 1995 were undertaken in October, just after the start of the school year, and outside the planting and harvesting seasons. These seasons have a more negative impact on the attendance of girls than boys. Another problem with the statistics is that repetition figures particularly in Standard One are high and this reduces the accuracy of enrolment figures, and the increase of enrolment.

Thirdly, the quality of community schools needs evaluation. Participation of the local people in their respective communities in decision-making and other activities is important. Therefore, it is critical to investigate the participation of communities in the construction of community schools.

However, although the government has taken control of mission schools, churches are continuing to show interest in educational work by agreeing with the government to manage the schools. At this point the role of the Churches in supporting FPE initiatives is not clear. The fieldwork investigation in Chapter Six, gives a clearer picture of the position of the Churches and Muslim Associations in continuity support of education.

Lastly, in Malawi there is an unemployment problem. Provision of schooling will enlarge the number of applicants qualified for wage-earning jobs. The government should, therefore, be concerned with employment programmes for school leavers both in the primary and secondary sectors. Under the present situation the government's strategic plan to alleviate poverty through education is, therefore, endangered by the serious economic problems which are currently affecting the quality and quantity of FPE programmes.
SUMMARY

This chapter has covered challenging issues concerning the Malawi government's initiatives in introducing FPE with the intention of increasing access to schooling particularly for girls. It has also covered complex issues about the quality and quantity of primary schools needed in order to make FPE a success. Chapters Two and Three show that Malawi has had a deficit in girls' access to and retention in education, and in their full literacy attainment. Also there have been limitations in their curriculum. These chapters show that missions were aware of the factors which affected the participation of girls in schooling. Chapter Three reveals that constraints to female education continued during Banda's regime. Moreover, Banda's regime did not include gender policies in its Education Development Plans to facilitate access for girls to primary schools.

The change of government from President Banda to the present UDF government has seen the implementation of the new educational policy of free primary education. Gender policies that are directly related to female education have been given priority. However, such a policy has had implications in regard to quality and quantity of primary schools. The foregoing chapters have raised a number of questions which now need further investigation.

- Why has girls' resistance to education persisted since the introduction of western education in Malawi?
- How in practice do schools affect the achieving of girls' retention in schools? This question includes the effectiveness of the quality and quantity of schools and views of teachers and headteachers on efficiency of primary schools.
- Does the introduction of FPE make a difference in the achievements of female education or is it making a difference in access to, and retention of, girls in schools?
• What role does the community play in enhancing female education? For example, does adult education contribute to girls' enrolment in schools?

• What is the impact of girls' education in poor communities, and in Muslim communities?

Constraints that continue to impinge upon the girls' access to schooling despite the FPE initiatives, therefore, require further exploration. Moreover, it is important to assess whether the World Bank, donor agencies and NGOs take into account the practical realities faced in implementing their aid programmes in the field.

Questions arising from historical and national perspectives in the foregoing chapters helped in developing a research plan and instruments for fieldwork study. The next chapter discusses the methodological approach which was adopted for this inquiry in three areas in Malawi: Mzimba in the North, Dedza in Central and Mangochi District in the Southern Region. Since it has been seen that districts in Malawi differ in educational attainments, it becomes important to explore the impact of free education upon girls' schooling at the district level.
CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The research methods in this chapter derive from the fact that in Malawi there have been gender disparities in school attendance and achievement. This situation, as discussed in the foregoing chapters, dates back to the beginning of western education in the country when missionaries built the first schools. Traditional causes of poor female enrolment in schools have included early marriages, the preferment of male children to female, economic forces, religion and cultural norms such as initiation ceremonies.

Increased attention has been brought to bear on the issue of female education in recent times because the education of women is now seen as crucial to social and economic development. Hence agencies such as the World Bank, the British government's Department for International Development (DFID) social researchers and educationalists now argue for radical approaches that will facilitate female education.

It was discussed in Chapter Three that Malawi is one of the countries known to have openly acknowledged the importance of female education and which, as a result, has designed policies and strategies for enrolling more female children in conventional education. The government's programme has attracted the attention of a number of donor agencies and non-governmental organisations, many of which are now actively involved in the promotion of free primary education in the country. For instance, DFID has been involved in the building of 800 classrooms in community schools across the country, and is also helping on programmes and projects to improve the quality of teaching and learning generally. The goal of funding the construction of community schools is to make universal access available to all pupils and to provide a high quality community based primary education.
Issues discussed in Chapters One, Two and Three raise a number of questions about the phenomenon of female resistance to education. The researcher's concern about female education in Malawi is not only with an increase in enrolment, but also the retention of females after enrolment. Moreover, the phasing out of fees suggests additional implications about the quality of primary schools. For instance, the increase in enrolment figures, as discussed in Chapter Three, has led to large class sizes because of a shortage of teachers and inadequacy of teaching materials and classrooms.

All these factors raise a number of questions about the achievement of female education and the Malawian Universal Primary Education (UPE). The researcher, therefore, undertook fieldwork research in Malawian schools to examine the problem of girls' resistance, retention and lower achievement in schooling.

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this research is to gather data and develop solutions to the problem of why girls are not attending, and are dropping out of schools, despite the free primary education initiatives. This study aimed at focussing on a few selected schools, in the three different regions of Malawi. It studied and explored constraints to girls' education in three schools in depth and six schools surrounding the case study schools.

The research addressed the following questions:

• Why do girls fail to enrol or remain in schools in certain districts in Malawi during their basic education?

• Does the policy of free primary education (FPE) which was introduced in 1994 make a difference to girls' enrolment and retention in the sampled schools?
• What are the contextual and educational factors responsible for non-enrolment and drop-out? This question examined classroom practice including observation of teachers’ and pupils’ interaction in classrooms.

• What are the attitudes of illiterate and literate parents in sending their daughters to school with regard to the new policy of FPE? Parents consisted of those who have daughters who have reached the age of schooling and yet have not enrolled in primary schools, and those whose daughters enrolled upon the introduction of the policy of FPE but subsequently dropped out. This research question examined the responses of parents belonging to different communities in three districts.

• To what extent is the problem of girls' education different within three contrasting areas in Malawi, i.e. poor communities, patrilineal and matrilineal communities and Muslim communities.

Qualitative methodology was employed in this study in order to explore and investigate the research questions. The next section discusses this method of research.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork was conducted in Malawi using qualitative methods. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, life story, interview, observation, historical documents, interaction and visual texts. These describe routine moments and meanings in individuals’ lives. Qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 2). Qualitative methods focus primarily on the kind of evidence (what people tell the researcher, what they do) that will enable the researcher to understand what is going on. Their great strength is that they can illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations;
essentially a search for meaning (Gillham, 2000: 10). Qualitative methods were appropriate for this study, the aim of which was to record the opinions and thoughts of respondents by using interviewing processes and participant observations.

Qualitative research (QR hereafter) can help to understand what lies behind any phenomenon and to investigate situations where little is known. In addition, QR helps to gain fresh slants on things about which quite a lot is known (Bouma et al., 1995) and Gillham, (2000). In this study the researcher's use of qualitative method involved collecting life histories of pupils and teachers which produced fresh information on the factors which lie behind girls' resistance to education. Girls in particular were able to narrate a detailed account of their experiences at the initiation ceremonies and the impact of these upon girls' schooling.

The characteristic of QR work is that it is "naturalistic". Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explain that qualitative research is a multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 2). McNeill (1985) stated that the account given is rooted in the natural setting of what is being described and is thus very different from both the formal survey, interview or laboratory research which involve the creation of a more artificial situation where data is collected. Qualitative research, therefore, attempts to understand the culture of those being studied and to work as far as possible in natural settings. In this study the researcher interviewed respondents in their own environment. For instance, teachers and pupils were interviewed and observed in their own schools and surroundings.

The advantages of QR, as argued by Parahoo, are that the interviewer has the chance to go back to respondents to find out whether people feel or think differently about phenomena on a different day and to validate their responses. This data validation process by respondents is useful in providing the opportunity for clarification and for the
researcher to recognise his or her own prejudices. The aim of qualitative interviews is "to know all possible ways in which respondents view or experience phenomena. The researcher accumulates perspective and experiences until a broad understanding of the phenomenon is obtained" (Parahoo, 1997: 290). Moreover, the advantage of the research methods is that qualitative and phenomenological perspectives tend to be more realistic and faithful to local concepts and perceptions (Namuddu, 1991).

For qualitative researchers in education, the maximisation of ecological validity (the extent to which behaviour is observed in one context compared to another) is one of the main rationales for their approach (Vulliamy, 1990). To explore the question of validity, Kirby et al. (1997) explained that there are principles that explain how society works whether we know about them or not. Through reasoning and observation, particular facts can be linked to these principles, allowing the researcher to gain knowledge about those being studied. Comparison also allows the researcher to look at two different societies or different phenomena and by observing similarities and differences, gain knowledge of how they operate.

Brannen (1992) noted that the researcher who use QR methods question the nature of the data that constitute evidence. They are concerned with the ways in which data has been created, asking, for instance, whether it is the product of the negotiation between interviewer and interviewee or whether it is the actions, or justifications of action, given to other actors in a particular situation. They question the ways in which the data relate to the initial theories and formulations of the research problem. Kirby et al. (1997) suggest that the starting point for any sociology is an understanding of the subjective meanings that people use in interactions.

Social research cannot exclude consideration of the subjective feelings of people since, in reality, the object of sociological research is a subjective being. Moreover, it is necessary to understand motives behind any particular action to arrive at an understanding of a situation. This should be the task of sociology, as Kirby et al.
explain, starting from a recognition of the importance of seeing human beings as engaging in subjectively meaningful actions.

Distinction between facts and values is an important aspect in social research. By this means it is possible to arrive at an objective understanding of the subjective meanings people attribute to their actions. "Subjective belief must be checked against objective reality" (Vulliamy et al., 1990: 5). Qualitative researchers recognise the subjective component in the interviewing process and seek to utilise it in order to obtain meaningful data. However, building trust between the researcher and respondent is crucial in getting access to the respondents' perception of the phenomena (Parahoo, 1997: 293). This study was, in part, concerned with sensitive issues such as initiation ceremonies. The researcher's initial task was, therefore, to build trust and confidentiality with girls who had gone through the initiation ceremonies in order to get accounts of their experiences. As Stake notes:

> Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict. With much qualitative work, case study research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances. Those whose lives and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment: loss of standing, employment and self esteem (Stake, 1994: 244).

For the purpose of confidentiality, the names of girl pupils who revealed their experiences at the initiation ceremonies have not been disclosed as the researcher promised not to reveal their names to their parents nor to the teachers in their schools. Names of other respondents and schools in this study have also been made anonymous.

An interpretive paradigm was also applied in the QR methodology using the approaches of ethnography and phenomenology. The interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual, which is the aim of this study. As Vulliamy noted:
The interpretive researcher begins with the individual and sets out to understand his interpretations of the world around him (Vulliamy, 1990: 40).

Ethnography puts particular emphasis on people's behaviour in relation to their cultural and social environments. The advantage of this method, as cited by Kirby et al. (1997), is that social researchers view and focus on the cultural and social processes by which the respondents live their lives. Ethnography believes that human behaviour can only be understood if studied in the setting in which it occurs. "In ethnographic studies, researchers are supposed not to impose their interpretations in their attempt to understand and explain respondents' behaviour. Researchers, as anyone else, need a framework in order to make sense of phenomena; they can only use their experience to do this" (Parahoo, 1997: 151).

"Phenomenology seeks to find out how individuals' personal history, such as their education and social class, past events in their lives and their psychological make-up, influences the ways in which they experience phenomena" (Parahoo, 1997: 44). To understand the interpretations of the respondent, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand his actions from within. Vulliamy et al. (1990) explain that actions are only meaningful to us in so far as we are able to ascertain the intentions of the actor and share his or her experience. Moreover, a great deal of our interactions with one another relies on such shared experiences. Therefore, the researcher's task is to describe phenomena as experienced and expressed.

This study applied the phenomenology paradigm by obtaining personal histories of pupils, drop-outs, non-enrolees and teachers. The experiences of pupils' activities at home and school were important in examining how home and school environment affect pupils' schooling. Since this research is focused upon girls' schooling in Malawi, it was also appropriate to apply the method of qualitative educational research. The next section discusses this methodology as applied in the field.
Qualitative Educational Research

The choice of qualitative methodology depended on the type of data the researcher proposed to collect. The strength of this method was that the researcher was able to produce data through in-depth interviewing by using open-ended semi-structured questions. The data derived from open-ended questions helped with the interpretation and understanding of broad survey findings at an international and national level.

Qualitative research has been viewed by researchers such as Stephens (1998) and Vulliamy et al. (1990) as an important research method in conducting educational research. The researcher is able to get teachers' opinions on government policies on education and their involvement in school practice, and to get views of pupils about the importance of schooling. Yet qualitative methodology is generally overlooked in research involving developing countries, and researchers prefer to use quantitative data collection.

This is the case in Malawi where intensive research has been carried out on factors affecting girls' education, but little attention has been paid to collecting data on the life histories of teachers and pupils. Instead quantitative statistical data collection has been widely used. As a result, there have been limitations in “digging out” the roots of establishing the real problems affecting female education and school practice. As discussed in Chapter Three, cultural norms, seasonal and traditional obligations and work in family firms and farms may continue to affect local patterns of attendance.

A number of USAID sponsored studies have been undertaken beginning in the early 1990s which have looked at factors affecting the achievements of girls in primary schools (Swainson et al., 1998). This includes Davidson and Martin Kanyuka's (1992) ethnographic study on factors affecting girls' education in Southern Malawi. Independent pieces of academic research have also been carried out by a number of
Several factors affecting girls' education have been identified and generalised at the national level in Malawi. These can be seen in the recent study by Swainson et al. (1998) on promoting girls' education in Africa. The findings of the study do not, however, report on how different communities view the importance of girls' education, when considering variations in the enrolment and retention of girls in different districts. Chapter Five and Chapter Six, therefore, seek to respond to this omission by studying how different ethnic groups in three areas respond to educational developments.

The study aimed to look into life histories of teachers and pupils and to conduct interviews with parents and communities in selected districts in the North, Central and the South to assess the implementation of the FPE policy in schools. A series of interviews, lesson observations and whole school observations were used to explore their situations. Interviewing pupils and teachers and observing their performance in classrooms provided valuable data on the everyday realities, the classroom activities and on the motivations and capabilities of teachers.

Qualitative educational research in developing countries, as Vulliamy pointed out, concentrates on "focusing on the actual implementation of policies in schools and thus assessing the points at which policy and practice converge and diverge" (Vulliamy, 1990: 17). This study aims at assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy of FPE in Malawi. As mentioned in Chapter Three, achieving the policy of FPE depends on the quality and quantity of schools. This type of educational research, as mentioned earlier, has been overlooked in developing countries.

A review of the literature on schooling in developing countries suggests that there are few widely known examples of qualitative research studies based upon extended observation of the process of schooling. Discussion of educational innovations in
developing countries has tended to be conducted at the level of policies, plans and rhetoric, rather than considering the practice of such policies within schools themselves (Vulliamy, 1990: 1-2).

An example can be detected in the recent research work on Gender and Primary Schooling in Africa (GAPS) which was carried out in African countries by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex. The aim of that research was to find out why girls are not getting into schools. The first phase of this programme was conducted in three African countries under the auspices of the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. A second phase of the GAPS programme was conducted on more African countries including Malawi. The second phase of the GAPS program adapted the same methodological approaches and conceptual framework as were carried out in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Guinea.

Peasgood et al. (1997) suggested that the instruments developed for the main survey included qualitative and quantitative techniques. However, looking at the reports of the outcome of the research in Tanzania and Ethiopia, one gets the impression that the research method used was highly quantitative. This can be seen in the statistical presentation of the data which lacked any reference to the actual quotations of the words spoken by parents, school children and teachers. Children’s backgrounds and their life histories are missing from the report and there are limitations on exactly how children view their schooling and the constraints that hinder them from progressing. For instance, when assessing school level performance, self-perception and the attitudes of pupils and teachers in schools, questionnaires designed for this purpose were rigidly structured (see Peasgood et al., 1997: 108-123).

What needed further research was how and why cultural norms have remained dominant and are continuing to affect girls’ education. Life histories of how female children are brought up in different environments at home and what is expected of them in school
were important for assessing the constraints affecting girls’ education. Reporting on girls’ schooling and puberty, parents were also reticent in expressing how they really feel about this sensitive issue which has hindered the progress of girls in schools. Less information has been reported on issues regarding cultural and school practices, which are usually in competition with each other.

Another issue that is missing in the report is how teachers themselves view school and classroom practices and how their teaching practices are being affected by educational policies. The IDS report on teachers in Tanzania (see Peasgood et al., 1997: 178-190) limits itself to looking at the general issues concerning teachers instead of focusing on the real issues that are causing high drop-out rates and lack of retention of girls in schools. In-depth interviews with teachers about their backgrounds, attitudes and teaching practice are missing in the report, as is the study of the constraints which teachers are experiencing due to educational reform. The omission in the report of the children’s and teachers’ views about the whole process of schooling also needed to be addressed by the means of the educational qualitative method.

Data collected from QR aimed to gather the views of the population sample being interviewed. An in-depth study of a particular school, i.e. in a poor community or a Muslim dominated community, provided knowledge that is likely to apply in other similar settings. Whilst quantitative strategy is concerned with generalising to a wider population, QR strategy is more interested in providing a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the totality of a single institution—which was the aim of this study. Findings from this study provided the characteristics of each of the three primary institutions in three regions. This was done in the hope that the ensuing generation of theoretical ideas might illuminate the processes of schooling elsewhere, but not with the intention that any specific findings should be generalised (Vulliamy, 1990: 12-13).

Stephens (1998) notes an important point about ensuring validity in qualitative research. Validity depends “on the researcher’s ability to understand the relationship between
macro and micro analytical levels of data collected, and to establish cross-cultural comparisons and contracts" (Stephens, 1998: 18). With this view in mind, interpretation and analysis of data in this study were measured against macro background data drawn from international and national studies and donor community documentation.

The interviews for qualitative research were conducted with the following respondents:

1. 1 headteacher from each case study school and 6 headteachers from schools in proximity to each case study school;
2. 3 female teachers from each case study school;
3. 15 girls from each case study school (i.e. 45);
4. 15 girls who have dropped out from each case study school (i.e. 45);
5. 25 girls who have not enrolled for school in Mangochi District;
6. 4 village headmen from each area;
7. 3 school committees from each case study school;
8. The parents of each girl in categories 3, 4 and 5 as listed above;
9. 2 Primary Education Advisers in Mzimba and Mangochi districts.

The number of respondents of each category was restricted to 15 and 25 because of the limited time the researcher had to spend in the field. In addition, the aim was to acquire qualitative data using in-depth interviews. Therefore, rather than talking to a large number of people, the aim was to focus on a few people representing each category, some being key individuals such as local leaders, teachers and headteachers. By talking to a limited number of people, issues were considered in detail and points that emerged followed up. Respondents were selected because of their involvement with educational activities in Malawi. For instance, teachers were expected to give an account of their life histories and attitudes towards their teaching profession. Questions included how they valued their teaching professions, the advantages and disadvantages of being a teacher, their aspirations and an examination of attitudes towards pupils.
Headteachers were examined on their views about the quality and quantity of primary schools and they were a valuable source for gathering statistical data from enrolment books. Parents were expected to provide data on how they valued education for girls and what their reaction was to the phasing out of fees. Parents included those who were illiterate and literate. This provided facts on how literate mothers valued education for girls more than illiterate mothers do. In Chapter One, it was shown that writers such as King and Hill (1993) and Chlebowska (1990) believe that literate mothers are more willing to send their children to school than the illiterate.

Local leaders were assessed on their involvement in community schools. They were also expected to have valuable information on how their communities are supporting girls' education and FPE programmes. To address such issues, this study used research methods of case study, semi-structured and unstructured interviewing, participant observation, focus groups, document, record and statistical analysis. The next section focuses on the research method of a case study.

CASE STUDY RESEARCH

The length of fieldwork was almost seven months (from 15th January 1999 to 5th August 1999). Permission for research procedures and conducting interviews with the proposed population sample was obtained in advance from the Planning Division of the Ministry of Education headquarters. This was guaranteed and the researcher was allowed to go to Malawi.

Malawi is situated in south-eastern Africa and is one of the smallest countries in Africa. It is landlocked and is surrounded by Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. Malawi is divide into three regions, Northern, Central and Southern Region. There are a total of 27 districts in the three regions (three recently formed districts are not included on the map). The population of Malawi is estimated at approximately 10 million.
Figure 4.1: Map of Malawi Showing the Three Areas of Research, Mzimba in the North, Dedza in the Central and Mangochi in the South.
Fieldwork took place in three schools one from each of the Northern, Central and Southern Regions and in Mzimba, Dedza and Mangochi districts within the respective regions (see Figure 4.1 on page 182). The estimated population of Mzimba District is 599,935; Dedza and Mangochi have a population of 746,060 and 623, 696 respectively.

Findings that are presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Six derive from a qualitative methodology based primarily on the three case studies. However, as already discussed other sources also included interviews, life histories, observations, documentation, national records and statistical analysis. Data thus accumulated by different methods but bearing on the same issue constitute the multi-method approach (Gillham, 2000). But within this context, the emphasis on a case study is made because it draws attention specifically to what can be learned from the single case (Stake, 1994). As Gillham (2000) notes, a case can be an individual, a group or an institution such as a school. While these are all single cases, one can also study a group entity such as several schools.

This study has focused on selected primary schools in the three areas in Malawi which differ in cultural practices, ethnicity, religion, educational achievement and economic conditions. One primary school from an area in each district was chosen and in addition six other schools within each of the chosen areas were surveyed. As mentioned, districts are divided into zones and Ekwendeni zone from Mzimba District in the Northern Region was chosen, along with Mthandiza in Dedza in Central Region and Masongola, in Mangochi, in the Southern Region.

Stake (1994) mentions that while the time spent concentrating our inquiry on a case study may be long or short, it is still a case study irrespective of duration. In the field each case study was carried out for six weeks in each zone. However, the duration of the interviewing processes varied in each area. For instance, in Mangochi District considerable time was spent interviewing non-enrolees, as they were many in the villages surrounding the school. Unlike the North, the time spent on the interviewing
process was much less than in Mangochi because the researcher did not come across the non-enrolees in the villages.

A case study is one which investigates a group or an institution to answer specific research questions and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers to the research questions. Its relevance to this study is that the main purpose of a case study is to answer research questions as raised in Chapter Three and Four. Gillham rightly points out that:

In human behaviour, generalisation from one group of people to others, or one institution to another, is often suspect because there are too many elements that are specific to that group or institution. For example, what is true about one school, i.e. cause of low achievement rates may well not be true of another (Gillham, 2000: 2)

This comment by Gillham is related to this study. The reason for choosing schools from different districts in three regions is because of differences in enrolment and retention rates of pupils, especially girls. Communities surrounding schools may also have different cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies which have profound impact upon schooling. Therefore, some explorations of the findings are not generalised where they directly relate to specific features of a case. Stake rightly noted that “case study can usefully be seen as a small step toward grand generalisation but generalisations should not be emphasised in all research. Damage occurs when the commitment to generalise or create theory runs so strongly that the researcher’s attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself” (Stake, 1994: 238).

Generalisations in this thesis are, therefore, inappropriate, as in the three areas of research there are also slight differences in economic conditions. For instance, the economy of the Northern Region is poorer than other parts of the country. Dedza and
Mangochi in the other two regions are less poor, and farming practices include the cultivation of tobacco which is the country’s main cash crop.

Ethnicity and cultural differences also play a dominant role in these areas. Whilst the patrilineal system of marriage is practised in Mzimba District, Dedza and Mangochi Districts consist of matrilineal communities. Mzimba differs in its cultural context from the two other regions and consists of both the Ngoni and Tumbuka speaking ethnic groups whereas Dedza and Mangochi consists of the Chewa and Yao ethnic groups respectively. People in Mzimba and Dedza are largely Christian whilst in Mangochi District they are mainly adherents of Islam.

This study answered the research questions by providing evidence of characteristic differences between schools and between communities. However, the multi-method approach confirmed the validity of the findings. This approach allows deployment of different methods of research to bear on the same issue, usually known as the triangulation procedure. The inclusion of evidence from multiple sources, each with its own strength and weaknesses provided the key to the validation of the case studies.

Triangulation, as Stake noted, has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying the differing perceptions of the same phenomenon (Stake, 1994: 241). Moreover, as confirmed by Bassey (1999), triangulation is the term used in social science research to describe the technique for strengthening confidence in a statement. This study has brought together data from different sources and from the same source but by different methods of enquiry. Triangulation has been applied to verify previous research and also information obtained from examination of the historical perspectives.
Stake (1994) also notes that researchers usually report their cases with a view to comparison with other case study findings. However, they differ in the degree to which they accept responsibility for making comparisons, setting up comparative cases for the reader, or acknowledging reference cases. Discussions in Chapter Five and Chapter Six of this thesis, therefore, exclude comparative data in favour of the latter procedure. As already discussed, qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials. The next section discusses the research methodology of life story, observational, focus groups, interviewing and record and statistical analysis.

**LIFE HISTORIES**

Life history is a particular research method that is suited to cultural conditions in developing countries. Moreover, it fits well into a qualitative methodological paradigm. “This is concerned with the voice and ownership emphasis given throughout the research to what the individual researched has to say, how it is said, and the meaning made by the speaker to what has been said” (Stephens, 1998: 22). It was important in this study to hear the voices of teachers who daily experience the reality of teaching and of their pupils who are at the receiving end.

By understanding the individual teachers and pupils within a life history context we can identify significant moments and experiences which in the eyes of the respondents appear significant. Within that context and that level we can therefore suggest possible strategies for intervention (Stephens, 1998: 22).

Chapter Three has pointed out that for FPE to be achieved in Malawi, the quality of education in schools must be improved, and by implication the competence of teaching staff. The work of teachers, as Stephens (1998) suggests, is regarded as an important component in achieving the question of the goal of improving the quality of education in
developing countries. In this study the teachers’ life histories were told in their own words and terms.

It was seen in Chapter Three, that as a result of the subsequent increase in enrolment, the government was forced to recruit extra teachers who were not fully qualified. It was, therefore, important to get the views of untrained teachers on how they are coping with pressures from the government and how the latter is affecting them. Life histories of teachers comprised their views of the educational changes and thus covered the periods before and after the introduction of free education. Questions dealt with the quality of primary schools, teacher qualifications, availability of resources and teaching materials, and educational policies in relation to national policies.58

Stephens (1998), Swainson et al. (1998) and Avalos (1986) have argued that the teaching element has been neglected in research into schooling. Swainson notes that “most research on gender and education to date has concentrated on the access, persistence and attainment. However, the financing of education, the role of teachers and the curriculum have not been adequately addressed” (Swainson, et al. 1998: 4). Schweisfurth adds that “many studies have shown the mediation of reform initiatives by teachers is a critical but often overlooked element in determining the impact of new educational policy” (Schweisfurth, 1998: 4).

In this study the aim of interviewing teachers was to hear their own experiences of schooling and of the teaching profession both before and after the introduction of free primary education. It was also important to learn how they benefited from educational developments brought in by a new democratic government and the introduction of the policy of FPE. This involved talking to teachers about their backgrounds, attitudes and teaching practice, and also about the constraints which teachers are experiencing due to educational reforms. In order to gain an overall picture of a Malawian primary school

58 See appendix four.
the headteachers were asked to provide a snapshot of his or her school and provide information on their experiences of the school life.

To gain some insights into how teachers viewed their work, they were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the job. They were also asked how the local communities, and especially parents from their villages were supporting educational developments. The aim of interviewing teachers was to get opinions in their own words about the pressures they come across and to get information and ideas about whether school practice has contributed to the lack of retention of girls in schools. UNICEF/Malawi Government (1996) has argued inefficiency in schooling has created the problem of repetition rates in Malawian schools.

It was also important, in this study, to get life histories of pupils and the drop-outs. Pupils were interviewed to elicit a life history of the way they have been brought up, how they valued schooling, what their parents' views were, their expectations and attitudes towards teachers and to the issue of over-age children. Pupils who dropped out from schools were asked questions on the reasons for dropping out in addition to their life histories. Serpell suggested that an important factor in the significance attributed to schooling is the perception of the participant in regard to his or her own "life-journey".

Progress along the journey reflects a number of types of change: a developmental progression of the individual's social status and a cumulative sequence of experiences, decisions and shifts of priorities in the individual's personal agenda (Serpell, 1993: 142).

Serpell (1993) gives an account of the studies that were carried out in Zambia based on the life histories (what he calls life journeys) of some students. According to his findings, "some individuals developed a commitment to schooling over the course of their life journey and came to accept its narrow staircase definition as a channel for their career. Whilst for others the school remained a marginal resource, a place they visited
once but that had little to offer them, a club that they briefly expressed an interest in joining but that rejected them” (Serpell, 1993: 142).

The purpose of interviewing girls in school and out of school was to gather life histories of their experiences of being in school and at home. It was also to hear from pupils themselves how their parents viewed their schooling under the policy of free education. It was also important to assess the pressures those girls were under who had reached Standard Seven since the introduction of free education, in particular from parents and communities as they neared puberty. In Chapter One and Three, it was argued that girls who reach puberty go through initiation ceremonies and are encouraged to get married. Therefore, the question of what the communities and the school expected of them was important. In-depth interviewing also assessed what girls experienced in schools, such as the attitude of teachers towards them and the attitudes of parents at home.

Another purpose was to hear from pupils themselves what they expected from teachers at school and the community at home. Interviews were also conducted with girls who had reached enrolment age and yet were not in schools. The aim was to find out what was hindering them from enrolling in school. Girls who had dropped out of school were required to give life histories of their experiences at home and school practices, which might have discouraged them from continuing with schooling. Among the group of girls to be interviewed there were some who paid school fees before schooling was made free; thus it was important to hear their side of story about the way the educational policy of free education had affected their schooling.

Life histories of girl pupils attending school were taken to gather the thoughts and opinions of girls experiencing the impact of the policy of free education and to identify the problems they encountered and to the constraints discussed in the foregoing chapters which hindered their progress at school. Interviews were based on the life of the child at home and of the child at school. The ground covered included, for instance, what
children did when they were at home, what children liked and did not like at school, and also the impact of religion on school children.\textsuperscript{59}

This meant giving girls the opportunity to give an account of their background and upbringing, present experiences and what they thought ought to be done to increase their participation in the schooling process. Personal histories were obtained through the interviewing process. The next section discusses the methodology of the semi-structured interviews which were utilised in the field.

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

The method chosen for this study was semi-structured interviewing using face to face interviews. These were open-ended ethnographic (in-depth) questioning and provided varied answers. In semi-structured interviews respondents are asked the same questions, but there is “flexibility in the phrasing and order of the questions” (Parahoo, 1997: 293). Validity is enhanced because respondents can be helped to understand the questions and interviewers can ask for clarification and probe for further responses. Semi-structured interviews are suited to the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and to clarify answers. The varied professional, educational and personal histories of the sample group exclude the use of a standardised schedule.

Interviewers have to strike a balance between establishing the kind of relationships with respondents that will encourage them to be frank while also avoiding becoming too friendly lest respondents try too hard to please them. According to McNeill (1985), interviewers are usually encouraged to be as non-directive as possible. This study adopted the non-directive reflective interview approach. The researcher tried not to put words into respondents’ mouths to ensure that first hand opinion was achieved.

\textsuperscript{59} See appendix one and two.
The advantage of unstructured interviewing is that it allows respondents to respond in their own words. This provides a more credible and in-depth picture of reality. Moreover, the interviewer can follow up issues that arise during the interview (Kirby et al., 1997). On the other hand, the disadvantage of the semi-structured questions is that it is time consuming since the interviewer is required to record all answers verbatim. This limits the number of questions that can be asked and the interviewer can have difficulty in keeping up with a verbal barrage. Generalisations can be difficult if respondents give inconsistent explanations for their viewpoints. Interviews were partially tape recorded to avoid missing any details. Tape recording was also initially used to gather comments while also taking notes. The whole process was explained to respondents before the researcher commenced the interviews.\(^{60}\) Notes were also taken regularly and analysed continually.

Parahoo argued that "semi-structured interviews are popular because they can provide quantitative and qualitative type response that allow comparisons between respondents in the same study and be applicable to other similar settings" (Parahoo, 1997: 295). The next section explores the method of participant observation carried out in schools and classrooms.

**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

Observation has three main elements: watching what people do; listening to what they say and sometimes asking them clarifying questions (Gillham, 2000: 45). In participant observation, the researcher is a complete observer of the subjects being studied. The observer is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed, and, by participating with them in their natural life setting, he or she gathers data.

\(^{60}\) It was intended to use a tape recorder throughout the research but unfortunately it was stolen before the survey of the other two areas of the research.
Parahoo (1997) notes that participation observation represents the ideal form of research strategy because this method requires that the sociologist for all intents and purposes becomes a member of the group being studied. To get a glimpse of people’s feelings and behaviour, ethnographers not only have to be present where the action is but also, as much as possible, be part of their environment and become an insider.

The purpose of participation is to try to see things from the subjects’ point of view (Parahoo, 1997: 330). Qualitative observation is fundamentally naturalistic in essence; it takes place in the natural context of occurrence, among the actors who would naturally be participating in the interaction, and follows the natural stream of everyday life (Adler and Adler, 1994: 378). In this particular study, the researcher was involved in observation of pupils’ and teachers’ interactions in a classroom. Observations included pupils’ attitudes to the teacher, pupils’ expectations of teachers, attentiveness, teachers’ attitudes and contacts with pupils.

Parahoo (1997) rightly notes that one of the strengths of the ethnographic approach is that observation and interviews go hand in hand. This allows for a more complete understanding of what is being studied. Thus the ethnographer can ask why people behave the way they do and clarify inconsistencies that arise between what people say and do. By adopting this approach in the field the researcher was able to clarify her observations by interviewing pupils and teachers.

The operational method, therefore, comprised:

- Observation → Interview → Observation

The overpowering justification for observation is that it is the most direct way of obtaining data. It is not based on “what people have written on the topic (what they intend to do, or should do). It is what they actually do (which may also be reflected to
some extent in records)” (Gillham, 2000: 46). However, there are several weaknesses in the observational method. A major problem with observation is that it is time-consuming. Observing people is slower than asking them about what they do. Moreover, as Gillham suggests, the data from observation are also troublesome to collate and analyse, and difficult to write up adequately.

Indeed the researcher found this method to be time-consuming in the field. Two weeks were spent observing activities in the classrooms (both teachers and pupils) and the school as a whole. It was also difficult and confusing to observe pupils’ actions and at the same time observe teachers’ attitudes, interaction and actions. Moreover, writing up and remembering what had occurred in the classroom was also difficult. In this regard the researcher in this study wrote up her rough notes promptly and regularly.

Parahoo (1997) mentions that many people are reluctant to have their working practices observed. People may be suspicious of the motives of researchers, many of whom do not show any concern for those they observe once the data are collected and would probably not allow others to observe their own practices. This explanation by Parahoo was relevant in the field. Teachers were suspicious of why the researcher was observing them in the classroom. Moreover, they complained that many researchers had been to their schools but they had not received any feedback from them, nor had there been any changes in the teachers’ working conditions, such as an increase in salary. Consequently some researchers believe that the only way to obtain valid data is not to let participants know they are being observed (Parahoo, 1997).

The experiences in the field revealed that when teachers knew that they were being observed in the classroom, they tried as much as possible to impress the researcher. When the researcher was not in the classroom they behaved differently to pupils. The researcher gathered from pupils who narrated how teachers were presenting themselves when the researcher was in and out of the classroom. One day the researcher went to the village near the school to conduct interviews. When the researcher returned to the
school she noted a teacher who was beating a pupil who the researcher gathered misbehaved. As soon as the teacher saw the researcher he hid a stick but it was too late as the boy was crying and teachers were forced to narrate to the researcher what happened. When teachers thought that the researcher was observing pupils only and not them, they behaved naturally in the classroom and one teacher even beat a pupil while the researcher was in the classroom. This means that in the field the researcher should find the best means, which she or he thinks, are suitable for obtaining valuable data.

On the other hand, as Gillham (2000) suggests, “telling them the researcher’s purpose is part of the researcher’s openness, much of the researcher’s identity, and it may be helpful. Helpfulness and disclosure from individuals or members of a group or institution are going to depend on the building up of confidence in the researcher as a person: that researchers are reasonable, straightforward, and sympathetic to their endeavours. People will disclose a great deal if they feel they trust the researcher” (Gillham, 2000:53). The next section discusses issues that were observed in classrooms.

Observations in Classrooms

Observations in classrooms were used to assess classroom environment and classroom practice, and to see how teachers and pupils interact during lessons. The researcher observed the teaching conditions such as availability of teaching and learning materials, teacher-pupil ratio, class size, the curricula and assessment of teachers’ educational qualifications.

The main point of observations was to focus on situations found in the daily life of the school. The idea explored factors that might have affected the high drop-out and repetition rates in schools. Some questions reflected upon for observation purposes were as follows: What happens in classrooms which are being affected by high drop-out
and repetition rates? What do teachers think causes this phenomenon and are teachers doing anything about it? How do teachers, through their words, actions and gestures, affect pupil outcomes and how do they react to pupil behaviour? Are pupils attentive and showing interest in the classroom? If not, why are they not motivated?

It is important to observe the teachers' contact with pupils because classrooms are busy places with different activities, i.e. teachers helping individual pupils or talking to groups. Everyday classroom interactions are controlled by the teacher for it is he or she who promotes particular learning situations through the choice of objectives, organisation of experiences and selection of materials and books.

**FOCUS GROUPS**

Focus group methodology was used in interviewing pupils and parents. Group discussions were conducted several times with similar types of participants to identify trends and patterns of perceptions. Krueger suggested that for the interviewer to obtain best results from the interview, the number of group respondents should be from six to ten.

The focus group interview is created to do a specific purpose through a defined process. The purpose is to obtain information of a qualitative nature from a predetermined and limited number of people (Krueger, 1994: 15).

In this study, focus groups were divided into groups of girls who were attending schools and those who had dropped out of schools. Parents' groups consisted of those who were literate and those who were illiterate. The purpose was to get information about why girls dropped out of school and to open discussions on the attitudes towards schooling of parents and the community and attitudes to teachers and the school. Focus groups, as Krueger (1994) pointed out, are effective in providing information about why
people think or feel the way they do. Moreover, they allow for group interaction and permit greater insight into why certain opinions are held. Group members also influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. The field study, however, revealed that in matrilineal communities women were more actively involved in discussions than women from patrilineal communities.

The advantage of this research method is that interviews are non-directive and the use of open-ended questions allows individuals to respond without setting boundaries or providing clues for potential response categories.

The open-ended approaches allow the subject ample opportunity to comment, explain and to share experiences and attitudes as opposed to the structured and directive interview that is lead by the interviewer (Krueger, 1994: 7).

This method was effective in interviewing and observing parents and sharing their experience of being illiterate or literate, and in assessing the impact of their literacy skills on their children’s education and their attitudes towards schooling for girls. In using focus group interviews it was hoped that this would promote self-disclosure among parents and pupils and that they would be able to share their experiences effectively with other respondents. Krueger suggests that:

Focus groups provide an environment in which disclosures are encouraged and nurtured, but it falls to the interviewer to bring focus to those disclosures through open-ended questions with a permissive environment (Krueger, 1994: 15).

Validity in focus group research is achievable if it is applied carefully to a problem that is suitable to focus group inquiry. In this study, focus group interviews consisted of respondents who shared similar experiences such as dropping out of school and the questions raised were geared towards this specific problem. These included reasons for
not going to school, the types of activities they engaged in before going to school in the morning and after attending classes, teachers' attitudes and the significance of achieving retention of girls in schools. The question of the validity of findings resulting from interviewing depends on whether the questions put to respondents are really measuring what they are supposed to measure. “The reliability and validity of the findings are difficult to ascertain on their own but can be compared with the findings of individual parents' attitudes toward schooling” (Parahoo, 1997: 299).

Parents proved to be an important source for views on education for girls and how education had negatively or positively affected their daughters in their community life. The parents in question consisted of those whose daughters were in Standard Seven, those whose daughters had dropped out from school and those whose daughters had never enrolled in schools. In-depth interviews were geared towards extracting experiences of their own education and their opinions on the importance of education for girls. Those whose daughters were still in school were asked to give their views on girls’ schooling now that it is free. There were also probing questions on their relationship with the teachers.

Parents whose children have dropped out of schools were interviewed about their own educational achievement and the factors which they thought contributed to girls dropping out from schools. Now that education is free and every school age child is expected to be in school, parents were interviewed to find out why their school-age children were not at school. It was interesting to compare what children had to say about their schooling and to hear the opinions and thoughts of parents about the importance of schooling for girls. The aim of interviewing parents was to get information on the cultural norms, religious and economic forces that have affected girls’ education.

School committees and village headmen in the three areas of study also participated in focus group interviews. Respondents in this category were expected to give an account
of how the communities in villages were involved in educational developments and what they expected from the school, teachers and parents. For instance, they were asked about the characteristics of the community to which most of the children of a given school belong and the community’s level of development and employment conditions, about the actual beliefs and values of religious and community leaders regarding education, and also about the relationship between community values and beliefs about education and theories of modernisation as propounded by policymakers and teachers.

The aim was to get views on how communities in villages were supporting school activities and the policy of free education, and their opinions on the importance of girls’ education. As already discussed data was also collected from national records and documentation from various sources.

**DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS**

Documents and records are of importance for qualitative research because, in general terms, access can be easy and low cost; the information provided may differ and may not be available in spoken form and because texts endure and thus give historical insight (Hodder, 1994). Documents can be letters, policy statements, regulations and guidelines. They provide a formal framework to which a researcher may have to relate the informal reality. Records are things that go back in time but may provide a useful longitudinal fix on the present situation (Gillham, 2000). Published or publicly available documents and records also help one to appraise the wider context to which one’s case belongs. Conversely a narrow focus local literature context is also available from community or school specific documentation. Institutions in particular will have their own literature which is usually neither published nor available to the public (Bassey, 2000).
Statistics and summary information are maintained for a variety of reasons and these can go back several years and so provide a dimension that would not otherwise be accessible. However, getting these records may present some problems. For instance, the data may not be in a form which can be easily processes or analysed while its accuracy may be open to question (Gillham, 2000). Gilliam points out that researchers should bear in mind that the database was not designed to answer his or her questions. Therefore, relevance comes from weighing and assessing and selecting the evidence that does have a bearing on the research issues.

In this study, representation of data from the statistics on schools helped in the analysis of qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected from documents such as registration and enrolment books in order to assess the issue of retention of girls in schools in particular districts. The headteachers helped in providing statistical data from school records and register books which spanned the period before and after the introduction of FPE policy; from 1990-1999. The objective was to critically assess whether the policy of free primary education was progressing or whether it had been a one off affair, and to see if children were continuing to be enrolled in primary schools.

Statistical measures from existing government primary schools were also gathered from the Ministry of Education headquarters in Lilongwe. Quantitative statistical data helped with the analysis of qualitative theories and concepts. Secondary data was obtained from the University of Malawi and government departments, i.e. Ministry of Education, Malawi Institute of Education and international agencies such as the World Bank, DFID, UNDP, UNICEF and USAID.

Archival research was also undertaken at the Malawi National Archives in Zomba. As Bassey (1999) notes, the archive is the complete set of documents involved in the enquiry. In the field the researcher explored more insights into the early development of education and policies by missionaries in Malawi from the colonial reports and examining educational statistics.
DATA ANALYSIS: GROUNDED THEORY

In qualitative research, "analysis" is the process by which data is used to identify themes. In qualitative research, data analysis takes place during data collection and thereafter. The researcher processes the data as they are received and makes judgements relating to aspects of the phenomenon which requires investigation (Parahoo, 1997). The process used to analyse the data produced during fieldwork was the grounded theory (GT hereafter) approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). GT is a methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed.

Theory evolves during actual research and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). This approach is often referred to as the constant comparative method. During the analysis the researcher is continually asking questions about the data and checking them by constantly comparing different data samples (Kelle, 1995). This study followed this approach when collecting data. Analysis of data was an ongoing process starting from the time the fieldwork began.

The major difference between grounded theory methodology and other approaches to qualitative research is its emphasis upon theory development (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). In this study, theories were generated by the collection of data through the research methods as already discussed. Theory is something researchers create. It may be that they only modify existing theory, or it may be that they start from scratch.

Theories derived in that way may be a result of generalising from case specific data, i.e. the actual data that the researcher finds may be specific to a particular school, or factory, or family, or individual, but the researcher’s theory may be useable by other people; or generalisable in understanding how other schools, factories families or individuals work. Good theories are fertile: they account for a lot of data (Gillham, 2000: 12). Moreover,
good theory has categories that fit the data; is relevant to the core of what is going on; can be used to explain, predict, and interpret what is going on and is modifiable (Huberman and Miles, 1994: 433).

Critics on GT have suggested that “the authors remain vague on how verification is accomplished and question the status of data and the actors’ perspective within the theory. Others have commented on the perceived tendency of researchers to impose their own order on empirical materials” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 205). The researcher in this study felt that it was important to defend the findings, explanations and analysis of the data. Evidence to support the conclusions was also provided.

Coding was a process which this study applied in sorting out data from emerging theories. Coding is simply a process of categorising and sorting data, while codes are described as serving to summarise, synthesis, and sort many observations made out of data (Bryman and Burgess, 1994: 5). The method used in this study was of breaking down themes, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data. This meant building up categories out of data. In regards to focus groups, transcripts were coded by a given code of each individual participant mentioned and each group discussions contained a given code.

SUMMARY

Qualitative methods of research in this study were successful in obtaining data from the population sample in three districts. However, in the field there was evidence of the realities of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative methodology as portrayed in literature. Thus it appears that application of QT research methods is particularly problematic in Malawi because of differential cultural practices in the three main geographic groupings. As a result, a number of ethical issues arose particularly in regard to sensitive issues such as initiation ceremonies. However, the researcher was
able to acquire valuable data and interpret, analyse and discuss its implications (Chapter Five and Chapter Six refer). The next Chapter explores findings in Malawi in the said three areas encompassing the North, Central and Southern Regions respectively.
CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL IMPACTS ON EDUCATION IN THREE DISTRICTS IN MALAWI

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One and Two discussed factors that have continued to affect girls’ access to, and retention in primary schools in Malawi. It was noted that, historically, girls have always lagged behind boys in enrolment and achievement of literacy skills due to factors such as religious, ethnic, economic forces and political factors. These have contributed to higher drop-out rates. Malawi is not very different from other countries in Africa in this aspect. Indeed one might argue that religious, ethnic, economic and political factors have all impacted on the education of girls to the extent that girls’ schooling has been greatly diminished. This research emerges out of that concern about the quality and sustainability of girls’ education in Malawi.

As already mentioned, I carried out seven months’ research work in three areas because I was particularly interested in the question of retention of girls in schools in Malawi. The research focused on selected schools in three districts in the North, Centre and South - Mzimba, Dedza and Mangochi, respectively. Three zones, one from each district, were selected for my research: Ekwendeni in the North, Mthandiza in Central and Masongola in the South. The duration for fieldwork in each zone was six weeks during which I interviewed Primary Education Advisers (PEAs), headteachers, teachers, pupils in schools, drop-outs, non-enrolees, parents, village headmen, the school committees and the Community Development Officers.

These districts differ not only culturally, but also in socio-economic status and educational achievement. Variations in enrolment figures both of girls and boys also differ from district to district in the country. Studies show that districts have performed poorly in education and other sectors. The central constraints to education appear to
include poor quality of education and limited access to education which affects, particularly, marginalised communities. In addition to these there are problems which children encounter when entering school. These have resulted in high repetition, drop-out and failure rates amongst school children.

The aim of the study was to move from such generalisations about constraints to girls' education towards assessing how different practices in each district have affected access to and retention in primary schools. Each district, therefore, has been researched in order to delineate and then compare the effect of different cultural norms and attitudes upon girls' education. In this way the research becomes not merely a description of what happens in terms of girls' schooling in three areas but is also used as a comparative tool through which analytical understandings can be developed.

Fieldwork took place at School K1 in Mangochi in the South, School G in Central and School Z in Mzimba District in the North. It was found that there are regional differences in the impact on schools of economic factors, cultural and social practices, enrolment rates, and of language and religion. However, in all three areas agriculture is the main force for economic activity. In addition, in districts such as Mangochi and Dedza people also benefit from fishing activities around and on the lake. In the districts of Mangochi and Dedza, there are tobacco estates owned by wealthy individuals. Yet due to a lack of employment and poverty in the villages, villagers (including pupils who live near the tobacco estates) work at the estates. This of course helps parents and pupils with their domestic economy and enables them to find the financial wherewithal to buy food and necessary educational materials.
Figure 5.1: Three Areas of Research
In light of this brief description of all three areas, it is the intention of this chapter to examine the economic basis for the provision of free primary education (FPE). As discussed in Chapter Three, the United Democratic Front (UDF) government introduced FPE as a strategy for alleviating poverty in Malawi. It will be argued that such a policy stands little chance of success whilst economic forces continue to impact so profoundly upon pupils' schooling.

Secondly, the chapter will address concerns beyond economic forces, which impact on girls' schooling. These include the very apparent cultural and religious as well as the more implicit ideological barriers to schooling. Thirdly, discussion will focus upon the framework within which free primary education and schooling in particular are supported. In Chapter Three it was noted that multilateral aid agencies and bilateral agencies assist the education sector in various ways such as provision of textbooks, training untrained teachers and construction of community schools. After consideration of subsequent to these economic, cultural, religious and aid agency concerns, this chapter will focus upon schools in the three districts. It will delineate in each district issues concerning the people, the local economy, the village, as well as drawing attention to the manner in which macro and micro economic, political and cultural concerns impact upon girls' schooling.

This chapter will, hopefully, therefore, provide an understanding of the constraints in all three areas, where it will be seen that, in each, these macro and micro concerns are played out in slightly different ways. The next section explores the district profiles, and the characteristics of schools and villages in each district. This will give a clear picture of social settings and economic conditions in these areas before discussing the research findings in Chapter Six.

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61 Malawi is ranked as the world's 16th poorest nation, with 60% of Malawi’s 10 million population living below the IMF/World Bank poverty breadline of US$1 per day (African Eye News Service, November 8, 2000).
AREA 1: SOUTHERN REGION: MANGOCHI DISTRICT

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Mangochi District is one of the twelve districts in the Southern Region. It is situated at the Southern end of Lake Malawi and entirely surrounds the Eastern arm tip of the Lake (see figure 5.1 on page 205). The district shares boundaries with Machinga District in the Southeast, Balaka, Ntcheu and Dedza in the Southwest, and Salima in the North. It also shares an international boundary with Mozambique in the East and Northeast. The district can be reached either by road, water or air and is approximately 200 kilometres from Blantyre, the major commercial and industrial centre for the country and the administrative headquarters for the Southern Region.

The district has a total land area of 6,273 square kilometres. It comprises approximately 19.8% of the region's total land area and 6.7% of the whole country. According to the 1998 preliminary results of the 1998 population and housing census, Mangochi had a population census of 599,935.

ETHNICITY

The district has many ethnic groups - Yao, Chewa, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Tumbuka and Ngoni. Yao is the predominant ethnic group in the district and its people are found in almost every part of the district. The Yao people strongly hold to traditional and cultural practices, while other ethnic groups appear to have lost most of their traditions. Yao is the main language spoken in the district. However, most people in the district understand Chichewa and more than 50% of the population speak Chichewa with ease. Like the rest of the country, English is the official language.
The people of Mangochi have maintained their traditions in a number of areas. For instance, local institutions such as the chieftaincy are well recognised, as are the traditional dances. The prominent faiths in the district are Islam and Christianity. Traces of animism, that is, belief in ancestral spirits, are evident during times of stress. In terms of Christianity, the major denominations are Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Seventh Day Adventists.

A practice among the Yao Muslims is the circumcision ritual for boys. According to Malawi Government (1999a: 21) “girls who go through initiation ceremonies, ‘the chinamwali’, believe that it is wrong to turn down an offer from the opposite sex”. As a result, teenage pregnancies have become the main cause of high drop-out rates among girls. Early marriages have partly been attributed to the practice of the chinamwali. This has contributed to a high a rate of illiteracy in the district and also HIV/AIDS-related diseases.

The Yao have established institutions for training the youth during the initiation ceremonies. These institutions are organised according to gender. Teaching involves customs, values, beliefs and sexual instructions. The purpose for initiation ceremonies is preparing young people for adult roles. Boys aged from six years old go through jando, which is a circumcision ceremony mainly connected with Islamic beliefs. Girls have two types of ceremonies. The first ceremony, nsondo, is for girls starting from the age of six years old who have not reached puberty; the second is for girls who have had their first pregnancy (Community Development Officer, Mangochi). The duration of such ceremonies is from one to two months. Initiation ceremonies will be seen to profoundly impact upon pupils’ schooling, especially that of girls.

\[62\] Whilst jando is connected with Islamic beliefs, nsondo is connected with the Yao culture. Both Christian girls and Muslim girls go through the nsondo ceremony. However, Christians try to avoid some aspects of the initiation ceremony such as those concerning sexual matters.
It has been argued that along with economic characterisation and performance, cultural practices play an important role in educational achievement, especially for girls in school. The three areas of the research study differ in cultural practices. Mangochi in the South practise matrilineal marriage systems. This practice is still in full force among the Yao in Mangochi. Such marriages are arranged whereby the husband lives with his wife in her village among her relatives. This means that the woman's relatives, especially the uncle, control the family. People living in villages surrounding School K1 practice the matrilineal type of marriage system. The children in the family are mostly controlled by the wife's relatives, mainly by the uncle (the wife's brother). According to the people I interviewed, the uncle oversees the upbringing of the children because they belong to the mother and not the father. The husband has the responsibility of feeding and clothing the children.

The matrilineal marriage system has tremendous impact on education, particularly for girls because the mother and the uncle can decide if they want the girl to stop schooling and get married without the father's consent. This is common among the Yao who believe in having many children. Teachers at School K1 in Mangochi District explained to me that some parents allow men to marry off their daughters while the girls are still at school. Thus, when a man asks for a girl in marriage, she drops out of school. In addition to cultural practices the economy of the three areas also play a vital role in educational achievements. The next section explores economic conditions in the district.

THE ECONOMY

Land Tenure System

Three land tenure categories recognised in the district are Customary, Public and Private. Customary land comprises 60% of the total land in the district. This land is
owned, controlled and allocated by the traditional leaders who are the Traditional Authorities (TAs) /Chiefs, Group Village Headmen and Village Headmen. Customary land is passed on in succession from one generation to the other through the maternal nephew. Traditional leaders settle most land disputes. In a few circumstances these are referred to the District Commissioner (DC). The primary use of customary land is in subsistence farming and human settlements. And even public land may be turned into customary land by the government when there is a scarcity of customary land for subsistence farming.

**Agriculture**

Over 90% of the population of the district are farmers growing crops and rearing livestock. The main crops grown by farmers in the district are food and cash crops. The major food crops include maize, rice, sweet potatoes, cassava, groundnuts, beans, pigeon peas, cow peas, soya beans, fruits and vegetables. Maize, being the main staple food in the district, accounts for almost 80% of the area under cultivation. Burley tobacco\(^6\) is the major cash crop for the majority of the small holder farmers. Groundnut is the second dominant cash crop, followed by cotton.

The arable land in the district is currently under small holder agriculture. A greater proportion of land is put out to crop production while less than 1% is left to grazing of animals. The majority of these farmers are subsistence farmers growing crops for their own requirements. The use of farm machinery is restricted to a hoe; in fact, very little use of the recommended farm inputs and husbandry practices is made by these farmers. Currently only 30% of all farmers are using fertilisers and less than 1% have access to irrigation facilities for crop production.

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\(^6\) This is a common name of the cured tobacco leaf that is used, usually after aging and processing in various ways, for smoking, chewing, snuffing and extraction of nicotine.
The district has a total number of 916 individual estates, with an average land holding of 106.5 hectares. Most estates are on land usually leased up to 99 years either to individuals or groups of individuals. For the export market, the estates cultivate high value crops, such as tobacco and coffee. The tobacco estates are largely run on a tenant system and these tenants are paid in cash or kind. Estates owned by the Greek settlers are close to School K1 and other village schools in the area. As already mentioned, people surrounding the area, including pupils, work at these estates and earn money to buy food and educational materials.64

The Panafrican News Agency (November 17, 2000) reports that the trade unions and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are critical of the tobacco industry over its use of child labour on farms. Thus an ILO-funded survey report indicates that a significant percentage of estate workers in Malawi are under-aged children who are paid lower than average salaries to work in most strenuous conditions. The survey attributes the growing child labour problem in Malawi to chronic poverty among most Malawian households, which forces many children to help their parents in the search for food.

Tobacco estates have profound impact upon pupils’ retention in schools in the area. The drop-out total for the first term at School M4 was already over a hundred pupils. According to the headteacher, many pupils dropped out because of poverty and, therefore, opted to work at the estates. I visited a village near the school in search of the drop-outs and there were few children in the village. People in the village told me that most of the children go to work at the estates during the day. It was therefore, impossible to get hold of them in the mornings or afternoons.

64 Greeks employ children to work on tobacco estates. Parents encourage children to work on the estates especially during reaping season (January to March). Children do piecework or tasks based on productivity. The work involves weeding and reaping. However, children also load and unload tobacco into the trucks. They usually work for a minimum of 6 hours at the payment of K8.00. Because of poverty, sometimes the Greeks give children maize in lieu of money.
The principal occupation of communities surrounding School K1 is self-employment, i.e. farming whereby people grow different types of crops some for food and some for sale. A few are employed in tobacco estates as casual labourers. People surrounding the school are economically handicapped in that they solely depend on farm produce. In times of bad weather people suffer because of a lack of food. In addition, the soil has lost its fertility. To have a good harvest, requires fertiliser for the soil. Since the people are so poor, they cannot afford to buy expensive fertiliser. As a result, there are fewer yields and foodstuffs do not last for the whole year. There is no surplus which can be sold in order to buy necessities and children’s educational needs. Most people are below the poverty line.

EDUCATION

Masongola Zone: School K1

Primary schools in Malawi are grouped into 315 zones throughout the country. Each zone consists of a Primary Education Adviser (PEA) whose duty is to supervise headteachers and oversee the needs of teachers and the school. Primary schools in Mangochi are grouped into 13 zones. I selected Masongola Zone, which consists of 25 primary schools. Statistics in this zone show wider disparities in enrolment for girls as compared with boys. More boys are in school than girls. In one school there are no girls in Standard Eight. Malawi Government (1999a) reports that the district has a high illiteracy rate and poor quality of education because of inadequate educational facilities, inadequate teaching and learning materials, inadequately-trained teachers, parents unwilling to send children to school, teenage pregnancies, early marriages and cultural practices.
Figure 5.2: Map of Mangochi District Showing School K1 and Six Other Schools in Masongola Zone.
For my main research study from this zone, I chose School K1. Figures for girls in senior classes were lower than boys and also the area is Yao Muslim-dominated which is one of my areas of interest for research (see Figure 5.2 on page 213). School K1 is situated in the area of Senior Traditional Chief Jalasi on the Eastern side of Mangochi Boma. It is about 48 kilometres away from Mangochi Boma. Villages such as Malulu, Namamba, Chiumba, Ngawo, Kajeko and Somba surround it. The physical features that enclose the school are the Mbenjele, Lusangwisi and Matope rivers. Two hundred meters from the school is a market, which caters for School K1 catchment areas as stated above.

There are seven villages surrounding this school, all under Group Village Headman. The Yao ethnic group dominates the catchment area of the school. Other ethnic groups such as Sena and Chewa are also found because of intermarriages, work and businesses. The main language is Yao.

**Historical Background of School K1**

The school is in the area of Yao speakers and many of these are Moslems. This is due to the fact that the Arabs who brought the Islamic religion to the area from the Zanzibar and East Africa arrived earlier than the Christian missionaries. Establishment of the school can be credited to Sisulo Yasinu (who is a Muslim and also the former chairman of the school committee from 1962 to 1999), who advanced the proposal to establish a school in his village. He started thinking of starting a school after he attended a Roman Catholic school for two years. Afterwards, he travelled to South Africa to work and also completed his schooling to Standard Three. He then began to plan the establishment of a school in 1958.
What motivated him, he said, was the education he obtained in Cape Town and also seeing how educated people lived. When asked why it took a long time to establish a school in the village he said that people lacked interest in education.

The school was opened in 1962. When the school began it had two classes and only a few pupils enrolled because people in the area had a negative attitude towards education. Classes at the school originally took place under a tree. Two years later a two-block school was constructed through a self-help project in which parents moulded bricks and the government provided cement and iron sheets.

![School K1 in the South](image)

In the year 1966 Standards Three, Four, Five and Six were introduced and lastly Standards Seven and Eight. As early as the 1970s the school lost its roof after a major hurricane which affected the whole area. A certain estate owner who had an estate three kilometres from the school repaired it. In 1987 a block of four classrooms was

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65 The headteacher wrote to me and said that the school block collapsed in January, 2000 due to heavy rains. Therefore, there is now an acute shortage of classrooms.
constructed through a self-help project and also with the help of Malawi Young Pioneers. Today, thirty years on, in common with others in the district, the school lacks classrooms, educational materials and teaching resources for pupils. The deputy headteacher was asked to give a description of his school and this is what he said:

At present there are 700 pupils with eight classes. The teacher pupil ratio is 1:87. There is a problem of understaffing, which the government has to look into. The four-block classroom, which was constructed in 1980, is now out-of-date. We expect its walls to fall down as well as its roof any time. The seven houses, which are for teachers, are not in good condition. They look as if they are huts for refugees who stay at a place temporarily waiting for repatriation. For instance, houses leak, do not have lime, have no cement and are small. The school has no staff room, no permanent toilets for boys and girls. Standards One to Seven pupils sit on the floor and only Standard Eight pupils sit on desks. A lack of stationery is another problem which has contributed a lot to the poor performance of pupils. The school in many cases receives exercise books and writing materials only once in a school session. As a result, many pupils come to school empty-handed (Deputy Headteacher, School K1).

This description of the school by the deputy head shows that the quality of the school is not sufficient to provide pupils with a good learning environment and to retain them. From my observations it can be confirmed that the quality of the school is far below an acceptable standard. I observed that pupils went to school without basic educational materials and as noted previously they were hungry and tired. Classes, especially those for younger children, were overcrowded and the teachers lost control. A few pupils, who sat in front, concentrated on what they were being taught, but the rest at the back were sleeping, playing or not participating at all. The teacher also did not bother with pupils at the back but she concentrated on a few at the front. Another option was to move the class outside but pupils would then lack concentration because it was too hot and people who were passing by would distract them. I also observed that a number of pupils did not have notebooks. Some would just sit in a classroom whilst others were
copying notes from the blackboard. As noted previously a lack of educational and school facilities affects pupils' retention in the school. This will be developed in Chapter Six.

It is interesting that even with all these disadvantages and impediments to quality education, boys and girls still commence school in substantial numbers. However, as Table 5.1 reveals, from Standard Five there are fewer girls than boys. This difference is enhanced as the number of girls decreases as they progress to Standard Seven and Eight. Table 5.1 reveals that the number of pupils entering Standard One is much higher than those reaching Standard Eight. It is obvious that this school does manage now to recruit equal numbers of girls and boys in class one and that girls outnumber boys in classes two, three and four. However, figures for girls reaching Standard Eight are much lower than for boys. The school is not offering a quality of education which retains both boys and girls in school. The school lacks adequate educational facilities for teachers and pupils.

![Table 5.1: Gross Enrolment Figures for 1999](chart.png)

*Source: Obtained from School Registers for 1999 School Year at School K1*
It is evident that the village and the communities to which pupils belong do not provide an environment from which pupils can be encouraged to stay in school. Moreover, it will be seen that economic forces and cultural practices continue to affect pupils' schooling. Since past history shows that the UMCA played a vital role in educational developments among the Yao Muslims, the next section explores recent influences of the missionaries in Mangochi District.

**Missionaries' Support**

The United Universities Mission to Central Africa, as discussed in Chapter Two, established mission schools at Likoma Island and Mangochi District which is still occupied by the Yao Muslims. It was seen that Muslims resisted western education because they did not want to be converted to Christianity. Moreover, mission schools emphasised Bible teaching. In an interview with a former Chairman of the School Committee of School K1, he explained that a Roman Catholic School closed in his village because the pupils were being taught the Catechism every morning. As Bone (1987) articulates, many schools insisted on conversion to Christianity as a prerequisite for entry or advancement.

In 1965 the UMCA and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) joined and formed the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG). The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is a world-wide organisation and has continued to support the Anglican Diocese in Malawi by sending missionaries to work in secondary schools and diocesan hospitals at Malindi in Mangochi District and Malosa in Zomba District. Funds have also been provided for construction of primary and secondary schools and re-roofing existing schools.66

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66 Interview with Fergus King on 4th October 2000.
The USPG, however, is not assisting the School K1 in Mangochi. Before the government took control of mission schools in 1994, Muslims were proprietors of schools in Muslim dominated areas.

The Muslim Association of Malawi encouraged communities to build schools on a self-help basis. Villagers built the school which was surveyed in Mangochi, School K1, on a self-help basis in 1962. Madrassa classes for Muslim pupils have also continued in Mangochi District and are conducted every day for one hour soon after formal education for all Muslim pupils at school (see Figure 5.4). Madrassa classes are more common in Mangochi District than Dedza and Mzimba Districts which are mainly populated by Christians.

Figure 5.4: A Madrassa Class in Mangochi
Dedza District is located in the Central Region of Malawi. The district has a total land area of 3624 sq. km. It has three tribal groups: the Chewa, Yao and Ngoni. They have similar cultures and Chichewa is their common language. The Chewa are the majority followed by the Ngoni and the Yao. The Chewa are found almost everywhere in the district. The estimated population is 746,060. Land in the district is mostly used for agricultural purposes. Agriculture provides the main source of livelihood of the district's population.

There are two main religions in the district: Christianity and Islam (Moslem). Christianity is the more dominant religion. Among the Christians, there are Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses and members of the Church of Christ. Cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies for boys and girls are also common in Dedza District.

ETHNICITY

Traditionally the Chewa goes through initiation ceremonies for boys and girls. They establish institutions for training the youth, i.e. *gule wamkulu* for boys and *chinamwali* for girls. *Gule wamkulu* is a tradition among the Chewa. Young boys are forced to join *gule wamkulu*. The elders make a camp at a graveyard for about five to seven days. A Standard Seven teacher who went through the *nyau* initiation told me that when young boys go there they are whipped and beaten. This is done in order to make them clever, or so it is said. During this period the youth are taught to respect their elders. Young girls are sometimes forced or caught to join the *gule wamkulu* by parents who arrange with the *nyau*. They are caught by *nyau* when they are nine years and above. They are given instructions for about three to four days and later they are released.

67 *Nyau* is a ritual of the Chewa ethnic group in Central Region, which involves masked dancers.
The gule wamkulu perform a traditional male dance. Men wear masks and leaves and feathers. Women and girls who have gone through nyau initiation ceremonies are involved in the dance because they are the ones who clap hands and sing the songs while the nyau dances. According to the deputy headteacher of School C1, over-age pupils are also discouraged to go to school by the nyau in order to attend nyau dances.

Girls go through the nyau “chinamwali” ceremony from the age of nine years and also when they reach puberty. It lasts about a week. The nyau ritual provides a strong identity for the Chewa, who belong to this society. This initiation ceremony for the Chewa is a public acknowledgement that a person is passing through childhood to adulthood. Chimbiya (1990) explains that the menstrual blood of girls is a symbol of getting rid of childhood. Thus the girl gets ready for the future responsibility of childbearing. So long as the girl is not initiated, she is considered as a child. During the initiation ceremonies, girls are prepared for marriage. In a transition period, the initiates are taught many facts concerning life, customs, values, beliefs, sex education and ritualised behaviour. “At the end of the initiation ceremony, the unmarried girls are given young men for sexual relationship at least once. Each of these men is called fisi (hyena). If it is a married girl, her husband becomes a hyena-man” (Chimbiya, 1990: 5).

The rites of passage for girls among the Chewa are that of initiation at pre-puberty and puberty stages. Those to be initiated are separated from normal society and normal obligations. The candidates are secluded in a hut and are given a guardian. There is a female instructor called a namkungwi. During this seclusion period the initiates are instructed in their future role as adults and potential mothers. One stage (pre-puberty) is for girls who are between ages seven and nine years and another for girls who have reached puberty. Puberty is eagerly looked forward to by mothers because they are happy to see that their daughters are grown up and able to start a family. If there is a

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68 A fisi is a man who performs sexual intercourse to the initiates at the end of the initiation ceremony. Usually he performs these acts at night so that girls do not recognise him.
nyau ritual-taking place in the village, the girl is taken into seclusion for five days (Chimbiya, 1990). If a girl is still in school, it means that she is absent from school for five days. This obviously impacts upon girls’ education as they miss classes.

However, not all the Chewa go through the nyau rituals. DRCM, as already discussed in Chapter Two, played an important role in converting people to Christianity and in developing education in the Central Region. Some girls who I interviewed mentioned that because they are Christians, Church women advised them when they reached puberty so that they never went to a nyau ritual.

The Malawi Government (1999b) states that the Chewa, Yao and Ngoni in Dedza District follow the matrilineal and matrilocal systems of marriage. The Chewa practices the chikamwini and chitengwa systems of marriage. Chikamwini is a matrilocal marriage system whereby a husband lives with his wife in her village. This is a MUST. However, upon the agreement between husbands’ relatives and wives’ relatives, a wife may live at her husband’s village. This is then called chitengwa. It is usually accepted when the husband’s parents are very old or sick and if the husband is responsible for their welfare.

However, in the field it was seen that unlike Mangochi, matrilineal practice is slowly dying away in Dedza District. Those I interviewed in the community informed me that both a man and a woman take full responsibilities of bringing up children. The village headmen told me that old beliefs are dying away and they realise that both a mother and a father have a role to play in bringing up children. Female parents in Dedza explained that:

Both parents take the initiative of sending their children to school but sometimes pupils go to school because of their father’s strictness and firmness. If a pupil does not want to go to school, the mother cautions her by saying “I will report you to your father”; and so the child goes to school because of fear of the father (Focus Group, Dedza).
Male parents explained that they advise women not to overwork girls at home and in agricultural activities but to let them do their homework. Parents also make sure that mothers prepare food for children before they go to school (Focus Group, Dedza). It was seen that most people in Dedza District are subsistence farmers. The next section, therefore, explores the economy of the district.

ECONOMY

As already discussed, the economy of Dedza District is dependent upon agriculture. The main crops grown in the district are maize (both local and hybrids), tobacco, (Burley, NDDF and flue-cured), beans, soya beans, groundnuts, cow peas, European potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, finger millet and vegetables. Minor crops grown in the district are paprika, sorghum, rice, cotton, ground beans, pigeon peas, sunflowers, coffee and wheat. These crops are grown on a large scale in estates and by small-scale holders. Dedza District has 70 estates, occupying about 9400 hectares. The estates are owned by missions such as the Roman Catholic and Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP) and private Malawian individuals. Unlike Mangochi District, there were no estates around the School G. Therefore, the estates do not affect pupils’ attendance and drop-out rates as in Mangochi. On the other hand, it is of interest that, despite acute poverty and a lack of land for local people, the churches also own the estates.

There are 134,001 small holder farm families in the district. The district is characterised by an acute shortage of land, particularly arable land. There are three categories of markets where small holder farmers sell their produce. These are Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMAC), District and Town Council markets and private traders. Generally these markets are far distant from most small holders. Thus walking to market wastes a lot of time when they want to sell their produce. This problem also leads to the existence of middlemen (Africans) before the
produce finally reaches the consumer. This arrangement deprives the farmers of their much-needed revenue since the middlemen take up a greater part. The majority of households in the district are engaged in different livestock activities. The most common type of livestock is poultry. A few households also own cattle and goats.

Villages surrounding School G entirely depend on subsistence farming. People grow food crops such as maize, groundnuts, Soya beans, sweet potatoes and to a lesser degree, tobacco. A few have cattle, goats and chickens. Most people in the villages brew watery beer called ‘Kachasu’. They get money after selling the Kachasu. Some people sell their farm products and bake doughnuts for sale in order to buy educational materials and other necessary provisions for pupils.

The Malawi Government (1999b) reports that prices of farm inputs are too high for farmers to afford while they get low prices for their produce, i.e. maize and beans. Small land holdings lead to low yields in produce by the farming families and to uncertainty about food production and sales of livestock. This results in migration of men to urban areas in search of jobs.

MIGRATION

Results of the 1993/94-baseline survey for the district done by Centre for Social Research indicate that most of the households in the district (91.4%) were at the same locality 12 months prior to the survey. It has been estimated that the mean length of stay for households in the district was seven years. A major reason for migration is people leaving to search for jobs. It is estimated that in Dedza, on average, three persons per household went out to search for jobs. This could be taken to mean that Dedza is an out-migration district. This is true because some pupils I interviewed live with their grandparents while their parents live in Lilongwe, which is the nearest city to Dedza. Migration of their parents affected their schooling because their grandparents,
being illiterate, were unable to assess their progress or help them with homework. Pupils also lacked educational materials because their parents did not visit them regularly and bringing with them such resources.

**EDUCATION**

Education services include nursery/pre-schools, primary, secondary, adult literacy and colleges. The government provides most of the schools and missions while some are run by private individuals. The Primary Education Advisers are deployed into these zones to offer inspectorate and administrative support.

The basic education is mainly provided by government and private institutions. There are 224 primary schools with 972 classrooms and 1857 teachers. Nearly half of the primary teachers are unqualified because of the introduction of free primary education. The total enrolment in 1998 was 116,408, 55% of which were boys. In 1997 there were 3267 pupils (2068 boys and 1199 girls) who enrolled for Standard Eight. A total of 1912 passed (1272 boys and girls) and only 194 (130 boys and 64 girls) were selected for secondary education. There are seven secondary schools in the district and 15 Distance Education Centres. There are 123 adult literacy learning centres in the district with 97 instructors (Malawi Government, 1999b).

The main problems in the education sector in the district include, among others, a shortage of teachers, the death of trained teachers due to the AIDS epidemic and other illnesses, inadequate teachers' houses and classrooms. There is also a shortage of textbooks for pupils. High drop-out rates are prevalent in the district in addition to poor access to schooling by a significant number of villages. Malawi Government (1999b) reports that 788 villages have no schools at all. Most of the pupils in junior primary use church buildings or sheds as classrooms. Shortage of classes is a severe problem in the district, as most of the pupils must learn not in buildings but under trees.
There were 1857 teachers as at May 1998, classified as follows: 940 trained and 917 untrained. In 1996 the district had 1584 and in 1997 there were 1867 (942 trained and 925 untrained). There are more male teachers than females and a majority of teachers have Junior Certificates. Enrolment rate was 106,321 and 115,271 in 1997 and 1996, respectively.

The net enrolment, which is defined as the number of primary school-age children enrolled in primary school, expressed as a percentage of the total number of children that age, stands at 59.8%. According to Dedza District profile document, this figure is lower than the National ratio of 83. Dedza had a registered rate of 66.1% and 38.1% in 1995 and 1992/93, respectively. The district’s Social Indicators Survey Report of 1995 indicated that the net enrolment rate by district and gender stood at 69.2% for males and 63.7% for females (Malawi Government, 1999b).

The major issues in the district include: low agricultural productivity, poor access to water and sanitation facilities, poor health, high illiteracy rate, poor transport and communications facilities, high level of deforestation, under-developed Micro Small and Medium Enterprises and environmental degradation.

Mthandiza Zone: School G

Dedza District was selected for my research because the data shows that enrolment rates are the lowest in the Central Region. The Mthandiza Zone, which is about 45 kilometres from Dedza, was targeted for my research study. I chose School G as my main focus in addition to five schools in the zone. School G is government-assisted and is about 40 kilometres from the "boma" (Central Government Administration). School G is found in the Centre Region of Malawi, in Dedza District (see Figure 5.5). School G is surrounded by four villages. Each village has a village headman and is supervised by two Group
Village headmen. Accessibility to villages and the school is through the main road from Lilongwe to Dedza.

Figure 5.5: Map of Dedza District Showing School G and Five Other Schools in Mhandiza Zone.
School G is a primary school with Standards One to Eight. The school was opened on 5th October 1970 with one teacher, Kutchona, and 116 pupils. Pupils at this school come from 20 villages surrounding the school. This shows a shortage of schools in this area. Some pupils come from villages which are 5-10 kilometres away. The school has four blocks and 10 teachers' houses. There are 10 teachers at the school, four females and six males. The school has the problem of classroom shortage; indeed four classrooms are not yet roofed. They were built in 1997. The unroofed block has five classrooms. The number of pupils has increased rapidly due to free primary education. As a result of this problem, some classes must now meet out-of-doors under the trees. These are usually classes in Standards Three, Four, Five and Six.
Among the 10 teachers' houses, only five are in good condition. They have iron sheet roofs and are well cemented but the rest leak heavily during the rainy season and have potholes on the earthen floor. According to the deputy headteacher, teachers living in these houses lead a hard life. The school has very few desks. Only Standards Seven and Eight pupils sit on desks. Standard One to Six pupils must sit on the floor when learning. This makes it difficult for the pupils. The deputy headteacher stated that:

Teaching and learning materials are too few, i.e. pupils' books, teachers' guides, portable chalk boards, writing materials, notebooks, chalk dusters, paper for charts. The school also lacks any sports equipment, i.e. footballs, net balls, volleyball and volleyball net. The school has only three permanent toilets for the pupils and one for the teachers. The rest of the toilets are temporary. The staff room and the headteacher's office are not yet roofed due to a lack of materials (Deputy Headteacher, School G).
The school does not have a bore-hole for the provision of water. An abandoned bore-hole, which was a distance from the school, some two kilometres away, stopped functioning in 1994. No substitute has been made since. As the deputy headteacher stated, "there is a need for a new bore-hole just beside the school." The absence or inadequacy of latrines and access to safe water have obvious health implications, and can be a deterrent effect for girls’ enrolment. All too often, school is a high-risk environment for contracting disease, and a low achievement environment for learning (Oxfam, 1999a: 72).

The headteacher explained that due to the low quality of the school, a number of enrolled pupils eventually drop-out because of the lack of educational materials and poor learning environment, as already mentioned. Enrolment figures for both boys and girls decrease as pupils progress to senior classes (see Table 5.2). Enrolment for 1999 showed that more boys were enrolled in the school than girls. As in School K1 the number of girls were also much lower in senior classes.

Table 5.2: Gross Enrolment Figures as at 30th March 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Std 1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 2</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Std 3</td>
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<td>Std 4</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>Std 7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Obtained from School Registers for 1999 School Year at School G

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Table 5.2 shows that Standard One intake is almost the same for girls and boys. However, both girls’ and boys’ enrolment figures decrease as they progress into senior classes. Enrolment figures for girls are particularly lower in the Standard Two class as compared to boys. There is a tendency of higher drop-outs for girls in senior classes. For instance, Standard Seven enrolment is much lower for girls. This is due to the pressure girls face when they reach puberty. It will be seen that girls are expected to get married once they reach puberty and initiation ceremonies encourage them to do so. It is therefore evident that the main problem facing girls’ schooling is that of failure in retention rather than that of accessing girls into schools. Lack of retention remains to be a challenge particularly for girls. School observations reveal that the school cannot retain pupils because of a lack of adequate school facilities for both teachers and pupils.

Figure 5.8: School G in Central Region
Missionaries' Support

Past history reveals that districts in Central Region have been influenced by the DRCM in the development of education and by the fact that the DRCM has played an important role in converting people to Christianity. The Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in South Africa continues to support the Nkhoma Synod in financial and personnel matters. Teachers are mainly sent to teach at the Synod's secondary schools. The Nkhoma Synod does not, however, assist School G which is within its catchment area. The school depends entirely on government support. To ascertain how general this condition is, the next section will explore a school in Mzimba District in Northern Region. This district also differs in its ethnic mix from that of the Dedza and Mangochi districts.

AREA 3: NORTHERN REGION-MZIMBA DISTRICT

Mzimba District is in the Northern part of Malawi. It is 275 kilometres away from Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. Mzimba has a population of about 623,696 people. Literacy levels are 53.5% for the district of which 62% of men are literate and 44% of women. Agriculture is the major source of income. People are engaged in small-scale businesses by selling agricultural products.

A majority of a people in this district live below the poverty line. They lack basic needs such as clothes, food and shelter; indeed, most people are without food, especially in the rainy season, January to March. This affects education because it often means irregular school attendance. There are 430 primary schools, eight secondary schools in the district.
ETHNICITY

In Mzimba District the people practise a patrilineal and patrilocal system of marriage. In this system a woman lives at her husband’s village and the husband takes full responsibilities for looking after the children. Parents agreed that:

Culturally, a father is the head of the family. He is strong in the family and he is the one who takes responsibility for sending girls to school (Focus Group, Mzimba).

Male parents in Mzimba District in the North pointed out that women in their areas are reluctant to send their girls to schools as mothers encourage girls to help them with household chores and other duties at home. Therefore, husbands try to remedy this situation. Some parents argued that during the rainy season children are forced to work in gardens and do other chores because this is a busy time and mothers need help from their daughters. This has an impact on girls’ education as parents agreed that most pupils do not have time to do their homework as they get tired and cannot concentrate in the evenings.

One could argue that mothers are not solely responsible for requiring that daughters help them with household chores. The norm for girls in the three areas reveals that girls start doing house chores from the age of six years old when mothers train them to cook, sweep and to look after their siblings. Such activities are also encouraged at the initiation ceremonies as will be explored in Chapter Six.

The marriage procedure in Mzimba is different from the Central and Southern Region. In Mzimba there is no chikamwini but lobola (bridewealth). In the patrilineal system of marriage the groom is expected to pay a dowry, either in the form of money or cattle, to the girl’s parents. When a man wants to marry, he, together with any relative, discusses the marriage issue and his father’s brother negotiates with the girl’s uncle. The uncle agrees the amount of money or cattle the boy’s family has to pay. Currently acceptable
bridewealth is approximately four to five cows. However, I was told that people do not often have that amount of cattle; therefore, they refuse to let their daughters marry in order to get cattle or money. According to village headmen, the community prefers to educate both the son and the daughter.

In Mzimba District there is one initiation ceremony for girls. This is done just after the girl has started her menstruation. When elders realise that amongst their girls one has reached puberty, they inform her relatives and organise the ceremony. During the ceremony, girls stay in a separate house for seven days during which they miss their classes for the whole week. Girls who went through the ceremony at Zombwe area stated that each girl is advised not to talk with anybody especially those who are not her instructors. On the seventh day she is given instructions and advised not to engage in sexual activities with boys. Every girl is also encouraged by her parents to continue with her education. Then she is released and is free to continue with her daily activities. But now she acts as a grown-up person.

Traditional dances in the Zombwe area are *vimbuza* and *mtungu*. The Ngoni Ingoma (war dance) is dying out. *Vimbuza* is a healing dance. When spirits possesses a person, this dance is performed to release the spirits. The person who is possessed dances until he feels all right. The *mtungu* dance is done when people are drinking. It involves both men and women. As they becoming drunk they organise themselves and start dancing in pairs, thus a man and a woman, whether related or not.

It should be noted that boys and girls attend traditional dances which are sometimes performed at night. Some girls join in the singing until 12 o'clock midnight. I gathered that because the dance is so entertaining some schoolboys and girls join in the beer drinking. This type of behaviour affects pupils’ schooling. Some teachers are not exemplary to pupils since they also attend dances and drink beer. Teachers mentioned that some pupils are absent from classes as a result of the dances. I met a Standard Two
pupil in the village during the school hours. Her mother told me that she was tired and did not go to school because she attended traditional dances the previous night.

It is believed that it is a Ngoni tradition to marry more than one wife. Two of the village headmen interviewed had two wives. As with other districts, the principal occupation in Zombwe area is agriculture. The next section, therefore, explores the economic backbone in this district.

ECONOMY

The villagers surrounding School Z rely heavily on farm produce for subsistence - i.e. cassava, groundnuts, maize, bananas, sorghum and sweet potatoes. The two village headmen in the village have cattle, and a few people have chickens. People's income depends on selling part of their farm produce to a market, which is 10 kilometres from the villages. In Village M people brew beer. There are no social services in the villages. The market and the hospital are at Ekwendeni Trading Centre which is about 8-10 kilometres from the villages. There are no bore-holes for clean water, instead people depend on water from the Lunyangwa River. During the rainy season, the river is dirty and muddy. Teachers told me that the community suffers from diarrhoea and other related illnesses.

All four-village headmen interviewed complained about the poverty and underdevelopment of their villages. The village headman of Village M, which is about 1 kilometre from the school, had this to say about his village:

It is a good village but very poor. The World Vision and Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMAC) lend people money to buy fertiliser and seeds. When they harvest, they pay back the ADMARC and repay money for the fertiliser to the World Vision.
They also sell part of their maize in order to buy clothes, notebooks and pencils for the children. After the money and the maize are finished children just stay at home because of hunger and eventually drop-out of school (Village Headman, Zombwe).

He explained that both boys and girls drop-out of school. However, he added that:

Parents have a lot of girls. That’s why we see a lot of girls dropping out (Village Headman, Zombwe).

The chairman of the school committee also mentioned that Zombwe is generally very poor throughout the year because even after harvest (which is in May), people have to pay back the cost of fertiliser and in the end the communities remain with only a small amount of food. It will be seen that poor economic conditions at Zombwe area impinge upon pupils' retention in schools

EDUCATION

Ekwendeni Zone: School Z

School Z in Ekwendeni Zone, Mzimba District opened in 1953. To get a clear picture of the school, the deputy headteacher was asked to describe his school and this is what he said:

Since the school started the following have been problems at this school: There has been a shortage of classrooms. There are only four classrooms, two in each newly built block by, constructed MASAF in 1997. There is an older third block, with roofs that leak during the rainy season. Pupils smear the muddy floors twice in a week but there still remains a problem. Teachers’ houses also leak due to deterioration of the old iron sheets. They can collapse at
any time. They have earthen floors and are grass-thatched.

The houses are also too few so there are not enough to accommodate all the teachers. Other teachers may live in rented houses provided by the villagers. At the school there are no desks, forms and chairs for pupils to sit and write on. There is also no Headteacher's Office, no staff office, and this leads to a lack of storage of the school records. There is no school library, which would promote learning and widen pupils' knowledge. Standard eight pupils are selected for secondary school education at intervals of two or three years (Deputy Headteacher, School Z).

Figure 5.9: School Z in the North
The deputy headteacher mentioned that there is little contribution by parents and the community towards the development of the school, mainly because of their own poverty and poor health. The village headmen and the school committee explained that people in the villages complain of hunger. The chairman of the school committee stated that:

People in the village are not willing to go to school and help in construction of teacher's houses and school toilets. This is due to poverty which is rife in villages. Instead of going to school to mould bricks, parents go and look for food because they are hungry. Even the school committee members sometimes fail to attend their meetings because of hunger (Chairman of the school committee, School Z).

The deputy headteacher noted that, during the rainy season, people are busy working in the fields, therefore, they could not be involved in the moulding of bricks. He added that only the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) project has built a block and that since the school was started there has not been another non-governmental organisation, to assist the community in developing the school in terms of more construction.

The headteacher mentioned that poverty has affected both boys and girls in enrolment rates and attendance in school. Pupils enrol in school but they are absent from school because of hunger. Therefore, he said, “enrolment rates differ every month because of inconsistency in attendance. Some pupils drop-out and then return months later to school.” As with the other two schools, enrolment figures in Table 5.3 shows that more boys enrolled in School Z than girls. However, interestingly, at Zomba the gender gap in the upper classes is not as wide as in Mangochi and Dedza districts. Standard Six class has the same number of girls and boys whilst Standard Seven class has more girls than boys.

School Z which is government-assisted, was chosen to be the main focus of my research as it presented the average enrolment of both girls and boys in Ekwendeni zone. Moreover, enrolment rates in primary schools in Mzimba did not have the wide gender
gap as in Dedza and Mangochi districts. In some schools, enrolment rates for girls were almost equal to or higher than for boys.

The area I chose is also economically disadvantaged; I wanted to compare this area with Mangochi and Dedza, which have tobacco estates and a fishing industry. In Zombwe area farmers depend on subsistence farming in small pieces of land. And yet the North is reputed to have higher literacy rates than Mangochi and Dedza. As for schooling, I also visited six other schools in the zone. My aim was to get a clear picture of the problems affecting the access to, and retention of girls in schools in the zone (see Figure 5.10).

![Figure 5.10: Map of Zombwe area in Mzimba District Showing School Z and Six Other Schools.](image)

Seven villages surround School Z. Some pupils come from villages, which are two to eight kilometres from the school. Villages surrounding the school are under-developed with no social services. The nearest hospital and market are about 8-10 kilometres from Zombwe. The Group Village headman of Zombwe is a Tumbuka. Villagers in those villages, which surround the school, consist of two ethnic groups: the Ngoni and
Tumbuka. The most-used language in these villages is Tumbuka. At first, the Ngoni dominated the Zombwe area, but Tumbuka from further North joined the Ngoni land and the Ngoni began speaking the Tumbukas' language.

Table 5.3 shows a different trend of enrolment. The rate of retention in school is better than that in the two areas already discussed in this chapter. The difference between the initial intake in Standard One and pupils completing Standard Eight is not wide. Moreover, it is observable that Standard Two, Four and Seven classes had more girls than boys. One might argue that the explanation for this is that it has been suggested that the North has a history of greater educational development (by Scottish missionaries) than the Central and the South. Moreover, as already discussed in this chapter, cultural practices, such as initiation ceremonies are different from the other two regions.
Missionaries’ Support

The Church of Scotland advanced educational developments mainly in Southern and Northern Regions. The North has a history of advancement in education because of the role which the Free Church of Scotland played in the establishment of industrial training and schools by missionaries. The North is where the first school in Malawi was established in 1882.

The Synods of Blantyre and Livingstonia eventually took over the administration from Edinburgh and mission stations are now national churches. Since 1959 the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP) has been autonomous. The Church of Scotland continues supporting the CCAP in financial and personnel matters. Missionaries are sent to Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods to work at the CCAP churches, schools and in mission hospitals. In addition every year the Scottish Churches World Exchange sends volunteers to Malawi to work mainly in the field of education and other projects connected with the CCAP.

The role of missionaries in Ekwendeni has had an impact on education of both girls and boys. As discussed in Chapter Three, enrolment rates in the North are higher than other districts in the Central and South. This can also be noticed by literacy rates for adults at Zombwe area. Out of 17 parents of girls in school I interviewed, only one female parent was illiterate. In contrast, in Mangochi, most parents and all the chiefs I interviewed were illiterate because they had resisted western education.

In light of the economic, cultural, religious and ideological impacts on education as explored in three areas, it is now intended to develop an understanding of how these are enhanced by the policies of donor agencies.
Chapter Three discussed how multilateral and bilateral agencies are assisting the education sector in various ways such as construction of community schools, provision of educational materials and the training of untrained teachers. In areas where I carried out my research there was no agency which was involved in community schools' projects. However, the Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) which is funded by USAID, has started the second phase of its programme which aims to improve the quality for both boys and girls in schools. In the first phase, GABLE concentrated on increasing the enrolment rate for girls. Now they have shifted in their second phase to improving the quality of education for both boys and girls in schools.

The GABLE programme is now actively involved in a Social Mobilisation Campaign for Educational Quality (SMC-EQ) project in Mangochi. This project focuses on ensuring educational quality in primary schools for both boys and girls. It derives from the first and second phase of GABLEs' Social Mobilisation Campaign (SMC), which aimed at increasing enrolment and the retention of girls in schools. SMC-EQ aims to create an atmosphere for dialogue within and among communities on how to attain educational quality and to empower communities to accept responsibility for influencing, implementing and achieving this through the exploration and utilisation of human and other local resources. The project will also explore the creation of a two-way communication system within the school environment that is conducive to community involvement and influence.

It is hoped that if people freely discuss issues that affect the quality of education, and accept the full responsibility of monitoring educational standards in schools and in their communities, educational quality can be achieved. The impact of the SMC-EQ project cannot be assessed at the moment because it was only started in November 1998. However, a two-day workshop of SMC-EQ at School K1 which involved village headmen and school committees of seven schools in the Masongola Zone in Mangochi,
showed that members were able to point out factors which are affecting the lack of quality in primary schools in their areas. These factors include lack of educational materials for pupils, lack of trained teachers and classrooms, untrained teachers and the attitudes of the communities.

The donor agencies, as discussed in Chapter Three, are supporting the education sector by building community schools. However, in areas where I carried out the research there was not even one community school, which has been supported by a donor agency. There were school blocks which have been supported by Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) with the loan from the World Bank.

Figure 5.11: Village Headmen and School Committee Members at an SMC-EQ Workshop at School K1 in Mangochi.
The Government of Malawi is also using the same idea as GABLE of involving the community in construction of school blocks by MASAF in districts in Malawi. At School Z, in the North, MASAF constructed a school block of two classes and one teacher's house (see Figure 5.12).

Malawi Social Action Fund was established in July 1995 as a key poverty alleviation instrument designed to address community social needs. MASAF finances community initiated self-help projects and cash transfer net activities. It is community-oriented and demand-driven and thus depends primarily on the people's commitment to its success. The project assists in construction of classrooms, teachers' houses, bore-holes, health units and bridges, among other projects. The government has now obtained a second loan from the World Bank, equivalent to USD66 million, to implement the MASAF II Project.

Figure 5.12: A School Block Constructed by MASAF at School Z in the North.
Community participation in all stages in decision-making such as selection of a project, planning a project and preparing a project is viewed by MASAF as an important aspect of the project because parents will value their efforts and hence encourage their children to go to school. MASAF also encourages women’s participation in decision making, which in turn will act as a role model for girls. Furthermore, MASAF will play a role in encouraging girls to enrol in schools. Mzuzu MASAF Zone Officer stated that the project’s requirement is to have 40% women in the committee.

This is to encourage women to take part in the activities. Women encourage most pupils in school. Women also play a major role than men in construction of schools. The majority of them are involved in fetching water and sand, and moulding bricks. Another reason is that women’s involvement is hoped to encourage girls to go to primary schools (Mzuzu Zone Officer).

MOESC/UNICEF (1998) notes that community participation is not only important for effective school management, but also for the most basic school maintenance and/or construction. Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school committees are the most common mechanisms for community involvement. However, levels of participation vary widely. One of the basic problems as noted by the government is that parents are not involved in education because they themselves are uneducated and poor and that they spend most of their time trying to provide for their families.

Bray suggests that the communities’ involvement in self-help projects depend on the availability of cash in the community. “At least in theory, paid employment allows communities to demand work of a particular quality and on a specific time scale, and it avoids the considerable difficulties of organising communal labour” (Bray, 1988a: 73). He also mentions that it is particularly hard to motivate people to contribute labour if they live far from the schools, and those who live nearby may be unsympathetic to the fact that others have to travel to reach the school. Moreover, “teachers frequently
commented that villagers would arrive late, achieve little and depart early, leading to undue protraction of building work" (Bray, 1988a: 74).

In the field it was seen that construction of teachers' houses had not been very successful because of a lack of interest by the communities in the development of schools. MASAF mentioned that, in Mangochi in particular, the disinterested communities have not been co-operative in moulding bricks or in other activities. The MASAF Administrative Assistant for Community Projects in Lilongwe, mentioned that:

The response in Mangochi is not good. The Member of Parliament for Mangochi has failed to mobilise people to be involved in construction of community school blocks. Some people have not moulded enough bricks. In some cases we have been reduced to one school block instead of two school blocks (Likoya, MASAF Lilongwe).

As a result, in many schools of the Mangochi District, teachers' houses and classrooms have not been constructed. In the North, village headmen argue that during the rainy season people opt to go to work in gardens or look for food. They said that the poor communities could not get involved while children are hungry. Logistical problems also cause delays in schools' projects. For instance, money is not sent in time and it also takes time to process proposals. As a result, parents get discouraged and, therefore, do not mould the required bricks.

This research has shown that the communities' attitude towards the construction of schools has also been partly affected by the former President Banda's regime. As discussed in Chapter Two, in Malawi, self-help was built into the way of life. Communities did voluntary activities together without being forced. It was seen that the communities were eager to have schools in villages and they worked together with the missions in construction of classroom blocks and teachers' houses. However, for 30 years the former ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) turned the tradition of communal tasks by the communities into a compulsory Party activity.
The government also suggests that the spirit of self-help was eroded during the multi-party political campaigns. “The messages implied that self-help was an abuse of human rights” (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 40). Therefore, the communities are still suspicious about self-help projects, as they perceive it; to be another form of compulsory forced labour by the new government.

The Government of Malawi has, however, pointed out that teachers should not expect the Ministry to build classrooms and teachers’ houses unless the community moulds bricks. When this is done, MASAF will be able to construct schools in their areas. It is therefore, the duty of the school to convince village headmen and the community itself to mould bricks. This supports Bray’s comment that “schools in most Third World countries are responsible for housing their own teachers. Communities which can provide good houses (which to the teachers usually means cement ones with aluminium roofs) usually have a better chance of attracting qualified staff and of persuading the staff to stay for a number of years” (Bray, 1988a: 73).

SUMMARY

The three areas discussed in this chapter reveal that they differ culturally, economically, and in religion, ethnicity and educational attainment. It has also been noted that in all three districts, enrolment figures for this year show that girls, especially in senior classes, are still lagging behind boys in retention. This problem is more acute in Mangochi in the South and Dedza as compared to Mzimba in the Northern Region. There are far fewer girls in upper classes in Mangochi District. The description of the schools also reveals that the quality of schools in three areas has deteriorated due to the introduction of free primary education. The main problems in schools include a shortage of trained teachers, inadequate educational materials for teachers and pupils, inadequate teachers’ houses and classrooms. Shortage of classes is a severe problem in schools-many of the pupils must learn outside under trees and in church buildings.
The three areas of research disclose that economic conditions are not favourable. It is seen that poverty is rife in all villages surveyed. The characteristics of the environment to which pupils belong challenge the policy of free primary education because economic forces will be seen to continue to impact upon pupil’s schooling. Moreover, this chapter shows that the communities have little enthusiasm for schooling for their children due to a number of factors that will be examined in Chapter Six. The next chapter explores further how the above mentioned factors have impacted upon pupils’ access and retention in three areas in the South, Central and Northern Regions. The discussions are based on interviews, which were conducted in schools in the three districts.
CHAPTER SIX

CONSTRAINTS TO GIRLS' SCHOOLLING: CASE STUDIES IN MANGOCHI, DEDZA AND MZIMBA DISTRICTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings on constraints to girls' education, and the factors which continue to inhibit girls from taking full advantage of free primary education. It interweaves these personal accounts with the illustrative cameos presented earlier and indicates the manner in which certain resonances extend beyond the particular and into the general. Headteachers, pupils, drop-outs, non-enrolees, school committees, parents and village headmen in three areas gave their opinions of the policy of free primary education and the impact on pupils, especially on girls and their education in the schools.

In Chapter Four the methodological issues concerning numbers of the population sample were delineated. It was noted that the numbers of pupils and drop-outs were 15 from each category. Whilst one headteacher and three female teachers were from the main focus school, six headteachers from other schools and four village headmen in each area were also interviewed. The numbers of non-enrolees interviewed varied in each area. For instance, seven non-enrolees were interviewed in the Dedza District of the Central Region while 18 non-enrolees were interviewed in Mangochi District (Southern Region). It was necessary to minimise the number of interviewees as time in the field was limited. Although subsequent conversations did occur, the figures above relate to the formal sets of informants.

It is important to begin this chapter by noting that all schools which I surveyed lacked adequate classrooms, educational materials for pupils and teaching and reading materials for teachers. The shortage of materials is such that the policy of provision of Education for All could be brought into disrepute. Classes from Standard One to Six in all three
areas did not have chairs and desks for pupils. I observed that in classrooms there were no posters, no duty rosters and no timetables. There was just a desk and a small stool for a teacher.

The headteachers' offices in each of the three areas were small and overcrowded. It was difficult for me to find school records and register books in the headteachers’ offices. The headteacher’s office in the North was in a very bad condition and leaked during the rainy season. As a result, the headteacher was forced to keep the school records and registers at his house which was not safe or secure and, in addition, his own house also leaked during the rainy season. Existing classrooms were in a poor physical condition. During the rainy seasons, classrooms also leaked and pupils in School Z in the North and School G in the Central were forced to join other classes, causing congestion and missed periods of learning.

In Dedza District, the school consists of only four classrooms for pupils so that other pupils are forced to learn outside, in the open. Not surprisingly, pupils in Standard Six complained of being unable to concentrate when the teacher is teaching because of the activities which are going on outside the class. If a nyau\textsuperscript{69} passes outside, pupils say they get frightened and disperse from this open-air class.\textsuperscript{70} In addition, they cannot follow what the teacher is saying because of the noise - particularly the noise of the wind. Furthermore, and understandably, they say that they do not enjoy sitting on stones: it is extremely uncomfortable when the weather is hot. Sometimes the class uses a prayer house, which is also uncomfortable, according to the pupils, because seats are small. As they are made of clay, their clothes get dirty. Its remoteness also caused pupils to be late for school, likewise the muddy state of the access route during the rainy

\textsuperscript{69} Nyau is a ritual of the Chewa ethnic group in Central Region, which involves masked dancers (see further below).

\textsuperscript{70} During the research, one day a nyau dancer passed outside the school and pupils learning outside abandoned their classes for fear of the nyau.
season. According to the Standard Six teacher, these conditions caused pupils' performance to be unsatisfactory.

I also observed in all districts that there were too many pupils in classes from Standards One to Four. Teachers, therefore, complained as they could not control the children and, consequently, they were forced to concentrate on just the few pupils who sat in front. The classrooms were also stuffy and uncomfortable. The overcrowding issue raises important policy issues since it inhibits pupils from reaching minimum standards of literacy. In Dedza District, the classroom shortage led teachers to using unoccupied teachers' houses. This proved to be counter productive because it meant that pupils were dispersed to different rooms throughout the house. A teacher would therefore have to shout at the top of his or her voice so that pupils in different rooms could hear what was being taught. As I looked through the rooms, I observed that pupils were playing and not concentrating at all. Only those who were in the room that was occupied by the teacher were attentive.

The schools in Mangochi and Dedza Districts start at 7.30 am and end at 1.10 pm. In Mzimba the school starts at 7.00 am and ends at 12.40 pm. In Mangochi District, School K1 finishes at 11.00 am on Fridays to enable Muslim pupils and teachers to go for Friday prayers. This means that pupils miss three periods every Friday. The headteacher explained that he tries to designate Fridays for religious studies since this subject is easier to teach than others. After school Muslim pupils are taught Islam in madrassa classes for one hour, Mondays to Thursdays. Pupils did not miss any teaching periods in the North and Central Regions. However, truancy was rife everywhere.

The next section will examine those factors which continue to affect girls' schooling. As discussed in Chapter Five, several factors continue to affect the attendance of girls at primary schools in Mangochi, Dedza and Mzimba districts. Some of these are the product of education policies, economic forces, or ethnic and religious practices.
Cultural practices vary in three districts due to differences in religion and the disparate influences of early missionaries in the areas.

**THE POLICY OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION**

All schools which were surveyed in this study are government-assisted schools and pupils do not pay school fees. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is supposed to provide educational materials such as notebooks, pencils and textbooks and teaching aids for teachers. However, I observed that pupils in classrooms did not have sufficient notebooks. In fact, some pupils did not have notebooks at all. As a result, these children were sent home with instructions to their parents to buy proper notebooks. The headteachers said that there was a shortage of teachers' guides and register books. This meant that some notebooks, which would have gone to pupils, were distributed to the teachers to be used as registers. All the headteachers I interviewed in other schools in the districts voiced the same opinion about the shortage of educational materials.

The Ministry of Education is aware of the shortage of educational materials in schools all over the country. According to Charles Gunsaru who is the Principal Secretary for Secondary and Higher Education:

> The government received tremendous support upon the introduction of FPE. For instance, the World Bank gave a loan to the government in order to print reading materials, but this has proved not to be sufficient. The Ministry has also tried to supply notebooks to schools but they too have not been supplied enough in sufficient quantities (C. Gunsaru, MOE).

He mentioned that in order to provide enough materials the government needs continuing support because notebooks are needed every year for pupils and textbooks at least every three years. In this regard the sustainability of good quality education in
Malawi will, therefore, be determined by the government’s efforts and also the amount of long term external aid. As Gunsaru suggested:

More support is still needed from the World Bank and the donor community on which we still depend. At the moment there are no books at the District Education Offices or Supplies Unit. The government has tried to provide notebooks but it is difficult to give students enough notebooks.

In the field, I found that a shortage of educational materials in schools was one of the factors affecting access and retention of pupils especially in Standard One. When I discussed with the World Bank Official about the shortage of reading materials for pupils, he argued that the World Bank lent money for notebooks and textbooks but shortages were attributable to the system for the distribution for educational materials from the MOE. When I asked him why vendors were selling textbooks in streets, he explained:

In the past vendors did not sell textbooks in the streets but these days you find vendors selling textbooks. I do not know where they get these textbooks. Maybe teachers are also involved in some crooked scheme to sell textbooks and mismanagement (World Bank Official).

If this is the case, priority should be given by the World Bank and donor agencies to reviewing the system for distribution of educational materials to schools. Strategic measures should be introduced to ensure the efficient distribution of textbooks and notebooks to schools. In the field, drop-outs and non-enrolees\(^1\) explained that a lack of educational materials was their reason for not attending school, a shortage also compounded by economic conditions in the villages. A non-enrolee in Dedza District explained that:

\(^1\) Non-enrolees were mainly identified in Mangochi and Dedza districts. They consisted of children from the age of 6 to 14 years who are supposed to be in schools. In Mzimba District I did not come across any school age child who was not in school.
I am not in school because of poverty. My grandmother is not able to buy me clothes and notebooks.

Deficiency of notebooks was identified as a cause of dropping out of pupils in all three areas. When pupils were asked why they dropped out the following reasons were identified:

I dropped out because of a lack of notebooks. When I told my parents to buy me notebooks, they resisted because they did not have money. Then I told them I would stop schooling and go and work (A Drop-out in Dedza)

I dropped out because of poverty, lack of notebooks and clothes. I could not resist because of poverty. When I went to school, I borrowed writing materials from friends and sometimes I would ask for a piece of paper (A Drop-out in Dedza).

I dropped out because of a lack of clothes, soap and notebooks (A Drop-out in Mangochi).

I dropped out because of a lack of reading materials (A Drop-out in Mzimba).

Parents of the non-enrolees mentioned that they are unable to provide children with educational needs because of poverty. Most non-enrolees said that they would like to go to school once they get educational materials, in addition, to other necessary incentives. Girl pupils in schools were also asked what they thought the school and communities should do to keep girls in school. They pointed out that:

If the school provides notebooks girls might stay in schools (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

Parents should provide assistance, i.e. clothes, notebooks and writing materials (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

School should assist with educational materials and clothes because some pupils drop-out. In order to get
these needs they do some piecework (Standard 7 Pupil, School K1).

This type of shortage in primary schools has caused parents to question the notion of education being free because they are required to buy notebooks for pupils. In poor communities where parents cannot afford to buy educational materials, pupils drop-out of school or engage in piecework in order to buy materials they need for schooling. Therefore, my next group of interviews focuses on parents' views on the policy of FPE.

**IS EDUCATION REALLY FREE?**

The headteachers of School K1 in the South, School G in the Central and School Z in the North, parents and the school committees were all sceptical about the notion of education being free. When I asked the headteacher of School K1 as to whether or not education is free, he said that:

> Education IS free but pupils have to buy notebooks which are more expensive than the fees that they used to pay. This problem of a lack of materials was evident before the introduction of FPE. In fact, pupils in the past had to buy their own notebooks (Headteacher, School K1).

The headteacher from School K2 in Mangochi said:

> Parents are paying fees indirectly because they are buying notebooks and also moulding bricks for school blocks. That's why parents have a laid - back attitude about the construction of schools. They say that everything is free, therefore, nobody should bother them (Headteacher, School K2).
The headteacher of a school in Dedza District stated that:

I do not know why we are calling it 'free education' when we ask pupils to contribute money to buy balls for football and netball. Pupils contributed K3.00 each and there is a lack of notebooks in school. In its true sense I do not understand it to be free. Is it really free? Pupils are forced to buy notebooks and therefore, they get discouraged. They go to do piecework so that they can get money to buy seven notebooks which cost from K6.00 each. May be the government is not receiving money but parents are paying. In the past pupils paid K3.50 for fees and yet they received balls, slates and notebooks. Nowadays sports do not enjoy a high priority because there are no netballs and footballs. In addition, there are no facilities for home economics and needlework (Headteacher, School M2, Dedza).

The headteacher from School M4 in Mangochi commented that all teachers are affected because of this inadequacy of teaching materials. For instance, teachers produce their own teaching aids. It is easy to see why political gestures such as the distribution of 6,000 notebooks and two bicycles to one school in Mangochi (which the state President was assisting) is an irritation.

The economic conditions of the three study areas are poor. The expectation was that the government would provide free educational materials and school facilities to get children into schools as well as not charging fees. Without this provision parents are not able to send their children to school since the school fees were lower than the educational materials. For instance, teachers in all three areas mentioned that one notebook cost K10.00 as compared to K3.50 for the fees which they used to pay. Parents of girls in school in Mangochi argued that education is free but:

We buy notebooks and ball-pens. If a child does not have these materials they are sent home (Focus Group, Mangochi).
A parent from Mangochi also argued that some parents who are unable to mould bricks are asked to contribute money instead. She contributed money because she was not present during the project. Parents, teachers and school committees who argue that parents are now spending more money in buying educational materials have, therefore, challenged the notion of "free education". This expense was in addition to contributions towards the development of schools. Issues that have been raised by communities and teachers on the policy of FPE are important in assessing the impact of free education in schools in the three selected areas.

THE IMPACT OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION

The impact of free education in regard to access can be analysed by critically looking at the data at the district level and the school level. Headteachers in all three districts mentioned that when free education was introduced the number of pupils increased in schools. Looking at Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 (on page 258 and 259) which represent Mangochi, Dedza and Mzimba districts respectively, one can see that enrolment increased upon the introduction of free primary education in the year 1994. Mangochi and Mzimba districts show that figures were even higher in the year 1995, whilst Dedza shows the decline in enrolment numbers for both boys and girls for the same year, 1995.

Enrolment rates for three tables indicate near to complete equity between boys and girls at district level. This is due to the fact that more girls enrolled in schools as a result of a fee waiver in 1992 for girls and introduction of FPE in 1994. In addition, to FPE figures for girls, enrolment figures for girls increased due to GABLE’s activities in the districts. GABLE mobilised and sensitised the community to the importance of girls’ education. However, it is important to note that enrolment figures presented at the district level may be less than the actual figures at the school level. For instance, the acting headteacher at School K1 presented much higher enrolment figures for the District Education Office (DEO) because he needed more educational materials.
Figures from the DEO's Office showed a total enrolment rate of 1041 pupils and yet at school level the enrolment figures were 720 pupils. This supports what Kuper (1996) explained that when it comes to the real base of collecting enrolment data, many different interests are involved which make the enrolment data higher than it really is.

![Table 6.1: Total Enrolment in Primary Schools in Mangochi District](image1)

![Table 6.2: Total Enrolment in Primary Schools in Dedza District](image2)
Girls in all three districts explained how FPE has helped their parents to be able to send their children to school. When pupils were asked what difference it made to their parents as a result of FPE policy they replied:

It has helped my parents not to pay school fees; the pressure is not there for them to pay our school fees (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

Because my mum is not working, therefore, it has assisted her in not paying the fees, which she could not afford (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

It has eased financial constraint because parents do not pay fees (Standard 7 Pupil, School K1).

Some parents are poor, therefore, phasing out of fees has helped parents to use money for food (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).
Some girls, however, mentioned that, despite FPE, parents still face the problems of buying notebooks which costs more than the initial fees. When pupils were asked if the phasing out of fees made life easier for their parents in sending children to school this is what they said:

It has helped my parents with fees and notebooks. But this year we have not received notebooks. At the moment I do not write notes because I do not have notebooks and my parents cannot afford to buy notebooks for me (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

It has not helped parents because they still buy notebooks (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

As explained by the MOE and the headteachers in three areas, despite the increase in enrolment rates in 1994, figures are decreasing gradually in all districts. While drop-out figures and irregular attendances are high in schools, exact figures of attendance and enrolment are unreliable because children drop-out of school and then at some point return to school. As a result, a pupil's name might appear in the school register in the first term and not appear in the second term.

At school level, figures also reveal that the effect of FPE was to increase the rate of enrolment. However, headteachers and the Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) maintain that cultural practices and beliefs, which will be discussed later in this chapter, diminish the achievements of the goal of FPE. As a result retention of pupils in schools still remains a problem. The PEA in Mzimba District in the North explained that:

The problem with girls is not necessarily with enrolment. Girls can enrol in large numbers but the main problem is with drop-out of girls in schools. In addition, the gender gap in schools does not apply to whole schools but only certain classes (Primary Education Adviser, Mzimba, 21st January, 1999).
Tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 reveal that enrolment figures are decreasing gradually due to a number of factors that continue to affect schooling, especially in the case of girls. It could also be the result of some of the average children leaving the schools once they had reached puberty. (This was noted in Chapters Two and Three). Tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 show that figures for both girls and boys at the school level in three areas increased upon the introduction of FPE in 1994. Figures for girls in 1994 are considerably higher at School Z. School Z in the North gives an interesting pattern in enrolment trends for boys. For instance, in 1994 and 1995 boys' enrolment was much lower as compared to girls. No specific reason was given for this. However, all tables show that enrolment for both boys and girls have decreased in recent years. Whilst overall figures for the districts showed near parity, at the individual school level the trend of enrolment is gender specific.


Source: Obtained from Register Books and Log Books, School K1

72 Statistics for 1994, 1996 and 1997 were missing in the log books.
Table 6.5: Gross Enrolment Figures for School G, Girls and Boys in Standard One 1990-1999

Table 6.6: Gross Enrolment Figures for School Z, Girls and Boys in Standard One 1991-1999

Source: Obtained from Register Books and Log Books, School G

Source: Obtained from Register Books and Log Books, School Z
School statistics show that there is still a wider gender gap between boys and girls especially when they progress into senior classes. However, disparities in enrolment figures for boys and girls differ in each school. For instance, School K1 had an enrolment of 373 boys as compared to 333 girls. Standard Six had 40 boys and 16 girls, Standard Seven, had 22 boys and eight girls and Standard Eight 20 boys and only six girls. Dedza District in Central Region had more boys in school with the enrolment of 474 boys as compared to 351 for girls. Senior classes also demonstrated a wide gender gap. Standard Six consisted of 39 boys and 29 girls, Standard Seven, 46 boys and 17 girls and Standard Eight, 36 boys and 16 girls. These figures reveal disparities, which still exist between boys and girls in enrolment and retention in Mangochi and Dedza districts. Drop-out rates continue to affect pupils’ enrolment, especially female pupils.

**Drop-out Rates**

Kadzamira (1998a) states that in the first year of free primary education the drop-out rates reached an alarming level (see Table 6.7 on page 264). In 1994, boys registered a 25% drop-out rate against 29% for girls. A significant proportion of girls in Standards Four to Seven left school in 1994 with half of the girls dropping out from Standards Six and Seven. The drop-out rate was twice as high for girls as boys in Standard Seven. The explanation for this, as also indicated by the MOE, is that schools failed to meet the expectation of those children who returned to school following the introduction of FPE because of a lack of resources such as sufficient classrooms and educational materials.

The accuracy of the drop-out figure in schools is difficult to measure. For instance, it was observed that in school registers the drop-out names were cancelled. Nevertheless, if at some point a pupil returns to school then her or his name was reinstated in the register book. However, apparently, statistics continue to highlight the drop-out rates for girls in all three areas. There are also variations in the number of girls who drop-out
from school in three areas. For instance, in Mangochi District a considerable number of girls dropped out in comparison with Mzimba District.

Table 6.7: Primary School Drop-out Rates by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%Girls</th>
<th>%Boys</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980/81</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981/82</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985/86</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993/94</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Lack of educational achievement by girls is due to high drop-out figures, particularly for areas such as Mangochi and Dedza where they practice initiation ceremonies which have been seen to affect girls’ schooling. In addition, at schools such as K1, attendance and drop-out figures result from pupils having to work on the tobacco estates which surround the school. Also acute poverty in villages causes pupils to miss classes and drop-out in order to work on the estates.

Table 6.8 on page 265 shows astonishing drop-out rates for the first term at School K1. A total of 154 pupils dropped out, 96 of which were girls. Drop-out figures for School G for the whole year of 1998 were 54 boys and 41 girls. These figures, however, must be taken with caution because girls tend to drop-out to go and work in cities as child minders and house girls, returning to school at one point and dropping out again. Therefore, in School G figures for girls might be higher or lower than shown in Table 6.9. Drop-out figures for the North were lower than in Mangochi and Dedza. This is also due to the fact that the school enrolment of School Z is much lower than the South
and the Central because of the higher populations in those areas. However, more girls dropped out than boys (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.8: Drop out Figures for 1999 in All Classes

![Graph of drop out figures for 1999 in all classes showing boys and girls comparison.](image)

Source: Obtained from School Registers at School K1

Table 6.9: Drop out Figures for 1999 in All Classes

![Graph of drop out figures for 1999 in all classes showing boys and girls comparison.](image)

Source: Obtained from School Registers at School G
Namuddu’s studies in Uganda showed that explanations for drop-out fail to indicate that dropping out of school occurs after the family has made the first commitment to send their child to school. Moreover, there are no serious studies, which give an accurate picture of when girls drop-out of school as compared to boys and why (Namuddu, 1991: 58).

In the field, it was seen that young girls of the ages ranging from six to 10 years drop-out of school mainly in grade one and two. The younger drop-outs and non-enrolees identified several reasons. For instance:

Because of a lack of clothes (A Drop-out in Standard 1 who was in school for one month in Mangochi).

Lack of clothes was the main reason which was given by parents and drop-outs. I observed that the clothes they wore during interviewing processes were torn and dirty. In the field, it was seen that some drop-outs had attended school for only two days.
Other reasons for not enrolling in school included: lack of encouragement by parents, lack of food, parents’ deaths and migration by parents who leave their children to be looked after by grand-parents who do not have resources for sending children to school.

Apart from drop-out figures it was evident that repetition figures are very high in schools. Currently, nearly a third of all primary school children are repeaters. According to Kadzamira (1998a), repetition rates have increased over the 1990/91 levels. The average repetition rates have increased from 17% in 1990/91 to 29% in 1994/95. The Ministry of Education notes that repetition rates are higher in Standards One to Three, but then decrease until Standard Eight as portrayed in the findings of this study (see Tables 6.11 and 6.12 on page 268). However, figures for repetition in School Z show a different trend. The headteacher explained that pupils who fail their exams repeat classes because they are interested in education. In districts such as Mangochi, pupils tend to drop-out once they fail exams. Moreover, girls lack encouragement from their parents to repeat classes.

In Mzimba District parents are eager that their daughters finish schooling. It is also evident that repetition figures slightly increase in Standard Eight classes due to pupils failing selection for secondary schooling. Higher repetition rates in lower classes are attributed to: under-age entry, ineffective teaching, lack of pre-primary programmes and the use of inexperienced and untrained teachers. Reasons for repetition rates in Standard Eight are due to limited spaces available in secondary education, the desire to get better grades for secondary school selection and a lack of non-academic training opportunities (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 42-43).
Table 6.11: Repetition Figures in All Classes 1999

Source: Obtained from School Registers at School K1

Table 6.12: Repetition Figures in All Classes 1999

Source: Obtained from School Registers at School G
The repetition rates as noted in the three areas are similar for both boys and girls. However, in some classes there are more boys repeating classes than girls. Repetition figures in schools shows that the quality of education is deteriorating as already discussed in this chapter. The official age of entry into primary school is six years. However, many children particularly from rural areas, (as observed in three areas of study) delay their entry into school. Late entry is common for both girls and boys. A study carried out by Hyde and Kadzamira (1994) found out that in rural Malawi the average age in Standard One is about 10 years for both boys and girls. Their progression through school is affected by the high repetition rates in younger classes so that by the time the girls reach puberty they have just finished a few years of schooling.

73 The number of repeaters was obtained by examining the register books of the number of pupils who failed in a particular class in 1998 and inspecting the names of the repeaters enrolled in 1999 academic year in the same class.
This is true as observed in all three areas of study. A number of Standard Seven pupils interviewed by me were overage pupils. Most of them told me that they repeated classes due to various economic, socio-cultural and educational constraints which had adversely affected their schooling.

**ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS**

In the past, colonial policies transferred family lands to estate owners (white settlers) and gave them the sole right to grow Burley tobacco, Malawi’s main export crop. As Durston (1999) explains, this constrained the development of smallholdings, which left most small holder families with plots of land too small to support their families, and forced them to sell their labour to the estates. There are now increased opportunities for small holders to grow Burley tobacco but many are unable to take advantage of these because they cannot afford the inputs needed. Therefore, most small holders continue to grow maize and, for subsistence, families are forced to buy additional food.

It has been the case that poverty is more prevalent within rural areas, where people move in and out of poverty (Durston, 1999). In Malawi this is particularly true in the rainy season where food is scarce. It is also due to the seasonal nature of agricultural employment. This affects education because it means inconsistent school attendance. In 1995 the Malawi government noted that Malawi’s continuing high level of poverty is “the result of insufficient good agricultural land made worse by rapid population growth and environmental degradation. Moreover, Malawi is not endowed with mineral wealth and there is little mining, little fishing for export and little industrial production” (UNICEF/Malawi Government, 1996: 4).

Historically, the colonial government contributed to the status of the recent poor economic conditions in Malawi although, as Pryor argues, “the linkage between colonialism and capitalism was weaker in Malawi than in many other newly independent
nations because the colonial power did not play a dominant role in commerce or manufacturing” (Pryor, 1990: 37).

Upon independence in 1964, the former President Dr. Hastings Banda emphasised the need for agricultural development throughout the country. As a result, Agricultural Development Divisions (ADDs) were established in all districts in Malawi. The Malawi government’s emphasis on agriculture, therefore, was a continuation of the basic ideas promulgated by the early Scottish Missionaries which, as noted in Chapter Two, was continued by the colonial government and shared by many Malawians, especially those educated in the 1920s and 1930s (Pryor, 1990). Missionaries emphasised agriculture in their curriculum as a means of encouraging communities to develop their areas and to be self-sufficient.

The majority of people living in villages own customary land which is controlled and allocated by the traditional leaders, i.e. chiefs and village headmen. However, villagers have very limited access to land. During the interviews in these villages in the three districts I saw that villagers did not possess land holdings but had land just sufficient to cultivate crops for subsistence farming. Most farmers appear to lack basic materials such as fertilisers, resulting in low yields, which do not last the whole year.

Poverty is very evident in three areas of the districts, which I surveyed. As already mentioned, I interviewed a number of pupils who dropped out or were absent from school because of hunger. Lack of clothes, food and soap are factors causing absenteeism and drop-outs. In the villages, I noticed that a number of children, especially girls, wore ragged clothes. Their clothes were very dirty, and children smelled bad. They opted to stay at home as they were embarrassed to go to school with dirty and torn clothes. The school committee in Mzimba mentioned that:

Both boys and girls are affected by poverty. However, boys are able to do piecework in order to acquire money to
buy notebooks, clothes, etc., whilst girls are disadvantaged because they spend most of their time doing household chores and helping parents at the home (School Committee, School Z).

An example of this is the case of the village headman of Village M in the North. The village headman has five children, two boys and three girls. The girls stay at home and have dropped out of school whilst the boys are in school. When I interviewed their mother, she told me that one of her sons missed a class because he went to work in the maize field in the village in order to get money for soap to enable him to continue with his schooling. The school committee also explained that because of poverty, girls drop-out because they engage in unsuitable relationships.

I also noted that in schools there was evidence of inconsistency in school attendance. In villages I interviewed both boys and girls, especially younger ones who dropped out or just missed classes because they told me they were tired, hungry and lacked food. I also observed in classes that pupils looked tired and lacked concentration. When I discussed with pupils my observations, most told me that they go to school without breakfast and have one meal only a day. Some indicated that due to hunger and exhaustion they do not go to school regularly.

A 14-year-old dropped out of school in the first term. The stepmother complained that her stepdaughter refuses to go to school because of a lack of interest. She said that early in the morning the daughter wakes up and pretends to go to school and she just stands at the path leading to school without going into class. I interviewed her daughter separately to find out her real problems concerning her lack of commitment to her schooling. I later found out that several factors affected her lack of commitment. This is what she explained to me:

I do not go to school because I have no clothes. (I observed that the dress she was wearing looked very dirty and torn). I have no soap to wash my only dress either.
“Usiwa wachuluka” (poverty is rife) and I usually do not eat in the mornings.

Q. Would you like to go back to school if you get help?
• I will go to school if I get food, clothes and a blanket.

Q. What do you use to cover yourself at night?
• “Chiguduli” (a sack) (A Drop-out in Mzimba).

These appalling living conditions which pupils experience contribute to a lack of interest and schooling as I confirmed in all three areas I surveyed. Poverty has a tremendous impact on schooling for both boys and girls. However, girls are more affected because whilst their mothers go and work in the fields, they have to stay at home and look after the siblings and do household chores. Moreover, as already mentioned, girls opt for relationships, which lead to pregnancies. I found out that in the North in particular, early pregnancies and marriages were partly due to economic pressure.

Poverty is also affecting the development of schools. The village headmen and the school committee in the North argued that the community is unable to participate fully in construction of community schools, partly, because of this poverty and hunger. The communities are asked to mould bricks, fetch sand and firewood but instead members of the community engage in other activities such as looking for foods, i.e. mushrooms, vegetables, etc., and finding work that will bring in money.

It was evident that in all villages in three areas which I surveyed, economic underdevelopment was entrenched. The village headmen in all districts told me that the communities are affected by poverty and that there were no social services in the villages. I noted that in all three areas health centres and trading centres were about 10 kilometres or more from the villages. One of the village headmen in Mzimba in the North told me that there was no clean water in the village and people get their water from a contaminated river. In this manner, people get sick. A number of women also deliver their babies on their way to the hospital because of a lack of transport.
There were no job opportunities in the villages in Mzimba in the North and Dedza in Central Region. In Dedza District there was what they call a “market day” where people go and sell their products at the distant market. As a result, pupils, especially girls, missed classes to assist their mothers in selling their farm products and helped their mothers to engage in small income generating activities.

The situation in Mangochi was different in that there are tobacco estates near the school and villages, so the distance between trading, health centres and centres of population is not so great as in Dedza and Mzimba districts. As already mentioned, pupils, both boys and girls, drop out or they are absent from school because they go and work in the tobacco estates. The headteacher of one school told me that in the first term 200 pupils dropped out because of the work required on the estates surrounding the school. Although Dedza in the Central Region has more estates than Mangochi, there was no estate surrounding the school and the villages. Economic activity in Dedza is mainly dependent on subsistence farming.

This economic factor provides the context for understanding educational achievement, schooling generally, and girls’ retention rates in particular. It is important, therefore, that education is seen as a determining factor in any discussion of Malawi as an economically disadvantaged country. Yet even though Malawi is economically disadvantaged, especially vis a vis more economic self-sufficient African countries, attempts have been made to promote education as the vehicle for increasing economic performance, i.e. by self employment and agricultural education.

MOESC/UNICEF (1998) noted that the new democratic government framed the introduction of FPE policy within its agenda to increase investment in the social sectors. The government not only abolished school fees, but also increased public expenditure in basic education: from 44.70% in 1990 to 74.17% in 1995 as a percentage of the total education sector budget. Moreover, the education budget as percentage of total national revenue has increased from 11.12% in 1990 to 21.68% in 1995. This shows that the
commitment to basic education is high but the poverty of the country as a whole makes the actual amount produced insufficient. Likewise, the MOE suggests that over 90% of the educational budget is spent on salaries, leaving less than 10% for running and managing primary schools and therefore, a negative effect on quality (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 44).

It has been suggested that whilst the government increased financial resources dedicated to primary education in order to meet the new levels of enrolment, the increase still falls short of the need. The World Bank (1995) argued that public resources within the education sector in Malawi are utterly insufficient to cover the rapid surge in primary school enrolments observed in 1994.

Although public education recurrent spending in 1994/95 increased to about 7.5% of the GDP, and increased as a share of the government’s recurrent expenditures allocated to the education sector from about 8.7% in 1988/89 to about 24% in 1994/95, there are still severe constraints for improving the quantity and quality of education (World Bank, 1995: 4).

Therefore, the key factor in maintaining current levels of expenditure, as the government suggests, is the willingness of the donor community to make educational investment a priority. The education budget by the government is indeed insufficient, thereby affecting the quality of primary schools. In the field it is evident that schools lack adequate facilities for both pupils and teachers.

**Inadequate School Facilities**

Charles Gunsaru from the MOE argued that before the introduction of FPE in 1994, the education system was under-resourced. Schools in Malawi lacked adequate classrooms, teachers and teaching materials. In some schools pupils were forced to study out-of-
doors, under trees and there was a shortage of exercise books. When FPE was introduced, it made things worse. The policy of free education has, therefore, been challenged by the headteachers, the school committees and parents in all schools in the North, Central and Southern Regions. The headteachers argue that since the introduction of FPE the quality of education has deteriorated because of untrained teachers, and a lack of classrooms, teaching and reading materials. One headteacher from the North commented that:

The new policies such as encouraging the communities to build or start a school in their area has brought the quality of education down, has contributed to a lack of classes, untrained teachers and facilities. Old policies were better. The former government indicated that if the community wants to start a school it had to meet conditions set by the government (Headteacher, School E1).

It is evident that community schools shown in Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 (on page 277 and page 278) cannot offer quality education for pupils. Moreover, teachers in these schools lacked teaching and educational materials for pupils.

I observed that in all three areas schools lacked adequate chairs and pupils were forced to sit on the floor. This too has tremendous impact upon pupils’ schooling, as they cannot learn properly. For instance, girl pupils in classrooms at Mangochi complained that it was not comfortable to sit on the floor because they struggle getting up to answer questions. Clothes get dirty, the pupils are uncomfortable sitting on logs, and it is difficult to write notes. Moreover, pupils towards the rear of classrooms do not see what is happening in front.
Figure 6.1: A Standard 1 Class in Dedza

Figure 6.2: Community School in Mangochi
Figure 6.3: Community School in Mzimba

Figure 6.4: Community School in Mzimba
Figure 6.5: A Standard 3 Class in Mzimba

Figure 6.6: A Standard 7 Class in Mangochi
It has been noted that in all schools in the three districts pupils’ attendance has been affected because of a lack of educational materials. Parents and single mothers told me that they did not have money to buy educational materials for their children. They explained that pupils do all kinds of piecework such as working on the estates or selling firewood and selling doughnuts in order to buy notebooks, soap and other necessary materials for their education. I observed that in classrooms some girls had small baskets with home-made doughnuts or mangoes which they sold during break times. Girls told me that their mothers sent them to sell doughnuts during break times.

This study, therefore, concludes that economic forces and direct costs of schooling continue to impinge upon pupils’ schooling. Moreover, the quality of education has been affected because the government has failed to offer resources due to economic constraints. As discussed in Chapter Three, donor agencies continue to support the education sector through programmes and projects. However, this study illustrates that more aid is needed in order to sustain the education for all policy. Such aid could be focused upon the provision and storage of adequate educational materials for pupils and teachers and construction of more classrooms.

Lack of retention of pupils in schools is indeed common especially in areas where initiation ceremonies are practised. The next section explores how initiation ceremonies, particularly, in Mangochi and Dedza districts have a diverse impact upon girls’ schooling.

**SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS**

**Initiation Ceremonies**

In Chapters One, Two and Three initiation ceremonies were identified as a factor which continues to affect pupils’ participation in school. The early missionaries as discussed
in Chapter Two also identified cultural practices of the nsondo and nyau. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) suggested that there was evidence which showed that initiation ceremonies bring dilemmas for girls, affecting their school attendance and academic performance and even leading to drop-out.

The scheduling of initiation ceremonies conflicts with the school calendar, leading to absenteeism from school. Although initiation marks the passage from childhood to adulthood, school authorities continue to treat initiated girls who return to school as children. They expect them to participate in certain activities and punish them in a manner, which is considered inappropriate for adults (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 22).

Furthermore, initiated girls find it difficult to return to formal school or to concentrate on their own studies because their next expectation is marriage. Studies, which were carried out in Malawi by Robb et al. (1998), suggest that problems affecting girls are acute in the Yao and Chewa dominated areas. It was seen that in the Yao dominated areas initiation ceremonies include teaching on sexual intercourse, suggestive and provocative songs and dances. Girls and boys continue practising what they had been taught which leads to a lack of interest in school and early pregnancies (Robb et al., 1998: 9). In Central Region the authors identified that gule wamkulu (nyau) affects pupils' participation in school. However, in the past researchers have not narrated the stories of the pupils or teachers and nor have they explored the communities’ views on these cultural practices, which profoundly affect pupils’ schooling. In this study both parents and pupils were interviewed to get a clear picture of what is involved in initiation ceremonies and the impact upon girls’ schooling. Girls in particular gave a detailed account of their experiences at the initiation ceremonies.

Indeed initiation ceremonies in Mangochi in the South and Dedza in the Central Region affect pupils’ attendance at school and dropping-out of pupils from school. Girls are affected more than boys because once they go through these ceremonies they start
having sexual relationships followed by pregnancies. Adults in the communities also encourage girls to get married once they reach puberty. As already mentioned in this chapter, the Yao surrounding the School K1 in Mangochi value their long-standing practices of initiation ceremonies for boys and girls, which, by tradition, identify or generate identity within their society. The nsondo initiation ceremony, which involves young girls between the ages of 6-10, is a cause of high drop-out rates.

At the nsondo ceremony girls are taught sexual practices and are encouraged to indulge in sex. What girls are taught is contrary to how they are expected to behave in school. This is a major factor because young girls are told that they are “adults” and they are advised to practice what they learn at nsondo ceremony. Yet the school still regards them as juveniles and not adults. Moreover, the ceremony is at odds with what the school expects of girls as after girls have been kept in a period of seclusion (required in the nsondo) they are expected by their community to carry out tasks at home—i.e. looking after the homes and their young siblings, and cooking. They are also regarded as adults because they are prepared for marriage at nsondo. Pupils were asked to disclose their experiences at the nsondo ceremony. This is what girls in school said:

MG1: I went to nsondo when I was 10 years old. They told us to respect elders and to help them. They also told us what happens between a man and a woman in the home and advised us to engage in sexual activities, but I refuse to do that. Other girls engage in such activities after the ceremony.

MG2: I went to nsondo when I was 11 years old. We stayed in the hut for two and half months. All this time we were naked. Some rituals included eating without washing hands. The women gave us food and advised us to respect our parents. They told us that when we return home we should do a lot of household chores because we were regarded as adults. The “namkungwi” instructed

74 Namkungwi is a woman instructor who warns and teaches girls during the ceremony of initiation. She is usually an elderly and respected married woman in the community. In Mangochi the village headman’s wife was one of the “namkungwi” in the village.
us to engage in sexual practices with boys, otherwise they told us we will not grow properly. At the end of the ceremony there is lot of dancing and feasting. Parents come including people in the village.

When I asked this pupil if nsondo affects girls’ schooling, she replied:

A number of girls go and indulge in sex after nsondo, hence they drop-out of school.

MG3: I went to nsondo when I was eight years old. I stayed there for one month. We were told how to respect elders, what happens in the home and sexual practices. They even told us to go and practice what we have been taught.

When I asked the pupil how the nsondo affected her since she was very young she said that:

I was surprised and also confused because I was young. I refuse to engage in such activities, but other girls “amakagona ndi amuna” (they sleep around with men).

The underlying constraints to girls’ education in regard to nsondo is that girls are instructed by the “anamkungwi” (women instructors) to indulge in sexual practices before they reach puberty. Most girls indulge in such practices and, therefore, they drop-out of school because they cannot concentrate on their schooling. Parents at Village K agreed that nsondo and jando are still very important influences among the Yao and many parents encourage their children to go and attend initiation ceremonies. According to parent SK:

I have been in this area for just one year but a lot of girls drop-out of school after nsondo. Moreover, they become very forward because at nsondo they teach them the facts of life (Focus Group, Village K).
This lack of inhibition is due to the fact that girls are free to engage in relationships. Parents lose control of their children also because to be regarded as an “adult”, means that a girl decides what she wants to do with her own life. Parent JM added:

When girls go to *nsondo* ceremony and come home after this, they change completely; therefore, encouraging them to go to school becomes a problem and impossible (Focus Group, Village K).

The headteacher of another school commented that:

*Nsondo* is a major blow and very complicated. It is even hard to mix girls and boys in the class because here boys and girls are sensitive. When they sit next to each other they are thinking about relationships in class. *Nsondo* is the element that sticks in pupils’ minds and it spoils pupils’ future (Headteacher, School K2).

A Standard Seven girl pupil who went through *nsondo* initiation ceremony was adamant that *nsondo* practice should stop. When asked how the families and the community could help to keep girls in school. She replied:

A number of girls drop-out because of the *nsondo* activities. This practice must stop (Pupil at School K1).

Some parents suggested that girls should not attend the ceremony at the early age. Commenting on the ceremony parent ZM said that her daughter of 10 years old dropped out of school partly due to *nsondo*. She said that:

My own child dropped out of school because of *nsondo*. When she came from *nsondo* ceremony she changed completely. Before *nsondo* she went to school, but after she came back she lost interest in school.
When asked how the community could help, she suggested that:

Girls should wait until they are grown up to attend the nsondo ceremony because they get confused if they are too young (Parent of a Drop-out in Mangochi).

Teachers also told me that if a girl pupil knows that the teacher is a Tumbuka or from another ethnic group they undermine the teachers because those who do not practise such a ceremony are considered still "young". The Primary Education Adviser (PEA) of the zone said that the cultural practice of nsondo is still strongly held because at the end of the ceremony, there are big parties and dances. Some people are fetched on lorries to attend the end of ceremonies. The PEA also gave an example of some girls in his area that went through the nsondo ceremony and when they came back he was warned by neighbours that if he is not careful, his daughters will start engaging in sexual activities because the girls who had attended would encourage them.

Nsondo practice among the Yao has been cited by teachers from School K1 and other schools as the main cultural practice which causes girls to drop-out from school. Indeed in Mangochi District nsondo practice is seen to be the principal cause of girls dropping out in addition to the appalling conditions of school. A number of girls in school suggested that girls should not be encouraged to have relationships whilst in school. Moreover, a few parents in the villages indicated that they provided educational materials for their daughters but their daughters did not want to go to school because of the relationships.

The School K1 teacher commented that education for boys and girls could not be improved because of cultural practices. He added that the Social Mobilising Campaign on Educational Quality by GABLE would not be successful because of these practices. In this connection USAID’s programme should focus more on increasing awareness in the communities of the adverse impact of initiation ceremonies upon girls’ schooling. This would necessarily involve the inclusion of initiation instructors and local leaders in
joint discussions about how best to overcome the educational problems arising from initiation ceremonies. The schoolteacher further stated that:

The community is so dedicated to their cultural practices. During ceremonies of nsondo and litiwo (litiwo is a ceremony for women who have their first child), boys and girls attend overnight dances of celebrations. Some come to school and you notice them sleeping in the classroom. Litiwo ceremonies have no season and happen all the time (Teacher, School K1).

Initiation ceremonies have also affected the drop-out rates of girls in Dedza District in Central Region but not in such a dramatic way as in Mangochi. This is because of the influence of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission, which introduced "chilangizo" for Christians whereby some women from the church advised girls about cleanliness upon reaching puberty. However, non-Christians still send their children to the nyau initiation ceremony (chinamwali). Some girls drop-out because of the "Chewa nyau cult", a secret society among the Chewa ethnic group. This is a traditional religion involving masked dancers and is practised among the Chewa in Central Region.

The practices of gule wamkulu, as discussed in Chapter Five, include a dance performed by masked men who have been transformed into animal spirits. Women and girls traditionally provide the background singing, and clapping for the gule wamkulu dance. Girls as young as seven years old are sometimes forced to join the nyau cult and this is one of the factors which is affecting the drop-out rates of girls from school. Some headteachers mentioned that once a girl goes to the nyau initiation ceremony she will drop-out from school as the result of a pregnancy or an early marriage. Some village headmen were not co-operative in being interviewed because they are the custodians of the cult. The following are comments about girls who went through the nyau initiation ceremony:
DZ1: Girls as young as eight years old go to the *nyau* dancing activities. The *nyau* encourages girls to sleep with them as the training of making love before they reach puberty. Even girls at school go to these dances. One day I went to see the *nyau* dance. I did not like it because the *nyau* dancers were inviting us to go and sleep with them. I refused but other schoolgirls went. When they came out of the hut they were angry and not happy. We asked them what had happened but they did not tell us. However, other girls revealed to us what happens when they go into the hut with the *nyau*.

DZ2: In our culture once a girl goes to the *nyau* ritual she is regarded as an adult because the village headmen say that girls know a lot and, therefore, they are not supposed to mix with other girls who have not gone through the *nyau* ritual.

DZ3: Before I reached puberty they took me to the *nyau* ritual at the age of seven years old. I wanted to go because if you don't go people in the village laugh at you. They told us to respect elders and also to help parents with household duties at home. When I reached puberty I was absent from school for one week. They advised us not to go to school because we did not know enough about “*zogona ndi amuna*” (about sleeping with men). Then they told us how a woman and a man make love.

Teachers and pupils explained that after a girl has gone through the *nyau* ritual, she does not remain in school, but quickly drops out. The teacher at School C1 states that:

One of the greatest causes of drop-out is the involvement of the “*nyau* dancers” during initiation ceremonies. A number of girls drop-out of school once they go through initiation ceremonies because of what they are taught and experience during this period. Girls as young as 10 years join the *nyau* dancing and rituals. During the harvest period *nyau* dancers become active and, therefore, girls are absent from school because they engage in clapping hands for the dancers (Teacher, School C1).
Literature on these cults by Chimbiya (1990) and Kaspin (1993) indicates that girls as well as boys go through nyau initiation ceremonies. However, girls’ experiences at the nyau initiation ceremonies are not narrated in detail and there is omission of the impact upon girls’ schooling. As already mentioned, studies conducted by Robb et al. (1998) show the impact of such practices upon pupils’ schooling. This study has focussed especially upon the experiences of girls at the nyau initiation ceremonies and their effect on their education. Teachers from other schools confirmed that girls miss school and engage in nyau activities and eventually drop-out from school.

In the North, although initiation ceremonies for girls do not affect their schooling as much as in Mangochi and Dedza districts, some drop-outs explained to me that their schooling was affected when they were kept in seclusion for a week after reaching puberty. A 17-year-old drop-out explained to me about her experiences. This is what she said:

When I reached puberty I was kept in a house by a woman advisor for seven days while my friends went to school. The woman advised me and other girls not to engage in relationships with boys because we would get pregnant.

When asked if the initiation ceremony affected her schooling she replied:

I think it affected me, however, these are our cultural practices and, therefore, I could not resist. When I was kept in a room for seven days, my friends from school came to visit me. As a result, everybody knew at school. When I went back boys used to laugh at me. Some girls from school got married after the enclosure and did not go back to school (A Drop-out in Mzimba).

Nevertheless, girls who have gone through the ceremony in the North explained that the ceremony itself does not encourage girls to get married or engage in relationships. Only a few girls mentioned that women in the villages encourage girls to get married after the
ceremony, but the majority told me that after the initiation ceremony parents and the communities do not pressurise them to get married.

Cultural practices such as nsondo and nyau appears to have led to an increase in the number of AIDS cases. Teachers and pupils at School K1 in Mangochi District mentioned that in the evenings a number of girls stay out until late at night at a small trading centre which is near the school. They are usually seen hanging around with men. HIV/AIDS also appear to have increased a number of orphans and the education system has also been affected by the deaths of teachers.

HIV/AIDS Orphans

Malawi is one of the countries which has been greatly affected by the AIDS epidemic. MOESC (2000) has indicated that USAID pointed out in 1995 that HIV/AIDS is a major threat to the overall population in Malawi. It has been noted that in 1998 25.3% of the population were HIV positive while in the rural area 11.2% were positive. In 1993 it was estimated that 140,000 children had lost their mothers due to AIDS. The Department for International Development states that “the growing number of AIDS orphans is a significant challenge to achieving UPE, especially in Africa” (DFID, 2000: 10). Furthermore, DFID notes that there are 360,000 orphans in Malawi.

The problem of AIDS is prevalent in all districts in Malawi but it may be more acute in areas with cultural practices such as those in Mangochi and Dedza districts in the Southern and Central Regions, respectively. This may be a result of multiple sexual partners, high incidences of the sex trade, unsafe sex, abortions and remoteness from health facilities. As a result, the number of AIDS orphans might be greater in the rural areas. The Malawi Government (1999a: 114) states that in Mangochi District “it is believed that the high incidence of HIV/AIDS is in part attributed to the culture of the people, level of education and the presence of tourists”. The problem of AIDS in
Mzimba District might be due partly to traditional dances such as *mtungu* (as discussed in Chapter Five), the sex trade and “sugar daddies” (elderly or middle-aged men who lavish money and gifts on younger girls in return for sex).

The impact of AIDS upon schooling is that where resources are scarce it may be girls who are kept out of school, so affecting their future economic prospects. AIDS orphans may similarly be disadvantaged and again girls may be more exposed to domestic exploitation or neglect (see Akeroyd, 1996: 42). AIDS also affects the productivity and welfare of female-headed households. Women suffer economically as well as psychologically from the illness or death of male members. As Akeroyd pointed out, “the burden of caring may fall more heavily on women, and they may also be forced further into dependency” (Akeroyd, 1996: 42).

“The impact of HIV/AIDS on Malawi’s education system is enormous. Teachers’ deaths result in a continuing shortage of instructors. Local school officials spend much of their time at funerals” (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 6). Indeed, AIDS is spreading faster in Malawi than efforts to contain it. Teachers are also dying faster than the Ministry of Education can train new ones. MOESC/UNICEF (1998) noted that the poor health in rural areas has also impacted upon children’s enrolment and attainment in education. In addition to childhood diseases, AIDS has had a devastating effect on children’s participation in schooling. Children lose their parents, constantly attend funerals, and they may be infected as well (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 6).

In the field, I observed that teachers and pupils were sometimes absent from school because they were attending funerals. Most girls who were interviewed in all three areas indicated that one of the reasons for absenteeism was due to funerals in the villages. In addition, girls are absent from school because they care for the sick relatives whilst mothers care for patients at hospitals or home.
The African Church Information Service (September 4, 2000) reports that soon after the death of their parents children suffer prejudice, isolation and neglect at the hands of their guardians and the community in which they live. Due to the sufferings they experience, most children abandon the homes of their parents in order to fend for themselves. This has created another challenge—the growing population of street children.

Orphans are unable to go to school because their relatives cannot pay for educational materials because of limited resources. I met a number of orphans in Village K in Dedza District and this is what the village headman told me:

There are a lot of orphans in the village mostly because of the AIDS crisis. They stay with other relatives and it is difficult to keep them. Single mothers also find difficulties in looking after their children (Village Headman, Dedza).

The Ministry of Education has incorporated the issues concerning AIDS in the school curriculum. For instance, a Standard Six Social Science textbook warns children of AIDS. Communities are also encouraged to form drama groups which go to schools and warn children of the effects of AIDS. I observed a Zombwe Aids Toto (which means no) drama group in the North which performed at School Z and warned pupils about the dangers of AIDS. Girls were particularly encouraged to say no to sexual advances by men and schoolboys. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (2000) also suggests the launching of further education Social Mobilisation Campaign targeting the (HIV/AIDS) orphans street children.

This research has shown the conflict between how the school expects children to behave and the views of the community to which they belong. As discussed earlier, whilst the school is encouraging girls to say no to sex, in some communities such as Mangochi, girls and boys are instructed to engage in sexual activities.
Communities’ Attitudes

Cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies have also affected communities’ attitudes towards education because communities are more interested in marrying their children, especially girls, once they reach puberty. Lack of interest in education by the community and children is affecting the latter’s schooling particularly in Mangochi District in the South. This problem is more acute in the South among the Yao ethnic group than among the Central and Northern Regions. As discussed in Chapter Five, a lack of interest by the community is a long-standing factor which has been pointed out by Sisulo, the former chairman of the school committee of School K1 from 1962-1999. He said that since the establishment of the school in 1962, people lack interest in education because of various reasons. Sisulo explained that:

What I have noticed is that over the years in which I have been in the school committee as a chairman; I have spoken to people in villages but there is still a lack of interest. People are interested in their children getting married. Sometimes I tell parents that they should encourage girls not to get pregnant, noting the number of girls who dropped out of school, but nothing seems to change. It is the parents’ responsibility to encourage girls to go to school but they encourage them in relationships because they accept money, which their daughters give them without questioning them. For a long time more girls have been dropping out of school in larger numbers than boys.

Girls in School K1 in Mangochi and in School G in Dedza districts told me that their communities are always pressurising them to get married especially when they reach puberty. When girls in school were asked what their parents’ and communities’ expectations were, this is what they said:

Women in the village urge me to stop school and get married (Standard 7 Pupil, School K1).
Women tell me that I am now grown up. They say, “just get pregnant”...but my mum tells me to complete my education so that may be in the future I can look after myself (Standard 7 Pupil, School K1).

My grandmother and especially women in the village pressurise me to get married. Some girls eventually drop-out of school (Standard 7 Pupil, School K1).

The community encourages me to stop schooling and get married. But I don’t want to stop schooling. My parents encourage me to continue schooling. Some girls stop schooling as a result of the pressure from the community (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

The community suggests to me to leave school and get married but I refuse telling them, “except if my parents stop assisting me with school or are dead then I will stop but not now” (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

This study shows how the communities’ attitudes affect girls’ schooling. Over-age girl pupils who have remain in school do so as a result of their parents’ initiatives. Therefore, the donor agencies and the government should focus upon programmes to sensitise the communities about how their attitudes towards girls impact upon their schooling and their future prospects. Programmes should also incorporate issues on how parents can deal with the communities’ attitudes. Parent SK also suggested that some parents discourage other people’s children from going to school as they ask them to do child minding. This is what SK said:

I see some mothers in villages, who leave their children with school-going girls to look after them while they go and do other duties. As a result, other people’s children do not go to school (Parent, School K1).

An 11-year-old drop-out in Standard One explained that she dropped out because of a lack of clothes which her uncle did not bother to buy for her. She said that:
I was living with my uncle who had a baby. Therefore, he urged me to stop schooling so that I could look after a baby (A eleven-year-old drop-out in Standard 1, Mangochi).

Indeed child labour is evident in all three areas of research. As already discussed girls who have gone through initiation ceremonies are advised and also encouraged to carry out tasks at home. Such activities will be seen to impact upon pupils’ schooling.

Child Labour

As discussed in Chapter Two, historically, opportunity costs were identified by missionaries as a factor which affected participation of girls in schooling. Studies by researchers indicate that the high opportunity costs continue to affect girls’ education. Odaga and Heneveld noted that “child labour is indispensable to the survival of some households, and schooling represents a high opportunity cost to those sending children to school” (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 17).

While the importance of child labour for agricultural, domestic and marketing tasks has been well documented, when it comes to child care, girls are more likely to be involved than boys, and children in the rural areas spend more time working than those in urban areas (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 17).

It was seen that as a result of the demand for domestic labour in urban areas, poor rural households have also responded by sending their daughters into the domestic labour market in exchange for regular cash income. Recent studies conducted by Robb et al. (1998) in Malawi reveal that parents often send their children, especially daughters, to do chores such as collecting wood and fetching water during school hours. In the field, I observed that some girls were absent from school because parents asked them to do tasks at home. I interviewed a Standard Seven-girl pupil carrying a sack of maize on
her head during school hours. When I asked her where she was going, she revealed that her mother asked her to go to the grinding mill. Teachers explained that it is a common practice for girls to be sent to the market and grinding mill during school hours. As a result, children become discouraged and often drop-out.

Namuddu (1991) states that indeed disparity between the performance of girls and boys is to be attributed to a greater demand imposed on female children to assist with household chores. This study has shown that girls in school spend considerable time doing different chores at home before going to school, and also after school. It was seen that most girls spend two to three hours on chores in the morning and four hours was spent on different chores after school. One hour was spent relaxing before they prepare evening meals.

Girls interviewed in all three districts told me that the community expects them to do work at home and this is part of the training they are given at the initiation ceremonies. Some mothers ask their daughters to be absent from school and send them to sell products at the markets or look after younger siblings. Girls complained about not having enough time to do their homework. Experiences of girls in schools in all three districts revealed that girls start doing household chores from the age of six.

Girls in all schools in Mangochi, Dedza and Mzimba districts explained to me the activities they carry out before going to school in the mornings and after school. Most girls told me that they get up four o’clock every morning to do household chores. A pupil at School K1 said that sometimes her mother is still asleep while she is working in the morning. One of the pupils at School Z in Mzimba told me what she does before going to school and after coming from school everyday. This is what she narrated:

Before I come to school I wake up at 3.00 am in the morning. I light fire and heat water for baths. I mop the house and sweep outside the house and wash dishes. Then I prepare breakfast for my uncle, my brother and
myself. I bath and then come to school. After school, I go home and cook *nsima* and relish. I wash dishes and fetch water from the river. When it is dark I cook again food. I go to bed at around 7 pm. (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

*Figure 6.7: Girls Start Doing Household Chores at the Age of Six Years Old.*

When the pupil was asked if responsibilities at home interferes with her studying, she said yes. For instance, when she wants to read she thinks about various tasks at home. The pupil explained that her mother transferred her from another school so that she
could assist her uncle with household duties. When I asked the uncle he agreed that it is true because he is not married he needed the niece to help with household chores. He went on to say that though his niece was tired she had to do chores and cook after school. If she is given homework it is impossible for her to do and instead she is forced to do her homework in the evenings. Girls explained to me how the responsibilities at home interfered with their schooling. One pupil has this to say:

Yes, responsibilities at home interfere with my schoolwork. When I get home instead of doing my schoolwork, I do household chores. If I tell my mum, I want to do school work, she tells me I have to do the work at home first. Even my grandmother tells me that I should do work at home first before I do my homework (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

Household chores interfere with my school because household chores do not make you learn English. Mum teaches me how to do household duties while the teacher teaches us Arithmetic. It confuses me because at home I do not learn Maths but at school I learn Maths (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

Parents from all three areas of research agreed that girls are expected to help mothers at home and also agreed that it disturbed their schooling. When I asked the headteacher of School M2 in Dedza of the problems affecting girls’ education, He explained that:

Families at home are a contributory factor to dropping out of girls. Girls are given tasks to do at home before and after school. Most girls are late for school because of household chores at home in the morning. As a result, they drop-out. During weekdays, mothers send girls to sell beans at the markets (Headteacher, School M2).

The time spent doing household chores instead of homework cause many pupils, especially girls, to have to repeat classes. When I asked girl pupils why they repeated classes they mentioned work at home as a contributing factor. They narrated that:
I repeated Standard Three because I was absent a lot. Many times my mother told me to stay from school and encouraged me to do work at home while she was away in the fields (A Drop-out in Mzimba).

I repeated in Standard Two then went to work in Lilongwe as a house girl. I was absent a lot from classes. Mum also asked me to do household chores at home (A Drop-out in Dedza).

As already discussed girls in Mangochi and Dedza districts go to the markets to sell their agricultural products after school. Some girls are absent from school on the day of the market. This is usually during the middle of the week. Markets do not affect pupils at School Z because the school is 12 kilometres away from the trading centre. However, parents at School Z admitted that they often encourage their daughters to do household chores at home whilst they work in gardens. They argued that during the rainy season they become very busy, therefore, their daughters look after the home while they engage in other activities. They said that they try to encourage their children to do homework after completing household chores. But girls in school argued that they cannot do their homework in the evenings as they get tired and also they have to get up early in the morning to fetch water before going to school. A few said that they try to do their schoolwork at night.

Some non-enrolees in Mangochi District explained that they are not in school because of the activities at home. For instance, a nine-year-old non-enrolee said that she was not in school because she looked after a young baby at home. The mother went to fetch firewood and did other duties. Therefore, there was no one to look after the baby.

In Dedza District girls drop-out of school because they go and work as house girls in cities such as Lilongwe. These girls usually work for richer African families. Reports on domestic workers reveal that their well-off employers grossly abuse them. The Panafrican News (March 30, 2000) reported that the survey conducted by the
Commercial, Industrial and Allied Workers Union, discovered that most domestic workers were being paid far below the prevailing market rates and worked long hours.

The Panafrican News further stated that the employers of the domestic workers paid between 50 and 100 kwacha (between 2 to 2.90 US dollars) a month against the statutory minimum wage of between 16.50 dollars and 11.60 dollars for workers in urban and rural areas, respectively. The abuse of domestic workers can also perhaps take the form of beatings and food deprivation and for the female workers, even sexual assaults are known to be carried out by the male family members. Domestic workers who are mostly girls rarely report such incidences because they are illiterate and do not know their rights.

The Panafrican News (August 4, 2000) further reported that Peter Chupa, the Labour and Vocational Minister in Malawi, described the problem of child labour in the country as serious and said it needed to be given a human face in order to eradicate it. The Minister stressed that “child labour was evil since it denies young people a chance to acquire formal education in order to realise their full potential in future”. In the field, it was seen that in all three areas the extensive use of child labour impacted upon pupils’ schooling. The village headman of Village K in Dedza District told me that:

Most girls drop-out and go to work in Lilongwe as house girls. When I ask, they tell me it is because of poverty. When they go to work they send money to their parents. Moreover, parents are willing to send their daughters to continue schooling but because of poverty they send them away to work (Village Headman, Dedza).

Indeed some girls who I interviewed in villages told me that they dropped out because they were encouraged by their parents to work as a house girl. The payment varies from K100. to K200 a month which is about $2.00. When asked why they dropped out of school they gave reasons such as:
Because of my house girl job in Mzimba District. A woman from Mzimba came to ask for a house girl in my village and my mum told me to go. Considering poverty, a lack of notebooks and clothes, I could not resist going.

When asked if her parents gave her some advice she replied:

They encouraged me to go and work as a house girl (A Drop-out, Dedza).

A Standard Seven pupil suggested that it is difficult to ask how the community could help in this matter because parents are the ones who encourage girls to go to cities and work. When asked how the families and the community could help girls stay in school a pupil in Dedza District commented that:

It is difficult to convince parents not to send girls to work as domestic workers because they are used to receiving money from girls. Parents are the ones who encourage girls to do house girl jobs. They tell them, “go and work” (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

A non-enrolee in Dedza said that she never went to school because of poverty, instead, her parents sent her to work as a house girl at a very young age. In addition, two sisters and two of her brothers also never went to school. This is what she narrated about her experiences:

I started doing housework when I was young. At first my parents sent me to Ntcheu (about 40kms from Dedza) to do housework for my uncle. I cooked food and did other chores. I stayed with him for one and half years. I was not happy as a child because I had lots of thoughts and I wanted to come home (A fourteen-year-old non-enrolee in Dedza).

This study shows that girls’ schooling is partly affected because of domestic duties. Girls who carry out household chores at home either drop-out of school, repeat classes and are absent from classes. On the other hand, domestic workers are disadvantaged
because domestic employers do not enrol girls in school. This contributes to the increasing number of female illiterates.

Factors affecting girls’ education due to the cultural practices of the initiation ceremonies are indeed affecting pupils’ attendance in schools and also contributing to the high rate of drop-outs. These practices have raised debates with the government on how to incorporate these practices with the school calendar. The Panafrican News (20th October 1999) mentions that “Chiefs in Malawi have asked the government to consider changing its school calendar because the current one interferes with initiation ceremonies among the country’s ethnic groups”. It is reported that a Yao chief argued that while the chiefs appreciated the importance of education, cultural values should not be ignored, either. He said that tradition called for the initiation rites for both girls and boys to be conducted soon after harvest of crops in July, August and September, which is during the current school calendar. The chief added that:

But with the current system pupils are missing classes because, although education is important, culture cannot be compromised (Yao Chief).

The Panafrican News reports that a parliamentarian and a cabinet minister from the chief’s area in Machinga, acknowledged the education system coincided with the initiation ceremonies which are performed during the school term. They said that initiation is some kind of religion. If a girl is not initiated, the community considers her immature. In the field, the village headmen, parents, pupils and teachers shared the same views as documented in the Panafrican News of how the cultural practices, especially the nsondo, is strong among the Yao ethnic group.

Drop-out rates for girls continue because of early marriage and pregnancy. Pregnancy regulations were changed in 1994 to allow girls return to school after having given birth. However, this study shows that girls do not go back to school after pregnancy. One pupil told me that it is difficult to go back to school because she has to look after her
baby. Moreover, she said it is not easy to cope in the classroom once a girl has a baby. This confirms Swainson’s argument which she states that “this regulation has been administered in a piecemeal and haphazard manner making monitoring difficult” (Swainson, 2000: 53). She rightly states that implementation problems have arisen due to lack of consultation and provision of guidelines for teachers, parents and local education authorities concerning the regulations. Moreover, it is seen that many heads are not in favour of re-admitting girls as they suffer prejudice from teachers and fellow pupils.

In this connection, programmes should be introduced to cater for girls who have dropped out of school as a result of pregnancy. Moreover, at the local level, the government should monitor and evaluate pregnancy policy to ensure that indeed girls go back to school after pregnancy. Another cultural factor which affects pupils’ schooling especially in Mangochi District is matrilineal marriage system. The next section explores this practice.

**Matrilineal Practice**

Indeed retention of pupils in schools is partly affected by the matrilineal marriage system. Studies carried out by Robb et al. found that matrilineal marriage systems affect the participation of children in schooling. It has been indicated that in this practice it is the mother’s brother who has a say in a matrilineal household and not the children’s father. This results in a lack of interest on the part of the father and the failure of parents to support their children as a couple (Robb et al., 1998: 9). As already discussed this practice is not strong among the Chewa in Dedza District as compared to Mangochi.

In the field, parents interviewed in Mangochi suggested that matrilineal practice is still strong among the Yao culture. They argued that *mbumba* (the uncle) control their marriages and yet they do not assist their children financially. For instance, when
children ask for notebooks, the uncle argues that he has his own children to take care of. Parents agree that the uncle decides on their children’s education. For instance, if an uncle wants his niece to get married, she will be married even if the father wants her to continue with her education. The school committee argued that this matrilineal practice has a big impact on the number of drop-outs among girls in school. They said that:

A woman has a strong say in the family. Even if the husband wants her children, especially girls, to be educated and their mother insists for her children to get married, girls drop-out from school because of their mother. In matrilineal society the uncle (the wife's uncle) controls issues concerning the family and even in regard to education. If the husband insists that his daughters should continue with schooling instead of getting married he can be chased away from the village (School Committee, School K1).

A female member of the committee said that if the man insists on his daughter to continue schooling his wife asks the husband, “Do you want to marry your daughter? These children are mine. If you want to control them go somewhere else. I will get another partner who will marry me”. Such comments, according to KS, discourage men. Instead they cease to take interest in their daughters and concentrate on their sons. They make sure boys complete their education. The chairman pointed out that:

We husbands feel insecure because our wives can chase us away at any time. But we insist that our children get educated in spite of this. As a result, we leave them alone and concentrate on the boys. We fight for our boys.

Children are therefore divided in the home. For instance, whilst mothers concentrate on girls, fathers concentrate on their sons because they know their sons will not agree to marry before completing schooling. An example was given about the children of the treasurer of the school committee. He has seven children. Four girls dropped out at primary school level and got married because of their mother, but three boys were all

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The committee pointed out that this is the main problem that is contributing to the lack of enrolment and the dropping out of girls in school. The chairman stated that:

We just educate girls but sometimes men give up because they say, after all, these children are not mine. Sometimes the mother sends her children to work in gardens, instead of going to school and we have no say (Chairman of the School Committee, School K1).

From this study it is evident that communities surrounding School K1 still practice a matrilineal type of marriage system. As already mentioned the chairman of the school committee argued that men feel insecure in the home as their wives threaten to throw them out if they disagree with the uncle. However, I also discovered that a number of women were divorced in villages because men left them for other women in the village. May be this is a result of the practice of polygamy which allows Muslim men to marry four wives. In addition, divorce for many is easy as noted at Village K because the purpose of marriage is little more than begetting of children. The social history, as discussed in Chapter Two, revealed that religion impacted upon pupils' schooling. The next section examines how religious factors continue to affect educational developments.

**Religious Influences**

Access to formal schooling for both boys and girls has been influenced in many developing countries, both historically and geographically, by the spread of religious movements and missions. As discussed in Chapter Two, Christian churches have been largely supportive of education for girls, even though initially it usually took second place to that of boys. However, studies show that Muslims were not influential in developing education, especially for girls. The study carried out by Brock and Cammish (1997) suggested that the low enrolment figures for girls and the relatively
negative attitudes to girls’ education in Muslim dominated countries was explained in terms of the religious factor, i.e. they were largely Muslim areas.

As discussed in Chapter Three, after the abolition of fees for primary education in 1994, the Malawi government took control of the unassisted schools linked to the different churches. In the field, however, it was seen that the foreign missions such as the Church of Scotland continues to support schools within the national churches’ catchment areas. For instance, Scottish missionaries and Scottish World Exchange volunteers are sent to Blantyre and Livingstonia Mission to work in national churches, hospitals and schools. The headteacher of Ekwendeni Mission Primary School in Mzimba told me that the Church of Scotland supports the school with educational materials and the maintenance of the school. However, the school also lacked materials for pupils and the headteacher was still waiting to receive notebooks and textbooks from the District Education Office in Mzimba.

School Z is also under the catchment area of the Ekwendeni Mission. However, the headteacher told me that the school does not receive any support from the Church. A missionary working at Ekwendeni hospital told me that the Church provides assistance for orphans in Zombwe area. School G in Dedza District is within the catchment area of Nkhoma Mission which was under the DRCM. However, the Mission does not support the school with educational materials or maintenance. Teachers told me that the Mission is supposed to inspect the school but this does not happen regularly.

The Muslim Association of Malawi managed schools in Muslim dominated areas in Mangochi. School K1 is connected to the Muslim Association in Mangochi. In the past the association supported the school with construction of teachers’ houses. However, at present the school is totally dependent upon the support from the government. The headteacher explained that the association does not provide any support and the teachers’ houses which were constructed some time back are in bad
condition. Thus schools surveyed in all three areas are controlled and assisted by the government.

As discussed in Chapter Three, in Malawi the Muslim dominated areas tend to have low enrolment and higher drop-out rates. The findings in this study reveal that a number of people interviewed at School K1 did not reckon Islamic influence to be a direct factor affecting female education. However, in the field it was seen that some Muslim practices of permitting men to marry more than one wife is a cause of a high rate of divorce rates which resulted in a huge number of female-headed households. I observed that in villages surrounding School K1, which are mainly dominated by Yao Muslims, there were a lot of divorced women. I also came across women who had children from different fathers because they kept getting married, only to be left by the husband for another woman.

Female-headed households find it hard to cope with the education of their children because of a lack of resources for basic needs. Mkandawire (1997) noted that female-headed households are largely confined to the production of food crops, mainly for own consumption. These households constitute a disproportionately large percentage of the “core poor”. Tellegen quotes O’Laughlin (1996) by stating that “female-headed households are indeed more commonly found among the poorer strata of the population” (Tellegen, 1997: 147). Mkandawire adds that various studies show that these households have less land and poorer access to credit than male-headed ones.

In the field it was seen that female-headed households have less land and are poor. The lack of resources and poverty have affected enrolment and dropping out of children from school. Women complained about a lack of money to buy clothes, food and educational materials. They said that other children in the family, especially boys, are able to go to school because they work in the tobacco estates after which they buy educational materials and clothes. Some even support their younger siblings. Young girls
suggested that they would like to go back to school once they acquire educational materials and clothes. Parents at Village K in Mangochi District commented that:

Single mothers struggle because they have no resources. We farm on small piece of land to grow maize. However, because of inadequate fertiliser we do not cultivate much. As the result, we harvest maize which last a few months then we suffer. Children go hungry and if they sleep with hunger they refuse to go to school (Focus Group, Mangochi).

Female-headed households are also prevalent in Mzimba and Dedza districts. This is mainly due either to the death of a husband or his migration. As discussed in Chapter One, women find it difficult to raise their children because of a lack of resources and the presence of the husband. In villages women complained about struggling to bring up their children single-handed. A single mother in Mzimba District explained to me that her children are unable to go to school because she cannot provide them with essentials and educational materials. Therefore, she encourages her children to go to a mountain which is near the school to fetch wood and to sell at the market which is seven kilometres from the village. This enables her children to acquire educational materials and food.

Another factor, which is connected to religion, is that of the jando initiation ceremony for Muslim boys. Robb et al. (1998) studies found that boys’ circumcision which is connected with Islamic belief include teaching on sexual intercourse, which they are encouraged to practice after the ceremonies. In this regard, boys look forward to engaging in sexual practices. The Primary Education Adviser and teachers at School K1 explained that after initiation ceremonies girls and boys engage in such practices resulting in a high rate of pregnancies.

Robb et al. (1998) also found that madrassa instruction affects formal education because the attainment of higher levels of religious instruction is more highly revered than
secular education. However, in the field it was seen that madrassa classes do not affect pupils’ participation in formal schooling. Teachers argued that pupils attend madrassa classes for one hour after school and by this time pupils are already tired and hungry and therefore do not pay much attention. When Muslim pupils were asked if their education was affected by religious factors such as madrassa classes, almost all pupils responded by saying that they are not affected. However, in lower classes it was seen that pupils, particularly in Standard One, were confused by new languages being imposed upon them such as Arabic. In the field it was also evident that historical resistance towards western education by Muslims has contributed to a higher rate of illiteracy rates particularly in Mangochi District. The next section explores how illiterate parents affect children’s education.

**Illiterate Parents**

In Mangochi and Dedza districts there was evidence of high illiteracy rates among adults. This was acute in areas such as Mangochi and Dedza where there was great resistance to education. The former chairman of the School K1 explained that in 1937 he attended a Roman Catholic School where they were also taught the Catechism. However, the school closed in 1938 because there was resistance to education among villagers.

Some parents refused to send their children to this school because they were afraid of being converted to Christianity and also because they believed that they were going to be encouraged to eat rats and pigs which is against the Muslim religion. They also used to conduct Christian prayers for pupils (Sisulo, Mangochi).

However, other village headmen argue that this attitude has changed because people realised educated young people have found work in offices. Therefore, they allowed their children to go to school. Nevertheless, it is evident that illiteracy in parents
contributes to children dropping out in schools because illiterate parents encourage girls to get married. Most girls interviewed in Mangochi stated that as their parents were illiterate they could not assess their schoolwork because they could not read or write. Parents also said that children challenged them about being illiterate. FN said that girls sometimes are impudent when they know that their parent is illiterate. They challenge by asking:

You are encouraging me to go to school. Have you been to school yourself? At least when I get married I will be able to read and write a letter. Can you read a letter yourself? (Focus Group, Mangochi).

This attitude by girls to their illiterate mothers shows the importance of educating a mother. This was discussed in Chapter One. The illiterate mothers lose control over girls because they are not role models. Moreover, they are unable to encourage children to go to school as a result of illiteracy.

Unlike Mangochi, Dedza District in Central and Mzimba District in the North did not have large rates of illiteracy because of the establishment of village schools by the DRCM and the Livingstonia Mission. In the North in particular, the village headmen were able to read and write. Most parents in the villages were educated and thus encouraged their children to go to school. They took interest in assessing their progress and helped their children with homework. This is what girls, parents and the school committee of School Z in the North narrated about the efforts they invest in education. When pupils were asked if their parents supported their schooling they replied:

Yes, my mum tells me to work hard in school and not to be playful. I live with my aunt and she tells me not to be absent from school. My aunt prepares food for me after school. After doing household chores she encourages me to do my schoolwork. My aunt's daughter also helps me with homework (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).
My parents advise me to work hard in school because it is good to be educated. My mum says, “Do not drop-out of school. I did not continue with my education and now I regret of not completing my schooling”. Both mum and dad look into my notebooks to see what I have learnt (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

Teachers help children to stay in school by punishing them when they miss classes. Parents are also aggressive when a child is absent from school (School Committee, Mzimba).

A father of a girl pupil in Standard Seven at School Z who has always been first in her class explained the efforts he goes to in order to help his children.

I am interested in seeing whatever our children have written in that particular day. We also buy them additional educational books to read at home. I also make sure that if there are school programmes on radio, I encourage them to listen to them. During exams I tell them that whoever gets the first position, I will do something for her and I keep my promise (A Father of a Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

The school committee in Mangochi suggested that parents lack interest in education and development of the school because of their own illiteracy. The village headman said that parents are illiterate, “therefore, they do not value education. There is an adult literacy class but parents do not bother to attend.” The committee explained that the village headmen force the children in villages to go to school because their communities are not keen to insist upon their children’s education. However, this is contradicted by the views of teachers. Teachers of School K1 argued that this lack of interest in school is also a result of the village headmen’s attitude. They do not encourage the community to send their children to school. A headteacher from School M4 in Mangochi expressed that:

The village headmen do not value education because they are not educated. They also compare pupils in schools and those who are doing businesses. They say, what is
the value of education? Just go to Blantyre and do business (Headteacher, School M4).

The village headmen also see how teachers are suffering with their low salaries of K1042 ($69.46) a month, adding:

Have you seen the teachers' houses and their living conditions? They have nothing. Just leave school and go to Johannesburg and work (Headteacher, School M4).

Indeed communities' attitude towards education is partly due to illiteracy rates. Most parents and all village headmen interviewed are not educated and as explained in Chapter One this also affects pupils' schooling. This study confirms that the early resistance to western education by Muslims has contributed to a high rate of illiteracy in Mangochi District. Aid agencies are mainly involved in basic education programmes and adult education seems to have been neglected. Plan International has incorporated adult literacy education in its project for 1996-2000. However, more programmes should be developed in supporting adult literacy classes. At School C2 in Mangochi, for instance, the community asked me for financial support for an adult literacy class instructor.

The Community Development Officer, Maseko, explained that the Ministry of Women, Youth, Community Development and Social Welfare and Save the Children US were supporting adult literacy centres. However, while in the field Maseko told me that classes ceased for five months due to non-payment of honoraria to instructors. The next section explores how the primary school teachers are also affected by a lack of resources in primary schools.
EDUCATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Teachers' Attitudes

Chapter Three raised challenging issues on free primary education policy and its effects on the quality and quantity of primary schools. Research studies have pointed to the fact that the quality of the educational system has deteriorated. Donor aid agencies in Malawi mention the inadequate facilities in schools such as insufficient school blocks and teachers' houses. However, documentation by the aid agencies such as the World Bank does not indicate how poor resources in schools have affected the teachers' profession. This study reports teachers' opinions and their views on how poor resources affect their commitment to teaching.

In the field it was important to explore how teachers view the good and bad aspects of teaching. Nine female teachers were interviewed comprising of three trained and six untrained teachers. Their responses are shown in Table 6.14 on page 313. It indicates that negative aspects of the teaching career have impacted upon teachers' performance in schools. I observed that teachers at School K1 in Mangochi were not dedicated to their work. They would start teaching late in the morning and they spent more time during breaks.

Teachers maintained that the government is not concerned about teachers' living conditions and salaries. They cannot live on poor salaries. Salaries for teachers are considerably low as shown in Table 6.15 on page 313. In addition, to poor salaries their houses often leak during the rainy season (see Figure 6.8 and Figure 6.9 on page 314). Oxfam states that low salaries, poor accommodation, inadequate professional support, and reduced social status have all combined to lower the level of teacher morale across the developing world (Oxfam, 1999a: 73).
Table 6.14: Good and Bad Aspects of the Job (Teachers at School K1, School G and School Z).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• We learn as we teach</td>
<td>• Low salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect by pupils and teachers</td>
<td>• Lack of teaching and learning materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More time to look after our families</td>
<td>• Poor working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A lot of holidays</td>
<td>• Work load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We know a lot of pupils</td>
<td>• No promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not have access to loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Salaries do not come in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some pupils are impudent to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Untrained teachers find it difficult to teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• District Education Officers do not respect teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communities’ attitudes towards education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.15: Primary Teachers’ Salary Structure as of January 1998.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Teachers</th>
<th>Entry Point</th>
<th>Bar/Ceiling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(US$2076)</td>
<td>(US$2468)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT1</td>
<td>MK31140.00 P/annum</td>
<td>MK37020.00 P/annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT2</td>
<td>(US$1892.20)</td>
<td>(US$2074.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MK28428 P/annum</td>
<td>MK31116.00 P/annum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT3</td>
<td>(US$1456.80)</td>
<td>(US$1764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MK21852.00 P/annum</td>
<td>MK26460.00 P/annum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE holder</td>
<td>(US$910.40)</td>
<td>(US$1243.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT4/T2</td>
<td>MK13656.00 P/annum</td>
<td>MK18648.00 P/annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCE holder</td>
<td>(US$833.60)</td>
<td>(US$1243.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT4/3</td>
<td>MK12504 P/annum</td>
<td>MK18648.00 P/annum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOESC, 2000: 193
Figure 6.8: A Teacher’s House at School K1 in Mangochi

Figure 6.9: A Teacher’s House at School Z in Mzimba
Malawi government admits that teachers' salaries are a major burden in basic education expenditure. The increase in expenditure is mainly due to the recruitment of the 18,000 untrained teachers in 1994. The teachers' salaries were already a major burden to bear in Basic Education expenditure even before the 1994 crisis. For instance, teachers' salaries alone in the 1990/91 year represented 87% of total recurrent expenditure. In the 1994/95 year this rose to 97% (MOESC, 2000). The strain of teachers' salaries on the budget has been so severe that it has either undermined or even displaced other expenses within the recurrent budget. However, though teachers' salaries cause such budgetary strain, they are not in the least high enough to sustain the teachers' morale.

Teachers stated that they are also frustrated about the new curriculum. Professionals at the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) have designed the curriculum but they did not consider what the teachers would need to implement it. Moreover, lessons in Teachers' Guides and pupils' textbooks do not give enough information for teachers and pupils. For instance, Units Eight and Nine of the Teachers' Guides and pupils' textbooks for Standard Six Social Studies do not contain a detailed explanation of the lessons. Therefore, any teacher who is not knowledgeable in the subject is unable to cope, as there are no libraries for reference in schools. Moreover, teachers do not understand the methodology they are supposed to follow.

Kunjje and Stuart's studies revealed that teachers had difficulties in planning and delivering English lessons under the new curriculum because it was based on 'communicative methods' which qualified teachers had not been trained to teach (Kunjje and Stuart, 1999: 164). This was found to be the case in all schools. The Deputy Director at the MIE, Wise Chauluka took the view that the source of the problem lay in a lack of orientation by teachers and funding from the government. Kadyoma who works at the Gender Unit at MIE also shared the same views when he emphasised that:

The problems which the teachers are facing when teaching, are because of a lack of orientation in the new curriculum. The MIE realise that this is a contributory
factor. However, the stumbling block for orientating teachers is a lack of funds (Kadyoma, MIE, Zomba).

Wise Chauluka explained that teachers were not given an in-service course prior to the official introduction of the new instructional materials. Kadyoma also mentioned that in Teachers Training Colleges (TTCs) teachers are not being taught properly, a view which was confirmed by primary school teachers interviewed in the three areas. Teachers indicated that when they go to TTCs they are taught general methodologies in teaching but not how to specialise in a specific subject. Yet, when they return to their schools they are expected to be able to teach any subject. The untrained teachers who are struggling to teach many subjects without proper training presented this argument. Teachers take the view that the SMCEQ project by GABLE will not be effective unless teachers’ problems in schools are solved throughout Malawi. They stated that:

We are forced to teach subjects, the contents of which we do not know. For example, some teachers dropped particular subjects at Secondary Schools or failed exams in those subjects, but in primary schools we are forced to teach subjects with which we are not familiar. As a result, we do not teach effectively. We also have problems with the lesson plans. Sometimes we have to plan three or five subjects for one day. By the time we are planning a fifth subject, we will have forgotten what we planned to teach in other subjects (Teachers, School K1).

Teachers said that they just try to memorise a lesson and remember as much information as they can during teaching, which they find difficult. I observed teachers teaching and sometimes they would forget what they were teaching. They paused and then checked with their teaching guides and textbooks.

Some argue that teachers are not familiar with certain subjects, yet teachers' guides do not always provide enough information. Sometimes in teaching guides, the Ministry of Education suggests books from which teachers can get more information. However,
such books are not available to teachers because schools have no libraries. In addition, the school may be situated far from a shopping centre. For instance, School K1 is six kilometres from the shopping centre. As a result, teachers teach with the little knowledge they have. A Standard Seven teacher at School K1 complained that the Social Studies teaching guide was very similar to the pupils' textbooks. This meant that there was not enough content in a teacher's guide with which to teach. Teachers are advised to be resourceful. Teachers said that:

When we complain, they tell us to be resourceful. But how can teachers be resourceful when there are no libraries in schools? (Teachers, School K1).

I observed that indeed teachers' guides did not provide enough information for teachers. It should be added that most of these teachers are also untrained and therefore without adequate knowledge they find it hard to handle the teaching process. Another problem affecting teachers was time wastage in classrooms. Namuddu's studies in Uganda revealed that more than 60% of the teaching time was taken up by pupils completing exercises copied from either the blackboard or the textbook (Namuddu, 1991: 59). This practice is typical of schools researched in the three areas.

Teachers spent considerable time writing notes on the blackboard. This might be due to the result of teachers' lack of expertise in classrooms. Consequently, most pupils could not remember what they had learnt the previous day. In School Z in the North, the teacher was angry because none of the pupils could remember what they copied on the blackboard. The teacher told them: “you wrote notes yesterday but your notes are useless”. Teachers did not bother either with what the pupils were doing while the teachers were writing notes on the blackboard. I observed that some pupils were standing outside the classroom while the teacher was busy writing on the blackboard, some pupils walked around the classroom and the teacher just ignored them. In one incident the teacher asked a pupil to read a textbook whilst he was writing on the board. However, some pupils were leaning on top of desks and chatting. Sometimes teachers
were not eager to go to classrooms as soon as the bell rang and wasted time as shown by this example of a teacher’s incompetence in a school in the North.

After break the bell rings at 11.00. Pupils are making a lot of noise in a classroom while waiting for the teacher. Some pupils go outside and most pupils are not sitting at their desks. Five minutes have passed before they see the teacher coming and they rush into the classroom. Some pupils are still outside and the teacher asks, “have you not heard the bell?” Then the teacher just walks into the classroom and does not talk to the pupils, goes straight onto the blackboard and writes today’s lesson while pupils are talking, some lying on the desks. Some pupils enter the classroom eight minutes after the bell rang. The teacher cautions latecomers and continues writing on the board for 30 minutes. At some point the teacher asks one of the pupils to go and draw a diagram on a blackboard. Then without warning he goes out and pupils make a noise. The teacher has been out of the classroom for ten minutes and pupils are restless, lying on desks. The bell rings, end of the lesson and the teacher has not returned yet. Some pupils walk out of the class (Classroom Observations, School Z).

Teachers’ behaviour in classrooms confirmed that much less time is spent on active school teaching compared to the time spent in writing on the blackboard, and pupils copying exercises from the blackboards. Schoolteachers are also not aware of the time which is wasted in coming late for classes and the attentiveness and interest of pupils. At School K1, for instance, both teachers and pupils were not conscious about time. Teachers would linger outside for 15 minutes after the bell rang for classes and most pupils were late for school in the mornings and after break times.

Teachers’ behaviour at schools was also seen to have contributed to drop-out rates, especially for pupils in lower classes. I interviewed young boys and girls from the age of seven years who were not at school. A girl who dropped out in Standard Two at the age of eight said that she dropped out because she just did not want to go to school. When I pressed on to find out why she is not keen in going to school, she said that:
Teachers liked beating me in the classroom when I spoke to friends in class. I do not know why the teacher beat me when I was talking to friends (A Drop-out, Dedza).

One parent argued that she brought clothes and notebooks but her daughter and son did not want to go to school. Her daughter was eight years old and had attended school for only one month. When I asked why they refused to go to school they confided in me that: "we fear teachers because they beat us at school". The majority of pupils who had dropped out and also those in schools shared this explanation.

A number of drop-outs spoke about their experiences of being beaten at school by harsh teachers. Since they are young, these children did not understand why they were given punishment. Furthermore, because their parents had themselves had little schooling, they could not advise. This is a contributory factor to the lack of interest in schooling. Serious issues in connection with teachers' attitudes and behaviour in schools were also identified such as asking school girls for sexual relationships. The next section explores teachers' behaviour towards girl pupils.

Teacher-Pupil Relationships

Studies reveal that there is evidence of sexual harassment in schools. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) quoted Hallam (1994) by pointing out that "while the many social and economic constraints on women obtaining an education in Africa are the subject of much concern, the issue of sexual violence and aggravation has been largely neglected" (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 34). At the present time sexual harassment in schools is increasingly been discussed because of the AIDS crisis which is affecting both pupils and teachers. As discussed in Chapter One, NIPILAR/UNICEF (1999) noted that within the school, male teachers and students sexually harass female students. Studies conducted in Malawi in 1998 by Robb et al. reveal that teachers and schoolboys propositioned girls.
Kadzamira mentioned that “there is widespread perception that male teachers subject female pupils to sexual harassment although there is not much evidence that this is widespread in practice” (Kadzamira, 1998b: 4). In the field it was evident that teachers do ask girls for sexual relationships. Girls at School G in Dedza District mentioned that male teachers tried to involve themselves with girls in school. One pupil recounted how her classroom teacher targeted her and this I confirmed with the teacher concerned. She mentioned how the teacher’s attitude was affecting her schooling. In fact she failed her first term exams because of the teacher who kept pester her for a relationship. When I asked her about the teachers’ attitudes towards her in class, this is what she narrated:

In Standard Six, a teacher wrote a letter asking for a relationship with me and I just put it back on his desk. Then he gave the letter to a boy pupil to pass it on to me. The teacher told me that he wanted a reply quickly because there was a net ball game during the weekend and I just tore the letter. Then we became enemies. As a result, he did not mark my Standard Six final exams. I reported him to the headteacher but the headteacher did not take any action. However, I passed my Standard Six exams and I moved to Standard Seven. Our current teacher in Standard Seven is an alcoholic. One day he asked me to go and drink beer with him in the village. I told him, I am still at school, and I cannot. Another teacher left the school because he impregnated a girl in Standard Six (Standard 7 Pupil, School G).

A former pupil of School G came looking for me in one of the villages where I was conducting interviews. She told me that when she heard that I was at the school, she was interested in sharing her views about one of the factors which affects girls’ schooling. She felt the main factor contributing to girls’ dropping out of school was teacher-pupil relationships. She said that she was at School G in 1994.

The big factor was that of teachers asking girls for sexual relationships. The headteacher (who is still at the school) also asked girls for relationships. If a girl refused, the headteacher reacted badly. He would come in the class
and despised girls, telling us that if we were tired of school we should just leave and get married. Sometimes he would refuse to teach. Instead, he gave us punishments (Former Pupil, School G).

She went on to say:

Even now, the headteacher and other teachers ask girls for relationships. Standard Six, Seven and Eight are targeted by the headteacher (Former Pupil, School G).

Other girls at the school, and parents confirmed their awareness of teacher-pupil relationships. In addition, girls complained that boys at school also asked girls for relationships. A Standard Seven pupil pointed out that some pupils in her class were engaged in relationships with boys at school. This issue is complex because it makes it difficult for girls to report such incidences to teachers who are also involved in relationships. For instance, when girl pupils at School G told me about a teacher who was always asking them for a relationship, I went to the headteacher to inquire about a teacher’s behaviour towards girls in school. When I approached the headteacher and brought up the subject of teacher-pupil relationships he became so subdued and he told me “while laughing” that “yes it is true but I cannot accuse other teachers because probably girls have also told you some issues concerning me”. He did not want to discuss the issue further. In fact I later gathered that the headteacher was in the forefront in asking girl pupils for relationships.

The Education Secretary of the Nkhoma Synod in Dedza District told me that teacher-pupil relationships are very common not only in Dedza District but may be in other districts in the country. Indeed pupils from School K1 in Mangochi and School Z in Mzimba informed me about teacher-pupil relationships. Teachers at School K1 in Mangochi explained that parents in the villages encourage girls to have a relationship with a teacher because they see it as a privilege. A Standard One teacher at School K1 said that she observed that “girl pupils do not fear men, some want to have relationships
with teachers”. This is partly due to the *nsondo* practice and also because of the poverty issue as already discussed in this chapter.

The teacher-pupil relationship is a serious and complicated one as it contributes to dropping out of pupils from school. For instance, a Standard Seven girl pupil told me that her schooling is very unsettled as she keeps moving from one school to another because of a teacher who kept asking her for a relationship. She left School G to go to another school. However, she did not like her new school and she decided to go back to School G with the hope that a teacher would not disturb her again. While I was in the field the same teacher started asking her for a relationship. The most disappointing issue is that a teacher even threatened to fail her exams if she did not respond to his proposal.

I interviewed girls in school and teachers who confirmed the behaviour of this teacher. I called him and investigated his behaviour. He confessed and even asked me not to report him to the MOE. I further investigated the issues of teacher-pupil relationships at the District Education Offices and the MOE headquarters. I was told that the government officials are aware of teacher-pupil relationships but parents and pupils do not report the incidents to the government. It is, therefore, recommended that the MOE should take tough measures in punishing teachers who ask girls in schools for relationships. Moreover, the community (especially the illiterates) and pupils should be mobilised and encouraged to report such incidents to the government.

Girls should feel it is normal for them to be attending school in furtherance of their education without being apprehensive of being taken advantage of by teachers. UNICEF is involved in two projects of Keeping Children in School and Closing the Gender Gap which are funded by CIDA and NORAD respectively. These projects are involved in curbing the high drop-out rates and addressing problems faced by children, especially girls, i.e. the limited access to school of 6-10 year olds and inadequate and untrained teachers. Such projects should focus more on programmes to address issues
concerning teacher-pupil relationships. It should emphasise on how girl pupils can abstain and deal with relationship issues. This is also related to the Malawi government's "Why Wait Programmes". Programmes should also address factors which contribute to drop-out rates for young children, such as teachers' attitudes and behaviour at school.

Employment of untrained teachers has indeed aggravated teachers' attitudes towards pupils in the classroom and also the quality of the primary school system. The headteacher of School M2 in Dedza District, for instance, also mentioned that the teachers’ situation has worsened because of untrained teachers who lacked skills for planning lessons and teaching.

**Untrained Teachers**

As discussed in Chapter Three, the MOE recruited approximately 18,000 untrained teachers in order to cope with the influx of over a million new pupils. Most of these were given a two to three week induction course before being sent to schools along with 5000 retired teachers (Kunje and Stuart, 1999). The Ministry of Education with the support of international donors, set up a new on-the-job training programme for teachers, known as the Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) to train the unqualified temporary teachers. Every untrained teacher with a Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE) is eligible for selection into the course.

Due to the increasing pressure to produce more qualified primary teachers more quickly, Teacher Preparation Programmes (TPPs) in Malawi have undergone a number of structural changes in the last ten years, all in the direction of shortening and condensing the formal period of college based training. The TPPs have always been linked to the current Primary School Curriculum. For instance, as part of the second Educational
Development Plan 1985-95, in 1990 the curriculum of Primary Teacher Training was revised to ensure that teachers were trained to teach the new subjects (Stuart, 1999).

The MIITEP course is two years long, combining residential training in college with supervised on-the-job training and distance education. When the trainees are called from their schools for training, they go first to one of the colleges for a three-month course, finishing with an examination before returning to their schools. During the next 4-5 terms they attend seminars within their local zone, and continue to study, completing a number of assignments and supported by self-study handbooks. Their teaching, as Stuart explains, is supervised and assessed in the first instance by the headteacher and the local Primary Education Adviser. College tutors also visit them and a moderation team which includes staff from Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) and Teacher Development Unit (TDU). Finally they return to college for a month to revise and write the final exams.

The MIITEP documents show that the new course is intended to train teachers in new styles of teaching/learning more in keeping with the aims of the revised primary school curriculum. The purpose of the programme is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools by enabling unqualified teachers to undergo a training programme. MIITEP still reflects the national objectives for teacher education which includes positive attitudes towards community development, appreciation of Malawi culture and values and the desire for continual professional growth (Stuart, 1999). The Teacher Trainer’s Source Book which is published by the Teacher Development Unit as quoted by Stuart states that:

Teaching and learning need to become much more activity based and participatory in Malawi classrooms. Teachers will have to become skilful facilitators of learning. In spite of lack of resources, they must integrate subjects and address equity issues (Stuart, 1999: 4).
All untrained and trained teachers in three areas have challenged lack of teaching resources which affect their teaching. However, the Student Teacher Handbooks highlight the teachers’ new approach as follows: promote active learning; use local resources; educate pupils about population and environmental issues; be gender sensitive; teach about democracy and human rights; value practical activities; be sensitive to pupils with special needs; teach about HIV/AIDS and use local cultural capital especially in science and technology. In the field it was evident that teachers used local resources when teaching and in pupils’ activities. I also observed that teachers mixed boys and girls in practical activities. However, there was gender bias in classrooms. Teachers paid much more attention to boys than girls. Moreover, teacher-pupil interactions favoured boys more than girls. For instance, in certain subjects such as Maths and Social Science, teachers involved boys rather than girls during teaching.

Kunje and Stuart (1999) mention that people become teachers without qualifications because (a) they need work and (b) there are too few trained people to staff the ever-expanding schools. In the field almost all untrained and trained teachers mentioned that lack of employment was the main reason for going into teaching. A female teacher at School G explained that:

    I stayed a long time without work and it was just by chance that I joined teaching (Teacher, School G).

Other teachers joined teaching profession because they were unable to pursue other careers. One teacher commented that:

    When I failed to go to a nursing course I thought at least I could manage teaching. I wanted to do other courses such as Secretarial but I failed because of lack of funds (Teacher, School G).

The evidence collected through interviews also reveal that some untrained teachers never attended the two-week induction course. Instead they were posted to schools and
taught for months before proper training. When I asked a JCE female teacher about her training she said that:

I went into teaching soon after the interviews for six months without a two-week induction course. Then I went to Teachers' Training College for three months (one term) and I did five months in-service training (Teacher, School Z).

Another teacher explained her experiences of teaching without qualifications. She said that in 1997 she went straight to a school to teach a Standard One class without a two-week induction course. She only did her two-week course in March 1999. Her experiences reveal the problems which untrained teachers face in classrooms, particularly in lower classes which have many pupils. She explained that:

When I started teaching in 1997 I had difficulties with teaching especially on how to prepare lesson schemes. I also lost control because pupils were too noisy since it was a big class. I did not get much help from the headteacher either. I asked my friends for guidance but I still found it difficult. Moreover, sometimes the headteacher asked me to go to teach a Standard Five class. It is difficult for me because I am not trained and sometimes I am not sure whether I am doing the right things (Teacher, School G).

This teacher explained to me that the three months course she did later was hectic because instead of doing the course for three years, the programme had to be completed in three months. The three months were spent on learning how to teach different subjects and how to organise and plan lessons. However, teachers continued receiving their salaries. Another teacher explained that after she went for a two-week orientation course, she taught for four years before she went for a further three months course. This shows that some untrained teachers are teaching for a considerable period before actually having proper training. This, of course, has an adverse effect upon their teaching skills and pupils' schooling.
When I asked Charles Gunsaru why some teachers have never gone for a two-week orientation course, he explained that the reason for this is that in 1995 more teachers were recruited because of a shortage of teachers. Therefore, the MOE was not able to train 18,000 teachers. Moreover, the Ministry started training the Malawi Certificate of Education certificate holders. Therefore, a number of Junior Certificate of Education holders have not gone through training. When I was in the field I asked Charles Gunsaru whether women also were keen to join the MIITEP programme. He said that:

When the Ministry of Education suggested that women should possess MSCE and be employed in 1995 or earlier as a condition for entry into MIITEP course, less than 600 women were recruited. As a result the Teachers Training Colleges were filled mainly with men. Another problem was that some women dropped out of Teacher Training Colleges because of pregnancies (Charles Gunsaru, MOE).

This explanation proved to be true in the field as schools consisted mainly of male teachers. However, the headteachers at School K1, School G and School Z in the South, Central and North respectively, mentioned that the problems of teaching had indeed been aggravated by the employment of untrained teachers. Some teachers had problems with the English language and they struggled to teach certain subjects which they themselves had failed during their secondary education. There are also breakdowns in communication between teachers and pupils. The headteacher of School M2 in Dedza District mentioned some of the problems, which were affecting untrained teachers at his school. He said that:

Teachers face “classroom language”. It is not a two-way communication with pupils. Teachers do not check to see who is listening and not listening. Teachers have too many pupils under their control. Even if you are a qualified teacher you cannot teach over a hundred pupils. A lot of unqualified and temporary teachers are employed but are not paid. Some wait for six months. Also, teachers do not know how to mark pupils’ work. They do not point out a mistake - i.e. the reason for putting an “X”.
Three quarters of teachers are short-tempered because they have not been properly trained. They do not properly know a child’s problems in a classroom and the child’s other problems outside a classroom. Information on children’s behaviour such as identification of behaviour of pupils is taught at colleges, for instance, the differences between pupils who are short - tempered and those who are joking. Teachers really need to go to colleges to receive training (Headteacher, School M2, Dedza).

This headteacher confirmed my observations about the untrained teachers in classrooms. For instance, teachers did not always correct wrong spellings in pupils' notebooks. I noticed that pupils' exercise books were full of spelling mistakes which teachers did not bother to correct, and there was no revision of the exercise. Teachers' attitudes towards pupils in class are very discouraging i.e. some teachers laugh at pupils when the pupils give a wrong answer. This discourages girls from participating in classroom because boys laugh at them while making funny remarks. When I asked girl pupils at School K1 why they were not actively involved in the classroom, they told me that they were afraid of being laughed at by pupils and teachers. In addition, boys make fun of them after classes. I also observed that male teachers were biased in favour of boys - for instance, they pick mostly boys to participate in classroom discussions.

Kadzamira, (1998b), however, mentioned that in the classroom, there is no difference between female and male teachers in their perceptions of girls’ performance. Both have low expectations from girls. Studies also reveal that gender biases in the classroom contribute to female drop-out (Kadyoma, 1998). In this study it was seen that girls at School Z in the North are conscious of this kind of attitude to them in class. When I asked what were teacher’s attitudes towards girl pupils in class they said that:

- Teachers like boys.
  Q. In what way?
- They like to pick boys to answer questions more than girls (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).
When asked what they thought the school could do to help girls stay in school they said that:

Teachers should not like boys only but they should also like girls in class (Pupils, School Z).

Girls were particularly referring to male teachers who involve girls in all kinds of work at school rather than boys. For instance, girls in senior classes at School Z are expected to sweep the classroom every morning and also to smear the mud floors twice a week. A Standard Seven pupil mentioned that when the classroom floor has not been swept teachers ask girls to stand and they are asked why the class is dirty. If they explain the reason, teachers will beat girls while boys are watching. She commented that teachers do not do the same to boys. Therefore, girls also encounter problems because of teachers’ attitudes. However, teachers from all schools in three areas pointed to the problems which are affecting their teaching profession. They stated that they are not satisfied with the teaching conditions and if, at a future time they find a good paying job, they will quit teaching. Teachers added that apart from the problems of the untrained teachers, quality education has been disturbed by the new curriculum.

It is evident that untrained teachers from all three areas are finding it hard to teach without proper training. This problem has been aggravated by a lack of teaching and learning materials and supervision. The Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) (1991) states that the Teacher Development Unit (TDU) was set up by the MOE to develop nation-wide systems of teacher support at school level and for clusters of schools, each to be served by a Teacher Development Centre. Under the Malawi School Support Systems Programme (MSSSP), the Primary School Advisers (PEAs) and headteachers are expected to be able to operate a comprehensive system of continuing professional development for teachers. PEAs are prepared for supervision and inspection of schools to improve the quality of learning.
However, untrained teachers are not being supervised regularly by the headteachers and PEAs. Whilst in the field headteachers were busy with other duties and some taught in classrooms. Therefore, teachers were not supervised, as they should be. Charles Gunsaru agreed that one of the main problems affecting MIITEP programme is a lack of supervision by headteachers. He explained that headteachers do not supervise untrained teachers and that they argue that even if they do they would not receive extra pay from the government. He also argued that PEAs were unable to go to schools frequently because of a lack of transport. Now PEAs have motorbikes which were bought through the World Bank. Indeed in the field I noted that PEAs had motorbikes.

This study shows that despite resource constraints, schoolteachers were willing to show commitment to their work and improve their teaching skills once they get support from the government. In the field, teachers frequently asked me to make recommendations to the government and the donor agencies for support.

**Curriculum**

The ‘universal’ primary education, as Hawes notes, adds an entirely new dimension to the primary school curriculum and its planning. In the first place, if education is for all, it is for all conditions and all abilities (Hawes, 1979: 11). The revised primary school curriculum which was first launched in 1992 in Malawi has considered the contribution of the language of instruction, religion and other traditional activities to inequities in school participation (MOESC, 2000). Primary school instruction in Standards One to Four takes in the mother tongue of the school’s locality. Pupils switch to English as a specific discipline, in Standard Five. Religious Education covers all the three major religions in Malawi: Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religions. Thus the new curriculum includes Islam and Traditional Religions. In contrast, the old curriculum covered only Bible Knowledge and omitted other religions.
In regard to curriculum development, Hawes (1979), states that a growing awareness can be traced of the need to understand who wants what kind of change, what current conditions are and what resources are actually available before developing the new curriculum. The curriculum planners display new ideas about languages of instruction, a new urgency in finding out about community needs and increased commitment to the concept of basic education.

According to Charles Gunsaru, the primary objective of the current curriculum is to encourage pupils to complete their education in order to achieve self-employment. He points out that in 1994, the government realised that the economy of the country was small. Therefore, the curriculum aimed at educating people to engage in commercially reliable farming practices or any other such form of self-employment. Such a policy is particularly relevant to those areas where the majority depend on agriculture. Thus if people are encouraged and supported in gaining self-employment, it provides an incentive for pupils to complete their schooling.

The new curriculum also covers population education and AIDS prevention, but according to the Malawi government, the Malawi Institute of Education stated that the AIDS prevention curriculum needs to focus more broadly than just on the use of the condom. Despite the fact that sensitive topics such as AIDS or sex education are addressed, teachers are reticent (for religious, personal or cultural reasons) or unable to teach these topics effectively. “Limited resources in the whole educational system and generally low levels of competence of teachers make conformity to the curriculum and its set standards extremely difficult” (MOESC/UNICEF, 1998: 36).

Kunje and Stuart’s study revealed that the untrained teachers, particularly, have problems with the new curriculum. They stated that the untrained teachers tried to introduce and conclude lessons appropriately but some found these skills difficult, as

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75 The Principal Secretary for Secondary and Higher Education.
well as the timing of them. In many cases they found problems in teaching in English especially in using an appropriate level of language. Moreover, teaching and learning resources were a huge problem, including a lack of textbooks and teachers’ guides, few materials to make visual aids and lack of practical experience in doing so (Kunje and Stuart, 1999: 161).

In the field it was seen that untrained teachers face a number of problems with the new curriculum. Teachers at School K1 and School G complained that the new curriculum is too advanced for pupils, especially English for Standard One and Two. For instance, the English lesson on page 16 for Standard One might be confusing and difficult for pupils who have never been to a pre-school. A female teacher at School K1 explained that she found an English textbook too advanced for Standard One pupils who have come straight from the village. She argued that:

Textbooks are too advanced for pupils who have come straight from villages without going through a pre-school. Textbooks and teachers’ guides are designed for pupils who have gone to a pre-school first and not from villages. It is prepared for a pre-school pupil and not for a child who comes from a vernacular language (Teacher, School K1).

Teachers also said that they find it difficult to teach using the teachers’ guides (English Standard One and Two). Teachers at School G and School K1 pointed out that they are frustrated because classes are also too big with over 150 pupils. They cannot control the whole class. Some of the work set for a class period takes longer to complete. The large class sizes require teachers to organise work in-groups which takes time and makes that problem worse.

We have to take pupils outside in order to work in groups; therefore, time is wasted in doing so. Some contents are too advanced and lessons are improperly structured. This makes it difficult to teach and confuses pupils. This is
very difficult for pupils in rural areas who are not familiar with the English language (Teacher, School K1).

Indeed textbooks and teacher’s guides are too advanced for pupils. I noted that the Teachers’ Guide for Standard One English contain lessons which are not simplified and are too advanced for pupils who have never been to a pre-school. Some lessons contain a number of activities which required more time for teachers. I also observed at School K1 that teachers wasted time in trying to organise pupils in-groups outside the classroom. The whole process would take ten minutes because of larger classes.

The headteacher of School M2 in Dedza commented that the new curriculum is also not up to standard. Some lessons teach issues concerning initiation ceremonies. Hawes (1979) raises important issues regarding curriculum development. Questions such as whether education should preserve tradition or encourage change. He further states that the main concern with educationalists and planners should be with what is planned, provided and selected from the culture for the individual learners in schools.

What is being selected from the culture and transmitted to learners remains the curriculum planners’ concern. Yet it becomes easy, and often less disturbing, to concentrate on whether a curriculum is working rather than whether it is appropriate (Hawes, 1979: 6).

In the field it was seen that the lesson in Social Studies Pupils’ textbook of Standard Six, Unit 12, on page 47 explains the “aspects of culture in the region”. By the end of the unit pupils are expected “to identify customs and traditions of their ethnic group and suggest ways of preserving aspects of culture of different ethnic group in their region”. The textbook narrates how different cultural practices are practised in different areas. A photograph of young girls coming out of nsondo and jando has been included in the textbook which teachers feel is irrelevant since nsondo is viewed as a practice which affects girls’ schooling (see Figure 6.10 on page 334).
Another example is of a Standard Three English textbook where there is a photograph of a *nyau*. Teachers in schools have also questioned the relevance of this photograph. In this connection, the headteacher of School M2 in Dedza pointed out that it was difficult to advise pupils not to practice *nyau* if it was mentioned in a school textbook even though it causes pupils to drop-out of school. Apparently, textbooks exclude explanation of the impact of initiation ceremonies upon pupils', especially girls' schooling. It would be more appropriate if the curriculum included the impact of sexual activities involved in *nyau* and *nsondo* ceremonies upon schooling and advise boys and girls to abstain from such behaviour until they finish schooling. The teaching of the practices of initiation ceremonies in school also affect girl pupils who feel embarrassed
as teachers narrate what happens when girls reach puberty. Girls explained that boys laugh and tease them after lessons.

When I asked pupils whether they preferred male or female teachers, most girls in all three areas desired female teachers. Girl pupils especially in the North believed that women teachers would not teach issues concerning initiation ceremonies. This is what a Standard Seven girl pupil expressed her views:

I would choose a female teacher because...take for example the issue of chinamwali, if it is a female teacher probably she would not teach this subject. I do not think the chinamwali lesson should be taught in school because boys laugh at us (Standard 7 Pupil, School Z).

The issue of chinamwali is not explained in greater depth in a Social Studies textbook for Standard Six and Seven. However, teachers told me that it is up to the teacher whether he or she wants to explain in greater detail what happens at initiation ceremonies. Teachers also confirmed that girls feel very embarrassed when such issues are discussed in a classroom.

The headteacher in Dedza also mentioned that the curriculum is shallow and lacked much information. He explained that grammar was not emphasised in the new curriculum. Therefore, he said, “at our school (School M2) we use old books to assist pupils. In old books grammar has been emphasised”. However, as already mentioned, from interviews with Wise Chauluka, the Deputy Director of MIE, I gathered that the main problem of the new curriculum is a lack of training and orientation of the teachers. Commenting on the new curriculum Chauluka explained that the new curriculum has been designed to increase the activities but a number of teachers are finding problems because of:

- Lack of qualifications
- Lack of level of competence required for teaching different subjects
- Lack of orientation
• Teachers lack a level of competence which needs skills and at TTCs methodologies are very limited (Wise Chauluka, MIE, Zomba).

Wise Chauluka suggested that there should be a system, which evaluates a level of competence of teachers, which needs continuous assessment. Commenting on English Grammar textbooks, Wise Chauluka stated that:

English textbooks have diverted from the traditional concept to a more interactive process of engaging teachers in practical activities than giving teachers facts. The lessons in the new curriculum are, therefore, activity based and include more practical activities. In addition, language can be used better in practicals (Wise Chauluka, MIE, Zomba).

Currently USAID is supporting curriculum reform and social mobilisation programmes. Under this project it is essential that reforms are introduced to ensure that the school curriculum addresses the adverse affect of initiation ceremonies upon girls’ schooling. Social mobilisation programmes should include local leaders and women initiation instructors who can work together in identifying cultural practices which continue to impinge upon pupils’ schooling. HIV/AIDS, as already discussed, also continue to pose a threat to the education system. UNFPA is involved in the incorporation of population and sexual/reproductive health issues into the curriculum. However, UNFPA should evaluate this project to see that sex education about HIV/AIDS is being taught effectively in the classroom. This study has shown that teachers are unable to teach such issues effectively because of cultural barriers.

In the field it was seen that there are also pressing issues arising from the language policy which the new government introduced in 1996. The next section explores the implications of the new policy of teaching in a mother tongue.
Language and education are highly political because they involve significant outcomes for people's lives and futures (Gegeo and Gegeo, 1995: 63). The use of mother tongues or vernacular languages as the media of instruction is not a new practice in Malawi's education system. During the colonial era, the media of instruction in the first four classes of primary school education (Sub A to Standard Two) were Chichewa (then called Chinyanja) and Chitumbuka. Chitumbuka was later removed after Chichewa was declared Malawi's national language by Banda's regime in 1968. Chichewa's role as a language of instruction at the lower levels of primary school education was maintained. As discussed in Chapter Three, in 1996 the Malawi government announced through its Ministry of Education a new language policy for primary schools. According to the new policy, mother tongues or vernacular languages would be used as the media of instruction from Standards One to Four. Beyond Standard Four, English would be the medium of instruction. It was mentioned that English would be taught in all the Standards as a subject.

Other studies, according to Gegeo and Gegeo (1995), have questioned why the minority and Third World children fail in school suggesting that an explanation may lie in how classroom organisation, discourse forms, teaching strategies, and values differ in important ways from these children's home cultures and prior experiences with language use. Several factors contribute to this question. There are disadvantages for pupils being exposed to English language, especially in junior classes. For instance, children who start schooling have little or no exposure to English language.

Children's school failure points to the differences between home and school language use, the submersion of their first language, their immersion in a restricted version of English, pedagogically inadequate and irrelevant materials and poorly trained teachers (Gegeo and Gegeo, 1995: 66).
Language problems also extend to teachers especially in rural areas. Gegeo and Gegeo (1995) rightly note that rural teachers often have poor English skills themselves. The discourse used in lessons and for classroom control is highly formulaic. Moreover, as Gummins (1984) articulates, both social and cultural factors may be more powerful than purely linguistic factors in influencing achievement (Gummins, 1984: 71).

There is evidence that pupils learn better in their mother tongue than English. According to Oxfam, “pupils learn to read and acquire other skills more quickly if they are at first taught in their mother tongue” (Oxfam, 1999a: 77). Pupils use their mother tongue consistently from a young age. It is part of their local culture and is used in their own environment.76 Moreover, the Director of Basic Education at the Ministry of Education, (Khonje), mentioned that pupils in classes one to four are supposed to be taught the substance of the subject and not the language. Therefore, the use of the local language in which teachers feel comfortable is encouraged. More importantly, as Gegeo and Gegeo suggest:

> Children should receive their initial education in their first language, and that teaching/learning patterns in the home and community could be adapted to classrooms to make education more meaningful for them (Gegeo and Gegeo, 1995: 66).

Khonje mentioned that teachers in senior classes use the vernacular languages as well because they are, for the most part, unqualified teachers who are not comfortable with English. However, Khonje argued that teachers who use a mixture of languages in senior classes simply confuse the pupils. On the other hand, in the field it was seen that pupils understood what they were being taught when teachers used a vernacular and English language. Nevertheless, teachers, especially those who are untrained, encounter a number of problems in teaching the second language because of various reasons. Children are mainly exposed to English at school. This means that the exposure at

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76 Interview with Huge Trappes-Lomax on 18th October 2000.
school is artificial and insufficient. As a result, pupils do not make complete sense of what they are being taught in English language. Learning becomes artificial for pupils because teachers never go through the reasoning process for pupils. Pupils memorise the language but they do not understand the meaning.77

Gegeo and Gegeo’s studies in the Solomon Islands found out that "rural teachers’ pedagogical strategies are primarily whole-group drill and practice with individual oral recitation, and simple worksheets. Children memorised the sing-song phrases and often recited with no apparent attention to meaning" (Gegeo and Gegeo, 1995: 66). As Williams notes, the question is whether classroom methods are appropriate to the expectations, capacities and needs of the students, and the availability of materials and other resources, and the competence of the teachers themselves. Williams’ research on bilingual literacy in Malawi noted factors which affect teaching a second language such as: teacher’s target language proficiency, appropriate materials, amount of time devoted to the language, appropriate teaching methods, degree of learner motivation, class size and provision of general amenities (Williams, 1998: 2).

Teachers’ attitudes in teaching in a second language are revealed in Williams’ findings in his research in Malawi. He found that a teacher made no attempt to clarify the differences in the meaning of the pronouns, but merely told those who committed errors to sit down, and made the whole class chant the correct response. Some teachers’ weaknesses in teaching were that there was no attempt at presenting meaning and little checking of an understanding of the text. Occasionally, the teacher aided understanding of her questions by translating them into Chichewa. Some children were asked to spell words on the board; a child who made a mistake was simply dismissed. He suggests that “the predominant impression was that the children spent too long in repetition, and that when not repeating, they were being tested rather than taught” (Williams, 1998: 11).

77 Interview with Hugh Trappes-Lomax on 18th October 2000.
Whilst teachers struggle to teach the second language, pupils also encounter problems in trying to understand and learn the language. As Williams notes “second language learning process is a process that takes repetition time over time, whether in a formal classroom setting, or an informal out-of-class setting. Moreover, the extent of learning depends in part on the duration, amount and richness of the input, i.e. what the learner hears or reads and also the type of language activities in which learners engage - e.g. repeating phrases, listening to the teacher, singing songs, writing stories and so on” (Williams, 1998: 2).

Williams’s findings reveal that pupils in Standard Three class who were tested did not know the meaning of English words despite extensive drilling with the teaching aid called the flash card. Williams adds, “the girls’ lack of response did not appear to be due to shyness, as they readily answered standards questions about themselves” (Williams, 1998: 11). Williams’s observations reveal that the predominant classroom method of teaching reading during lessons is the drilling of words and sentences through repetition. The problems of learning the second language were also aggravated because according to Williams, none of the children spoke English at home. Therefore, children did not practise the language outside classrooms.

The arguments presented by Trappes-Lomax and Williams were evident in the field. During my observations in classes in all districts, I noted that teacher-pupil communication is one-way and not true interaction. The teacher did most of the talking and got little response from pupils. When I interviewed girls at School K1 in the South, they mentioned that mixing languages was one of the factors that caused them to avoid participation. One girl in Standard Six said that she gets confused when the teacher mixes three languages when teaching. (For instance, since Mangochi consists of Yao speakers, teachers mix English, Yao and Chichewa when teaching).

This girl comes from a Lomwe ethnic group and her mother tongue is different from Yao and Chichewa. In addition, to an English language problem, Yao confuses her
because she is not familiar with the language. Pupils who speak Yao also stated that they find English hard to understand. Some Chichewa words are also difficult for them. This confirmed my observations in classrooms. For example, a teacher would teach a lesson in English, but when he asked questions afterwards, pupils would not know the answers, and some would answer back in the Yao language.

The problem of language is acute in lower classes in Mangochi. For instance, I observed that in Standard One, pupils were confused with four languages which are Yao, Chichewa, English and Arabic. Arabic was being taught in a madrassa class. When I spoke to a teacher in Standard Three she agreed with my observations. In addition, she thinks that madrassa classes should be introduced in Standard Three and not to pupils in Standard One. Pupils in Standard Four said that they found difficulties in reading Chichewa because of language problems and that they are more comfortable with their own mother tongue. Central Region is a Chichewa dominated region; therefore, teachers use Chichewa with English in the classroom. In the North, however, teachers mostly use Tumbuka when teaching. Pupils in both regions expressed dissatisfaction with dual language teaching because it confuses them during exams. Exams are set in English and there is no teacher to interpret into a local language. Since questions are multiple choice they just do guess work.

This study shows that there are constraints arising from the mother tongue language policy. However, as Trappes-Lomax suggests, experiences in Tanzania indicate that teaching in a mother tongue was a success at primary school level because Swahili\textsuperscript{78} is an indigenous language. Educational planners in Malawi should therefore invent means of coping with the negative consequences of teaching in a mother tongue. Aid agencies such as the World Bank, GTZ and Plan International are supporting programmes for teacher training; for instance, training of unqualified teachers and support for teacher training of new teachers in Malawi. Such agencies should create programmes to train

\textsuperscript{78} Swahili is not the mother tongue of most Tanzanians; it is however, an African language to which all Tanzanians are exposed on a daily basis.
teachers to be bilingual specialists, to cope with the need to interpret the mother tongue and to train pupils in examination technique and in reading and answering multiple choice questions.

Untrained teachers are unable to cope with multiple languages and, therefore, the education system suffers linguistically and educationally. The aid agencies and the government should create proficiency in English language and train teachers to be conscious of the need to have understanding of the subject matter so that they can explain themes in English and the mother tongue. In this connection, the government should also employ more specialist teachers and accept the reality of bilingual teaching.

As education suffers from dual language teaching, the system is indefensible in the long term if teaching in the mother tongue is discouraged. As Trappes-Lomax suggests, the investment of time and resources in English language teaching may be to the detriment of other parts of the curriculum and of limited practical benefit to the large numbers of children who do not go on from primary to secondary school. Moreover, the whole system may disadvantage girls because boys are more likely to have opportunities later to use English language in the formal employment sector. Girls’ prospects are minimal due to dropping out of school and the low selection process rate for admission to secondary schools in Malawi. This is not an argument against teaching of English. However, there is a need to address the question of how language policy can also influence girls’ schooling. The next section explores the impact of examinations upon pupils’ schooling.

**Examinations**

The achievements of quality education can be measured by a number of pupils in primary school who are passing examinations and also selected to secondary schools. Secondary education in Malawi runs for four years; two years in junior secondary and
two years in senior secondary. At the end of primary education in Standard Eight, pupils sit for the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) which determines the selection of pupils for secondary education. This results in only 15% of the Primary School leavers having access to secondary school education.

Until 1998, secondary education in Malawi was offered through conventional secondary schools and Distance Education Centres (DECs). In 1999 a new policy directive converted all DECs into Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), creating a unified system of secondary education. As a result of this new policy initiative, the government has now assumed more responsibility over the CDSSs than before. This has consequently put considerable financial pressure on the government.

Under the new unified system, there are six types of secondary schools namely: government day and boarding schools which are operated and funded directly by the government through treasury via Education Division Offices. Grant aided schools are operated by church organisations with government funding through monthly grants to their day to day running costs and teachers’ salaries. Tuition and boarding fees cumulatively are much higher than the Government Schools. Community Day Secondary Schools are mostly initiated and financed by the school committees but receive some government funding to cater for day to day running costs and for teacher and support staff salaries. Other secondary schools are Private, Designated and Distance Education Schools. According to 1997 secondary school census, there are 624 secondary education institutions in Malawi. This figure represents both government and private institutions - at least those registered.

The secondary education in Malawi lasts four years and includes two cycles each lasting two years. The Junior cycle comprises Form 1 and 2. At the end of this cycle students sit for a Junior Certificate Examination (JCE). The senior cycle comprises Forms 3 and 4. At the end of the cycle (Form 4) students sit for the Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE). All the examinations are prepared, administered and processed.
by the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) contracting teachers for some of the activities.

The number of pupils enrolling in secondary schools is extremely low for Malawi in comparison with other African countries (Kadzamira, 1998a). The number of places available on conventional secondary schools are very limited and as a result most children in Malawi never attend secondary school. Transition rates from primary to government assisted secondary schools have remained below 15% of those who passed the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) for the past decade.

Table 6.16: Transition Rates to Government Assisted Secondary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Transition Rate (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980/1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985/6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990/1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991/2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992/3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993/4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As Kadzamira (1998a) notes, the transition rates are higher for girls because girls are selected into secondary school with lower-cut-off scores than boys. As a result, the proportion of girls in Form 1 is higher than the proportion of girls in Standard Eight in the previous year. However, at school level the picture is different. For instance, in some schools such as School K1 in Mangochi District both boys and girls were not
selected for secondary schools from 1990 to 1997. At School Z in Mzimba District girls were not selected until 1997.

Although enrolment in conventional secondary schools has grown from approximately 18,000 students in 1980/1 to 43,928 students in 1997, the expansion of secondary schools has not been able to meet the social demand for secondary education. Gender disparities in enrolment rates are also pronounced at secondary level. Table 6.17 shows that enrolment for boys is higher than girls at all levels. Several reasons account for lower enrolment of girls.

Table 6.17: Government Secondary Schools-Enrolment by Gender, Form and by Division 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>1 B</th>
<th>1 G</th>
<th>2 B</th>
<th>2 G</th>
<th>3 B</th>
<th>3 G</th>
<th>4 B</th>
<th>4 G</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>1,379</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1,403</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>5,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central East</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>3,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>1,634</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>6,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South east</td>
<td>1,216</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>1,782</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>1,209</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>4,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South west</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>4,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire Highlands</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>1,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,685</td>
<td>4,328</td>
<td>6,706</td>
<td>4,225</td>
<td>6,772</td>
<td>4,245</td>
<td>6,710</td>
<td>4,254</td>
<td>26,876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Girls have consistently scored lower marks on the PLSCE which has greatly reduced the chances over the years of getting their fair share of secondary education. In addition, drop-out rates for girls in primary schools are higher so that by the end of primary school there are fewer girls than boys. Indeed, as already mentioned, this study reveals that girls reaching Standard Eight are much fewer than boys especially in Mangochi and Dedza districts.
One of the factors affecting girls' schooling is the selection process to secondary schools. Pupils get discouraged by not being selected for secondary schooling. Parents in all districts expressed this view. School records of pass rates for the PSLCE; taken at the end of primary school, reveal gender disparities. Girls have consistently had lower pass rates than boys. Kadzamira (1998a) cites that Bradbury (1991) noted that research evidence consistently shows poorer performance for girls in all subjects examined.

Teachers in all schools I surveyed expressed their disappointment with the passing rate and selection process of pupils in their schools for secondary schooling. Records in all schools revealed that a few pupils were selected to secondary schools thus dating back from 1990. Examination results show that few girls pass the exams and very few are selected to secondary schools. Since 1990 to 1998 at School Z in the North only five boys and three girls have been selected to secondary schools. At School G, 19 boys and 10 girls have been selected since 1990. School K1 shows the lowest number of only one girl and two boys. More pupils have been selected to secondary schools at School G as compared to School Z and School K1, probably because more pupils enrolled at School G than in the two other schools.

Figures for the pass rate show that more girls fail than boys. When parents in the North were asked about the issues concerning exams, they explained that it was just recently that a few girls were selected to secondary schools. Parents feel that pupils get discouraged and hence they drop-out. They do not see the significance of schooling. Parents from the North also commented that in their area many more boys are selected to secondary schools than girls.
Table 6.18: Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations at School Z

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Records 1990-1998, School Z

Table 6.19: Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations at School G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Records 1990-1998 (Figures for pupils who sat for examinations and those who passed were not available at school).
In the field, teachers have also identified a number of reasons for the poor performance of pupils not only in Standard Eight but in the lower classes as well. A major contributory factor is the practice of advancing pupils to a higher class without them attaining the pass mark for their previous class. For instance, Standard One classes tend to be over enrolled. The result is that at the end of the school year pupils who have failed are admitted to Standard Two to make space for new enrolled in Standard One. In this connection, Standard Seven teacher at School K1 also explains that in 1998 pupils who failed in Standard Six were nevertheless admitted to Standard Seven in order to achieve the enrolment targets arbitrary determined by the headteacher in the hope of impressing the District Education Officer.

An associated factor is the custom of parents whose children have failed to confront their teachers to dispute their exams results with their teachers. As a result, the headteacher would agree with their demands and allow their children to move up a class. The end result is that when pupils reach Standard Eight they have minimal prospects of passing the government examinations.
This study has shown that girls' schooling is partly affected because of the selection process into secondary schools. Parents are discouraged because they are not sure whether their children will be given a chance to proceed to secondary schools. Girls are also discouraged as they see their friends who were not selected into secondary schools not progressing in villages. Parents recommended that the government should select more girls into secondary schools so that other girls should be encouraged to complete their schooling. The government should indeed evaluate schools such as School K1 in the South and School Z in the North which have had a history of low selection for pupils to secondary schools. Increasing the numbers of pupils, especially girls, to secondary schools will encourage girls to complete their schooling.

Apart from pupils' discouragement due to selection process into secondary schools, there were also serious problems affecting girls' schooling such as lack of job opportunities especially in rural areas and scarcity of role models.

**Job Opportunities and Role Models**

Formal education, as Odaga and Heneveld (1995) noted, has historically been linked to employment opportunities in the labour market, particularly in the civil service (quoted from UNICEF, 1992). Families tend to judge the value of education by the returns from the labour market. It was indicated that "the historical exclusion of girls from education and the formal labour market made families cautious about investing in the formal education of boys because they will always be better placed to explore formal labour market opportunities" (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995: 21).

In the field, it was seen that the link between education and employment was a driving force in educating children. However, in all three areas of research it was evident that parents were discouraged from sending their children to school because of a scarcity of job opportunities in urban and rural areas. Moreover, all villages, which were surveyed,
are underdeveloped and there are no social services. In this regard, girls and boys who have completed their primary and secondary education are unable to work in their villages. Parents and village headmen, therefore, complained about a lack of role models in the villages and a lack of employment. This discourages girls and boys in school.

One of the most significant determinants of education quality for girls is the presence of a female teacher (Oxfam, 1999a). Studies conducted in Malawi by Robb et al. found out that a lack of female teachers and female role models affected girls’ participation in school. In the rural areas there are very few female teachers, causing a real void in providing female role models for girls in the school (Robb et al., 1998: 11). In the field, it was seen that there are variations in the number of female teachers in schools in the North, Central and Southern Regions. Some schools had more female teachers as compared to others. However, in all schools which were surveyed, there were more male teachers than female. For instance, at School Z there are four female and ten male teachers. At School G there are four female and six male teachers and School K1 had three female and five male teachers (see Table 6.21).

Table 6.21: Number of Teachers at School Z, School G and School K1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Qualified</th>
<th>Unqualified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Z</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School G</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School K1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Gathered from Schools.

As already mentioned, parents of girls in school suggested that girls in their areas do not go to school because of a lack of role models. One parent, FN, went on to say that people like me, the researcher, are scarce. If pupils see role models like me they will
work hard in school. FN added that in her village, she has a daughter who finished her Form Four ("O" levels) but just stays at home. She added:

Therefore, other children get discouraged when they see someone like my daughter who reached Form Four and yet she is doing nothing in the village (Focus Group, Mangochi).

Parents in all three districts complained that they have children at home without jobs. Parents in Dedza District said that:

There are no job opportunities in the villages and may be this is the reason why pupils are discouraged in their education. Few pupils reach Form 4, but remain at home because they cannot get jobs in towns. As a result there are no role models in the villages (Focus Group, Dedza).

In the field, it was seen that non-agricultural activities\(^\text{79}\) were popular among both adults and the drop-outs from school. As indicated by Tellegen, in Sub-Saharan Africa the vast majority of non-agricultural activities are located in rural areas and undertaken by farming households. Many non-agricultural activities require little investment or schooling. As a consequence, almost every adult can start a small business and generate some money (Tellegen, 1997: 2-3). A female teacher from another school, near the lake in Mangochi, told me that children in her area do not go to school because of the fishing industry at the lake. I also interviewed young boys at the lake shore area in Mangochi who were not in school. When I asked them why they were not in school they told me that they help their father in his fishing business at the lake and that they were not keen to go to school.

Another boy explained that he makes K200.00 a day, which is about K1400 a week in his fishing business. This is in comparison to a qualified teacher's salary of K1821 per

\(^{79}\) Non-agricultural activities are defined as all income-generating activities of rural households through self-employment outside the agricultural sector (see Tellegen, 1997: 3).
month. Teachers explained to me that parents do not encourage their children to go to school because they feel it is a waste of time. This supports Tellegen’s studies in Malawi in which she found out that non-agricultural activities generate the highest average incomes followed by wage labour and farming.

Households involved in non-agricultural activities generate significantly higher total household incomes compared to households not involved in these activities (Tellegen, 1997: 153). I also observed that teachers were engaged in other small income generating activities. One teacher in the North is using one room of his house that was funded by the MASAF and built by the community as a grocery where he sells soap, sugar, drinks and other foodstuff after school. In Mangochi some teachers were involved in buying flue cured tobacco from the farmers and selling it at a trading centre. Teachers explained to me that their salaries are too small and they cannot survive on them. They also condemned the government for not allowing teachers to teach pupils privately after school hours. However, in urban areas teachers still teach pupils privately.

Lack of jobs for pupils, especially for girls who complete schooling is a major setback for communities and pupils. Education is seen as a means of securing children for future employment. Therefore, if there are no jobs in rural and urban areas for pupils who have completed their education, parents and pupils in schools become discouraged. Parents suggested that the government should create more jobs for girls in towns.

As already discussed in Chapter Five, all the villages surveyed were under-developed and there were no jobs for boys and girls who have finished schooling. Therefore, in addition to accessing children to school, the government should come up with strategic schemes of boys and girls which can be useful in their communities and environment. Support for rural development would be appropriate in ensuring that after education pupils can find something useful to pursue in their villages.
SUMMARY

The foregoing has suggested that there are a number of factors, which continue to impact upon enrolment, participation and retention in schooling in Mangochi, Dedza and Mzimba Districts. Constraints on pupils', especially girls' schooling are related to socio-cultural, economic and educational factors. However, it has been seen that the extent to which girls are affected by these factors varies in each district. One of the main hindrances to girls' education is the cultural practice of nsondo in Mangochi and of the nyau ritual in Dedza District. It has been noted that the nsondo initiation ceremony for girls at the age of 6-10 years is the cause of a high drop-out in primary schools in Mangochi.

Figures at the district level and school level show that few girls complete their primary school education. These figures are considerably lower as the girls progress to Standards Six, Seven and Eight. Headteachers, pupils, parents, community development workers and at least one Primary Education Adviser pointed out that the nsondo practice is the main cause of drop-out. Yet it was seen that the nsondo ceremony remains an acceptable practice among the chiefs and in the communities whose people perceive it as providing a strong identity for a Yao girl.

Whilst the Yao Christians are encouraged to remove some aspects of sexual training which are unacceptable to the churches, the Yao Muslims condone all aspects of the nsondo ceremony. When pupils were asked how families and the community could help girls stay in school, most of the girl pupils said that the communities should not encourage girls to indulge in early sexual relationships and to pressurise pupils to get married.

This research undertaken in this study confirms the arguments as presented in Chapter Three that educational attainments differ in each district in Malawi partly because of religious influences and the roles which the missionaries played in the original
establishment of schools in villages. In areas where Christian missionaries were denied opportunities of establishing schools, such as Mangochi District, which is now Muslim-dominated, Muslims still lag behind all other religions groups with regard to participation in western education. As discussed in Chapter Two, part of this antipathy to a western system of education was clearly seen in the provision made within the school curriculum at all levels for the teaching of religious education. In the past, at primary level, three periods per week were set aside for a subject called Religious Education. The syllabus followed a Christian approach and content. The new curriculum has now been revised and includes Islam in Religious Education.

It is also evident, as discussed in Chapter Three, that districts in the North where Scottish Missionaries established schools, have higher enrolment rates and retention of girls and boys than districts in the Central and Southern regions. Findings reveal that communities are now aware of the importance of educating girls. But long-standing cultural practices, underdeveloped villages and educational practices hinder the enrolment and particularly retention of girls in schools. Even though enrolment figures increased after the introduction of free primary education, drop-out rates and irregular attendances continued to be higher. This may be attributed to many of the factors discussed in this chapter.

Economic constraints indeed affects pupils' schooling. Parents in all three areas have mentioned poverty as one of the hindrances to girls' access to and retention in schools in all three districts. The communities in districts acknowledge the importance of education for both boys and girls but parents are unable to provide educational materials, clothes and other basic needs for their children. Lack of employment and under development in the villages is a hindrance to advancement of education for both boys and girls. As anticipated in Chapter One and Three, macro-economic issues such as the quality of schools, overcrowding in younger classes and, indeed, untrained inadequate teachers and under-resourced classrooms have all contributed to repetition and drop-out rates.
Teachers and Primary Education Advisers have also challenged educational policies in all three districts. For instance, the free primary education, language and curriculum policies have raised questions about their impact on the quality of education and access to schooling, particularly in regard to girls. Headteachers hold the view that the result of free primary education has been an increase in enrolment of both girls and boys but the retention of pupils in schools still remains a problem. They maintain that free primary education has exacerbated the pre-existing problems causing the poor quality of education in all schools in Malawi.

It was noted that the policy of introducing the pupils’ mother tongue in teaching Standards 1 to 4 has been challenged because it means that the government has to print textbooks in the mother tongue in each district. At the moment teachers are using teaching guides which are in the Chichewa language. Chichewa has been a national language for over 30 years. Curriculum content as described in Chapter Three has been challenged by teachers who feel that its content is not relevant to the living conditions of pupils. Also some of the illustrations seem at least to condone cultural practices such as nyau and nsondo, which have an adverse affect on girls’ education.

Teachers and pupils suggested that there is a need to introduce new policies, aimed at helping girls to stay in school. Pupils in schools have said that parents should take a role in encouraging their daughters to go to school instead of encouraging them to get married. They also mentioned that the government should provide adequate learning materials, especially notebooks. They also suggested that the government should provide food during the hungry months of January to March.

Throughout the period of research, teachers were eager to suggest remedies for the retention of girls in their school. It has been seen that these include parental support; women’s organisations acting as support; and female only classes. Teachers suggested that because a number of parents are illiterate, it is difficult to make pupils realise the importance of education. During my survey, I assessed adult literacy classes in three
areas. But the community workers mentioned that adult classes have their own problems and parents tend to drop-out of classes for various reasons. There were very few adults who were attending adult literacy classes during my survey.

In conclusion, therefore, the research findings, although quite pessimistic in relation to the possibilities of girls’ enrolment, participation in and retention within schooling, do also indicate a high commitment to the education of girls by their teachers. The following chapter will address this complex relationship between declining school attendance and the possibilities for changing the situation found in Malawi. Chapter Seven also draws conclusions with regard to the contribution of the study to the broader understanding of the relationship between the formulation of EFA policy at the global level, the national level and its achievements and practice at the local level.
CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

This study explored and examined factors which have impacted upon girls’ schooling in Malawi. It has been seen that since 1994 there have been new developments in educational policy in the form of the free primary education (FPE) initiative. This is viewed as a means of enabling children, in particular girls, to enter education as a process of alleviating poverty in Malawi. Through qualitative research, this study examined the impact of socio-political forces as well as school practices, and especially the rates of participation and retention of girls’ at school in the context of free primary education in Malawi. This study argues that such a policy stands little chance of success in the face of economic forces, as well as cultural, religious and educational practices.

The constraints on girls’ schooling include economic, socio-cultural and educational. These, it is argued, have a profound influence on girls’ retention rates in school. The research has been concerned with discovering whether or not the interest shown in girls’ education (FPE and EFA) in the 1990s has had an impact on access and retention of pupils, especially girls in primary schools. It is important to conclude by examining the wider situation in which these country-specific factors have been analysed.

Exploring Education for All Achievements at the Global Level

The entry into the new century has been critical in assessing the Jomtien’s vision of providing Education for All. As discussed in Chapter One, ten years ago the world committed itself to a broad and forward-looking vision of education at Jomtien,
Thailand, in 1990. The world’s governments promised “education for all” by the year 2000. One of the three major objectives, which were presented by UNESCO’s education programmes, was “Towards Basic Education for All”. The goal of this programme was geared towards the provision of education of adequate quality that could form the foundation of lifelong learning for everyone young and old alike (UNESCO, 1990: 3).

In April 2000, the participants of the World Education Forum met in Dakar, Senegal, to intensify, and accelerate the efforts towards the Education for All goals. In assessing the achievements of EFA, the framework for action for the Forum states that progress has been made towards Jomtien’s vision in education at national, regional and global levels. It has been shown that, particularly, developing countries have achieved net enrolment rates of 80% or more by the end of the decade. However, the question still remains of whether enrolled children have been kept in schools.

It has been noted that numerous challenges in fulfilling Jomtien’s commitment remain and new obstacles have arisen as indicated in the EFA 2000-assessment document (UNESCO, 2000b). For instance, it has been seen from this research, and from the document noted above that there are too many children who are still excluded from education or are failing to learn in unhealthy, unsafe, ineffective environments. Moreover, countries where primary school systems have expanded rapidly during the 1990s are concerned that quality has not kept pace with quantity, that resources have been stretched too thinly to ensure effective learning for all.

Whilst the document demonstrates that there has been significant progress in many countries during the 1990s, it is seen that in less developed countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa the EFA achievements are minimal. For instance, the net enrolment ratio grew only from 54% in 1990 to 60% in 1998. It has been pointed out that the challenge of Education for All is greatest in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and that priority should be given to those two regions of the world.
Commenting on gender disparities, it is noted that at a global level, the proportion of girls enrolled in primary education has steadily increased to the point that it almost equals the proportion of girls in the total school-age population. However, despite the progress made in girls’ enrolment in other regions, the net enrolment ratios of girls remain lower than those of boys especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and North Africa and South and west Asia. The education of girls, therefore, remains a major challenge despite the international attention that it has received over the years. 60% of all children without access to primary education are still girls.

Lack of achievements in increasing the access of girls into primary schools despite EFA initiatives raises many questions. Some factors which have affected the achievements of EFA have been identified in the report and in this thesis. They are: weak political will, insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of available ones, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and a lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities. Moreover, across all regions, where enrolment and participation levels remain low, there is a powerful correlation between poor enrolment, retention and learning outcomes and the incidence of poverty.

The document rightly states that education is central to individual empowerment, the elimination of poverty at household and community level, and broader social and economic development. However, findings in this thesis reveal that the Education for All policy stands little chance of being accomplished in the light of economic forces, which continue to profoundly affect pupils’ access to and retention in primary schools. The document, however, argues that there are evident synergies between strategies for promoting education and those for reducing poverty that must be exploited both in programme planning and implementation. For instance, a multi-sectoral approach to poverty elimination requires that education strategies complement those of the productive sectors as well as of health, social welfare, labour, the environment and finance.
In recent years HIV/AIDS has also been well documented as a contributory factor to a lack of EFA achievements. It has been seen that the threat posed by HIV/AIDS to the fulfilment of EFA goals especially in Sub-Saharan Africa presents an enormous challenge (DFID, 2000; UNESCO, 2000b). As discussed in Chapter One, the AIDS epidemic is affecting teachers, system managers and performance of pupils in schools.

It is evident that factors, which have been discussed in the fore-going chapters, continue to contribute to a lack of attainment of Jomtien’s vision. UNESCO states that at the start of a new millennium fewer than a third out of more than 800 million children who are less than six years of age, benefit from any form of early childhood education. Moreover, some 113 million children, of whom 60% are girls, have no access to primary schooling. An estimate of at least 880 million adults are illiterate, of whom the majority are women. The global adult literacy rate is 85% for men and 74% for women (UNESCO, 2000b).

Figures for school age children and girls who are not in schools might also be higher than portrayed in the EFA document. For instance, the achievements of EFA are very difficult to measure at the local level because the reality of remote village schools can be worlds away from aggregate national statistics, and the growth of student numbers may have little to do with the actual learning gains. This scenario is typical of some village schools that have been researched in three areas in Malawi.

**Exploring Education for All Achievements at the National Level**

Exploration of the discourse surrounding educational developments between 1875 to 1950s reveals that Nyasaland had several early ideas of offering free primary education. However, this policy was not formulated because of socio-economic factors. During former President Banda’s government, in 1987, the introduction of free compulsory schooling up to Junior Primary level (Standard Five) was discussed. At the time the
government noted the inadequacies and inherent inefficiencies in the education system which included high cost of fees collection and under-representation of girls in schools. However, despite the FPE proposals it was not until 1992 that Banda’s regime introduced a fee waiver scheme and two years later the present United Democratic Front (UDF) government introduced free primary education.

In 1994 Malawi committed itself to the provision of Education for All as a strategy towards poverty alleviation policy. The impact of free primary education policy at a national level as documented by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MOESC) (2000)\(^8\) has been an increase in gross enrolment rates (GER) by 40% and net enrolment rates (NER) by 25%. Upon the introduction of FPE in 1994, enrolment figures increased from 1.9 million to 3.2 million students. However, the education system, which was already under-resourced, failed to provide quality education for pupils who enrolled. As a result, among other factors, 300,000 pupils dropped out of primary schools within six months of the implementation of FPE.

As MOESC (2000) states, the inauguration of the FPE policy in 1994, and the consequent popular excitement, still remain the available explanation behind the high rates in 1995. In general, people responded positively towards the inauguration of the FPE policy but they seem to be steadily losing the zeal for, and interest, in primary education. This is probably a sign of inherent problems to do with the primary school system which might be frustrating both pupils and parents. It is necessary, therefore, that government continue to harness more co-operation from donors for research into the junior primary school section to identify the root causes of this low retention rate when in fact tuition is provided free.

\(^{8}\) There is a national Malawi: Education for All 2000 Assessment document which was prepared for the Dakar Education for All 2000 Assessment.
Education for All 2000 assessment report for MOESC (2000) shows that there is a high degree of access to primary school education to new entrants, and this is currently claimed to be at 83.3% for both girls and boys. It is seen that gross enrolment ratios and net enrolment ratios for females have risen to 65.2% and 58.4% respectively. The difference between sexes in the Apparent Intake Rate (AIR) is shown to have been only 1.5% with more females taken into the system than males. The Ministry of Education points out that this testifies to the government’s success in closing the gender gap in primary school enrolment.

This assertion by the government can be misleading because this study has shown that the intake of pupils in Standard One is almost equal for both sexes. However, girls gradually drop-out before completion of primary schooling. Figures for girls in senior classes tend to be much lower than at the junior level. This research has shown that in three areas of study in 1999, enrolment figures have not significantly increased as compared to the dramatic increase in 1994.

Despite the initial impact of the FPE policy, lack of retention in schools remains a challenge to maintaining the enrolment levels. As already discussed, before the formulation of FPE policy, schools were already under-resourced. There were inadequate educational materials, school facilities and teachers. These problems were aggravated by the FPE policy because of the influx of additional pupils. The Malawi Education for All 2000 assessment report reveals that unqualified teachers are affecting the quality of schools and that pupil-teacher ratios remain high. Despite the framework for FPE having been created, there is still a need for better educational facilities to enhance the effectiveness of the qualified teaching force (MOESC, 2000).

There are also socio-economic disparities and variations in educational access at regional, district and local level. For instance, there are differences in net enrolment

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81 Apparent Intake Rate refers to new entrants in Primary Standard One as a percentage of the population of the official entry age.
rates at district level in the three regions. In 1995 Dedza District had a NER of 66.1%. This means that 33.9% of the school-going age group were not in school in this district. Mangochi District had enrolment of 86.5% and Mzimba District had a net enrolment of 90.9%, so that 13.50% and 9.10% respectively of the school-age group were not enrolled in schools. However, higher enrolment rates, particularly in Mangochi District, do not necessarily mean that all pupils enrolled are achieving literacy skills. This study has shown that Mangochi District has problems of retention of pupils because of cultural practices and Islamic influences. In Mzimba District a lack of retention is mainly due to socio-economic forces.

Education for All 2000 assessment report for MOESC (2000) affirms that there are standing regional, district and socio-economic disparities with regard to educational access at the basic education level. Overall, urban residents have more access to education opportunity than do their rural counterparts. Gender focused initiatives will act as one of the main means to the elimination of poverty. In some parts of the country, girls' enrolment in primary school is relatively low. The government also mentions that Poverty Alleviation Policy and initiative has not yet transformed the socio-economic situation of the majority of the population.

The implementation and achievements of FPE policy at the local level have not been impressive either. For instance, schools, which were surveyed in three districts in 1999, showed an increase in enrolment rates in the early years of FPE. However, the decline of gross enrolment figures in the following years since 1994 is evident in all schools surveyed, particularly in Mangochi and Dedza districts. As discussed in Chapter Six, figures which are passed on to the District Education Offices in the districts, may be misleading and not accurate.
Exploring Education for All Achievements at the Local Level

The findings in this study shows that the connection between the formulation of the policy of FPE and the universalisation of girls' access to schools cannot succeed because of factors which continue to impinge upon girls' schooling. It has been argued that boys, and girls in particular, are not retained in schools because of the socio-economic forces, educational factors, socio-cultural forces, religious and political factors.

Economic constraints have been seen to be a hindrance to pupils' retention in school and this has affected rural areas in Malawi. Poverty is more acute in rural areas and communities are unable to provide necessary learning materials for pupils in schools. In districts such as Mangochi and Dedza there is evidence of school age going children who have never been to school despite the FPE policy, mainly because of economic reasons. This scenario has raised questions of whether education IS really free. The government underestimated the financial complications when introducing free primary education. In this regard communities are discouraged, as pupils are not receiving adequate learning materials.

Economic conditions in Malawi have also affected the quality of schools. This study has revealed that the picture of the school system at the school level is quite different from the impression one gets at the district level. For instance, the acute problems affecting the quality of the school system have not been completely portrayed at the district level. At the school level it has been seen that pupils are learning in appalling conditions. School facilities are not adequate and the learning environment is not conducive to pupils. Moreover, although reports indicate that the impact of FPE policy has been an increase in enrolment rates, drop-out rates, absenteeism and repetition rates remain high.

Socio-cultural constraints have been seen also profoundly to impact upon girls' schooling. This is particularly affecting pupils in the Central and Southern Regions of
Malawi. Whilst the government is aiming at getting girls into schools, communities still believe in preparing girls at an early age for marriage. Observations in Mangochi and Dedza districts reveal that initiation ceremonies continue to affect both boys’ and girls’ schooling. It was seen that girls are particularly affected as they are encouraged to engage in relationships and are pressurised to get married as soon as they reach puberty. It was seen that girls from Mangochi are more affected by this issue because of a history of Islamic cultural influences in the district. The problem is aggravated because teachers also take advantage of vulnerable girls; hence instead of encouraging girls to continue schooling, they end up being involved in sexual relationships with schoolgirls.

The past history has shown that newly converted African Muslims in Nyasaland resisted early educational advances by missionaries (as discussed in Chapter Two). It is evident in Mangochi District that suspicions of the influence of Western education which lay behind this early resistance has contributed to high rates of illiteracy rates among adults even today.

This study has shown that political policy-making has affected the advancement of educational development. Whilst the history of the past shows that communities were actively involved in the development of schools, this study reveals that communities are no longer eager to develop schools in their areas. Those in the Malawi government argue that community involvement was a large part of life under the one-party system. This self-help spirit, according to the MOESC/UNICEF (1998), was eroded during the multi-party political campaigns which implied that self-help was an abuse of human rights.

It can also be argued that during Banda’s regime communities were forced to support self-help activities. Therefore, the communities are still suspicious about the self-help projects, as they perceive it to be another form of compulsory labour by the new government. Therefore, more efforts should be made to sensitise the communities of
the importance of developing schools in their areas. There is substantial evidence that strong community and parental involvement in schools improves quality (DFID, 2000).

This study also reveals that Banda's regime did not pay attention to women's education. The regime did not include gender policies in its Education Development Plans. Moreover, the move in 1992 towards introducing a fee waiver for girls in junior classes was due to political pressure in the country (as discussed in Chapter Three).

The findings in the foregoing chapters reveal that the school system in Malawi has failed to provide quality education to enable pupils to complete their primary school education. The decrease in enrolment rates in schools in Malawi is due to educational constraints. Schools lack adequate classrooms, educational materials for pupils and teaching materials for teachers. There is a shortage of both trained and untrained teachers. AIDS has also affected the education sector. Education for All 2000 assessment report for MOESC (2000) states that HIV/AIDS on Malawi's education system is enormous. Teachers' deaths result in a continuing shortage of instructors. However, the Ministry of Education has started to address AIDS prevention through the incorporation of relevant messages into the curriculum. Other factors related to socio-cultural and school practices and socio-political forces continue to profoundly affect the rates of participation and retention of pupils, particularly girls in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings in this thesis conclude that the move towards the provision of EFA is being constrained because of a number of historical factors. Although the three areas differ in geography, ethnicity, religion and economic contexts, the research has shown that the FPE policy is not being implemented in any of them at the local level because of the quality of the education system. It is evident from this study that schools in Malawi are not of a standard to provide a good learning environment for pupils. Apart from school
factors, initiation ceremonies in districts such as Mangochi and Dedza profoundly impact upon girls’ schooling.

This thesis has shown that policies, which are propagated at the national level, and supported by external donor agencies, do not necessarily meet the targeted group at the local level, which are meant to benefit from such policies. For instance, the policy of FPE has failed to retain the majority of girls in schools because of a lack of co-ordination between stakeholders and policy makers in the formulation of policies, which are geared towards the local conditions, especially issues concerning cultural practices. This study has shown that the school system has failed to hold the majority of overage female pupils in schools as they progress to senior classes (mainly from Standard Five to Eight). Most girls who reach puberty drop-out because of pregnancy and early marriage. This is particularly acute in districts such as Mangochi and Dedza where girls are encouraged and pressurised by the communities to get married before completion of primary school education.

Namuddu explained that “educational policies in much of Sub-Saharan Africa have not yet attained the status of genuine indigenous public policies. This is because the existing policies derive more from powerful external private sources than from groups and communities within African countries. More crucially, the recommendations do not contain suggestions about some of the roles the communities, as the main stakeholders, see themselves playing in order to eliminate the causes of existing grievances in education” (Namuddu, 1991: 52).

This study shows that the involvement of stakeholders such as parents, teachers, initiation counsellors, school committee members, local leaders and politicians is crucial in identifying problems which impinge upon girls’ education. Participatory methods have been used by, for instance, USAID, to help communities to identify problems affecting their children’s education. However what is needed is effective monitoring of the gender inputs of the education programmes. As discussed in Chapter Six, the
pregnancy policy is facing serious problems, as girls are still unable to return to school after pregnancy. This is a result of a lack of attention given to implementation issues by the government and donor agencies.

Increasing its expenditure in basic education shows the government’s political commitment to education, but, the reallocation of the resources is inadequate because of severe economic conditions in the country. Therefore, more resources from funding agencies are needed to make faster progress towards Education for All. However, the government should come up with tough measures to ensure that the support from donor agencies is reallocated in the education sector. The Department of International Development in UK rightly argues that in many countries, governments continue to have very limited knowledge on whether funding allocated to education reaches schools, especially those in the most disadvantaged regions, or that it is spent as intended. Moreover, government systems for managing and tracking expenditures remain weak and need support.

Recently the Panafrican News Agency (19th September 2000) reported that the pressure was growing on the government of President Bakili Muluzi following a report by Malawi's anti-corruption Bureau of massive fraud and corruption in his six-year-old government. The International Monetary Fund representative in Malawi, Thomas Gibson, is reported to have said that the delegation was "troubled and disturbed" with the reports of rampant fraud and corruption in Muluzi's government. He said the delegation was concerned that the money given to Malawi for construction of schools was ending up largely in "selfish" pockets of senior officials and politicians who used front contractors to milk the government. The delegation asked the government to recover the misappropriated funds and make sure the culprits were brought to book. Malawi's anti-corruption Bureau investigating a multi-million Kwacha corruption scandal in government, revealed that one contractor swindled some 56 million Kwacha (about 900,000 US dollars) in shady contracts from the education ministry.
Panafrican News Agency further reported that visiting British Minister for Africa in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Peter Hain, also warned Lilongwe that it risked losing donor confidence if it did not move to prosecute corrupt officials and curb further corruption in the country. In this regard the government should develop strategies to ensure greater accountability in the allocation of resources to schools in order to achieve quality education.

Malawi is one of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). Debt relief provides scope for reallocation of funds to the education sector. As of 31 December 1997, the people of Malawi owed the international community US$2.3 billion. The former Banda's regime incurred this massive debt, partly to finance development projects such as education, health and roads (Lamp Magazine, 1999). Yet it is evident from this study that the money was not adequately reallocated in the education sector. Malawi must now repay both the principal and pay interest on the debt. As a result, the government expenditure on social services such as health and education has declined. In 1998 Malawi paid out $0.39 in debt profile service for every $1 received in aid grants. Moreover, debt per person in 1998 was $233 which is more than the GNP of $169 per person.

The cancellation of debt will guarantee that all aid from the donor agencies be invested in social services. For instance the $0.39 from each $1.00 might help in improving the quality of schools. Debt relief has the potential to act as catalyst for human development. If it is structured and provided in a way which improves access to, and the quality of, the social and economic services used by poor people, the benefits will be large (Oxfam, 1999b).

This research has shown that different problems require different solutions. As with other aspects of development, there is no one policy which can be approved in one area and then applied everywhere in the country. Therefore, it is recommended that the government should continue working hand in hand with the donor agencies. It should
come up with different strategies and policies based on nuanced support, which interweave policies designed to overcome inhibitors to girls' education. For instance, donor agencies should put more money into the introduction of new courses for girls who have missed school during initiation ceremonies, especially in districts such as Mangochi where pupils may miss school for one to two months.

The interrogation of EFA in this thesis concludes that the move towards the provision of FPE policy is being constrained due to a number of historical factors. In addition, the impact of the HIV/AIDS on education demands urgent action. In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS threatens to play havoc with education systems, decimating the teaching force, disrupting school life and creating millions of orphans for whom education may be a low priority. Moreover, it is reducing the numbers participating in education, affecting its provision and lowering the management and quality of schools.

This research contributes to the knowledge that EFA can be achieved, but requires suitable provision of quality education and the involvement of stakeholders in the identification of those problems which currently inhibit pupils from taking full advantage of FPE/EFA. It indicates that more aid and nuanced, co-ordinated, strategic support from the international community are needed in order to achieve Education for All in Malawi. The Department for International Development in UK rightly suggests that the challenge for the international community is to promote the centrality of education for development, and to help individual countries to define strategies to give priority and sustained investment to primary education for all.

In this connection, the Jubilee 2000 is seen as a force for generating new approaches to education policy in Malawi. Cancellation of debt owned by Malawi to multilateral organisations will ensure that the government invest money on social services such as health and education. However, upon the cancellation of debt, it is recommended that efforts should be made to improve the social services. This can be made by involving civil society, the non governmental organisations, churches and other private bodies in
monitoring the debt cancellation, and advise the government on how the money should be spent to improve the lives of all Malawians, and to achieve Education for All.
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APPENDIX ONE

Individual Interviews with Girls in Schools

Experiences as a Child

Biographical Data
- Where were you born?
- Did you grow up there?
- Are you the eldest in the family?
- What kinds of jobs did you do as a child?
- What work did your father and mother do?
- What were the experiences of your childhood days? Both good and bad experiences?
- Were you happy as a child? What made you happy or sad?

School Life

Starting School
- How old were you when you started schooling?
- Where did you start your school?
- Can you remember your experiences when you started schooling?

Life in School
- Do you find schooling interesting?
- What do you like about school, don’t like about school?
- Do you attend your classed regularly?
- Do you pass your exams, repeat classes, why?
- Did you pay school fees when you started schooling?

Parental Attitudes, Efforts and Initiation Ceremonies
- What difference does it make to your parents that now schooling is free?
- Are your parents supportive about schooling?
- Do you face any pressures now that you are nearing puberty?
- Do your parents expect you to attend initiation ceremonies? For how long?
• What are your parents' and communities' expectations?
• Are your parents supportive about your schooling, in what way, what do they do?
• Is your education being affected by religious factors, in what way and what are your parent's views? (In Islamic community).

Teachers' Attitudes
• Are teachers supportive and helpful? In what way?
• What are teachers' attitudes towards you in class?
• Which subjects does the teacher encourage you take in class? Any preference?
• What type of work do you want to do in the future?

Productive and Reproductive Roles
• What type of work do you do at home? Do you do any work before going to school and after coming from school?
• Would you say your responsibilities at home interfere with your studying?

Economic Forces
• Parents occupation
• In your view, has the phasing out of fees made life easier for your parents in sending their children to school?
• Are your parents facing economic pressures in regard to your schooling? In what way?

Views About Girls who have dropped out of School
• Are there any girls who have dropped out of school?
• Do you know why they dropped out?
• What are they doing now?
• What do you think the school should do to help girls stay in school?
• How could families and the Community help?
APPENDIX TWO

Individual Interviews with Girls who have Dropped out of Schools

Experiences as a Child

Biographical Data
- Where were you born?
- Did you grow up there?
- Are you the eldest in the family?
- What kinds of jobs did you do as a child?
- What work did your father and mother do?
- What were the experiences of your childhood days? Both good and bad experiences?
- Were you happy as a child? What made you happy or sad?

School Life

Starting School
- How old were you when you started schooling?
- Where did you start your school?
- Can you remember your experiences when you started schooling?

Life in School
- What you remember about your primary school? Did you find schooling interesting? Why?
- What did you like about school, don't like about school?
- Did you attend your classes regularly?
- Did you pass your exams, repeat classes, why?
- Did you pay school fees when you started schooling?
- How old were you when you dropped out of school?
- Why did you drop-out of school: cultural, economic and other factors?
Parental Attitudes and Efforts
- Were your parents supportive when you were in school? What did they do?
- Did they advise you?
- Any pressures, i.e., initiation ceremonies, productive and reproductive roles, economic and religious views?
- What were your parents' and communities' expectations?

Teachers' and Pupils' Attitudes
- Were teachers supportive and helpful? In what way?
- What were teachers' attitudes towards you in class? Were they supportive?
- What were the other pupils' attitudes towards you?
- Were there other girls like you who dropped out of school while you were there?
- Do you know why they dropped out? What are they doing now?
- Which subjects did the teacher encouraged you to take in class? Any preference?

Productive and Reproductive Roles
- Chores and activities done before going to school and after school.
- Would you say your responsibilities at home interfered with your studying?

Present Experience
- Age, marriage and activities involved in, i.e. work etc.
- Would you like to go back to school if you get some help?
- Did you think of any career while you were in school? Did you feel like doing some job after school?
- Have you heard of the government?
- What do you think school authorities should do to help you stay in school?
- What do you think your parents should do to help you stay in school?
APPENDIX THREE

Individual Interviews with Non-enrolees

Experiences as a Child

Biographical Data
- Where were you born?
- Did you grow up there?
- Are you the eldest in the family?
- What kinds of jobs did you do as a child?
- What work did your father and mother do?
- What were the experiences of your childhood days? Both good and bad experiences?
- Were you happy as a child? What made you happy or sad?

Reasons for not enrolling in school
- Age and reasons for not enrolling in schools.
- Opportunity costs, i.e. activities engaged at home.
- Parents' educational background and attitude.
- Decision making in the home, i.e., who decides whether the child should go to school?
- Parents occupation.
APPENDIX FOUR

Individual Interviews with Headteachers and Teachers

Experiences of life as a child
- Where were you born and grew up?
- Position in the family e.g. eldest daughter.
- Responsibilities in the home.
- Parents occupation.
- Experiences as a child: difficult and happy time.

Experiences of life at primary school
- Where did you go to school?
- Memories of school.
- Support, efforts and encouragement of parents with regard to your schooling.
- Factors that contributed to your success at school.
- Do you remember girls dropping out of school? What were the causes and what happened to them?

Experiences of life after primary school
- How much more schooling did you do?
- What career thoughts did you have then?
- Any responsibilities at home?
- What were your parent’s and family’s views of your schooling?
- What motivated you at school and home?

Experiences of life as a teacher trainee
- Place of study and memories.
- What was teaching practice like?
- Reasons for going into teaching.
- What was the education system then?
• Family's reaction to your training?

Experiences of life as a teacher during Banda's government
• Did you go straight into teaching? Which year?
• What memories do you have of your first school job?
• What were your experiences in your teaching profession? I.e., quality of schooling and access of schooling by both girls and boys and parents attitude.
• Was the life of a teacher very different then?

Experiences of life as a teacher now
• Describe your teaching now.
• Good and bad aspects of the job: pupils' attitudes.
• Has the policy of FPE affected your job, the school, parents and the community?
• Relationship with pupils' parents.
• Efforts of parents and the community.

Views of girls dropping out of school
• Why do girls drop-out?
• Can you tell me about girl's experiences, causes and what happened to her?
• Do you think the situation is the same all over Malawi? Is your school typical of schools in this area?
• What policies exist to help girls?
• What do you think the District education Office should do?
• Anything you think you would like to say that we haven't talked about?
APPENDIX FIVE

Focus Group Interviews and Discussions with Parents of Girls in School, Drop-outs and Non-enrolees

**Girls in schools**
- The importance of girls' education.
- Mother's and father's decisions in taking their girls to schools.
- Involvement and support in girls' education, i.e., do they assess their progress?
- Background of schooling for parents.
- Benefits of schooling
- Views about school exams and job opportunities in their local areas.
- Efforts by parents, teachers and the community.

**Girls who have dropped out of school**
- Background of schooling for parents.
- Causes for drop-out of girls.
- Productive and reproductive constraints girls face.
- Male and female roles.
- Mother's perspective about education for girls
- Differences in bringing up children: patrilineal and matrilineal societies.
- Initiation ceremonies.
- What happens to the girls who drop-out?
- How could the school and the community help?

**Non-enrolees**
- Background of schooling for parents.
- Reasons for not sending their girls to school.
- Male and female roles, i.e., decision making in the home.
- Mother's perspective about education for girls.
- Role modes in the village.
APPENDIX SIX

Focus Group Interviews and Discussions with School Committees and Village Headmen

- Communities' involvement in educational developments in villages.
- Expectations of teachers and parents.
- Characteristics of the community, to which most of the children of a given school belong, community's level of development and employment conditions.
- Beliefs and values of religious and community leaders regarding education.
- Relationship between community values and beliefs about education and theories of modernisation as propounded by policy makers and teachers.
APPENDIX SEVEN

Participatory Observations

- Observation of pupils' and teachers' interactions in a classroom.
- Pupils' attitudes to the teacher, pupils' expectations of teachers, attentiveness, teachers' attitudes and contact with pupils.
- Observe the teaching conditions such as availability of teaching and learning materials, teacher-pupil ratio, class size, the curricula and assessment of the teachers' educational qualifications.
- Teachers' words, actions and gestures.
- Pupils' response, interaction, interest and attentiveness.
- Pupils' actions, i.e., while the teachers is writing on the blackboard what are the actions of pupils.
- Are teachers being gender biased?
## APPENDIX EIGHT

### Individual Interviews in Malawi

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<th>Mzimba District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mr. Maclean B. Ziba</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Education Advisor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mr. R. M. Kumwenda</strong></td>
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### Donor Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Terry Allsop</td>
<td>Senior Education Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Central Africa (21/7/99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sarah E. Wright</td>
<td>General Development Officer, USAID</td>
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<td>22/7/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Jan H. Olsson</td>
<td>First Secretary (Development)</td>
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<td>Royal Norwegian Embassy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Susan Durston</td>
<td>Team Leader Advisor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Primary Community Schools Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Hartford Mchazine</td>
<td>Technical Advisor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Malawi-German Co-operation in Basic Education Project, Zomba (7/7/99)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. M.T. Likoya</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Malawi Social Action Fund, Lilongwe.</td>
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<td>27/7/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Jamieson Tchale</td>
<td>Malawi Social Action Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dedza Zone Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Boniface Chifundo</td>
<td>Malawi Social Action Fund</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mzuzu Zone Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Noel Kulemeka</td>
<td>Economist</td>
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<td>World Bank Mission in Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. F. Malewezi</td>
<td>Project Officer, Education, UNICEF-Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21/7/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. E. Kaliati,</td>
<td>Gender Co-ordinator, UNDP-Malawi, Lilongwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. S Mawindo</td>
<td>Director: GABLE SMC-EQ, Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. M. Kierman</td>
<td>Programme Manager, DANIDA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. W. E. Chauluka</td>
<td>Deputy Director and Staff, Malawi Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. B. Kanjala</td>
<td>Curriculum Specialist, Malawi Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Women, Youth and Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. A. A. Shawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gregory H. Kamwendo</td>
<td>Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Director, Centre for Language Studies, University of Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. E. Kadzamira</td>
<td>Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. I. C. Lamba</td>
<td>Head of Department (History), University of Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. J. Chakhanza</td>
<td>Senior Lecture (Department of Religious Studies), University of Malawi</td>
</tr>
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# APPENDIX NINE

## Individual Interviews in United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Role and Additional Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Tom Colvin</td>
<td>The Manager of Schools of Blantyre District and Education Secretary: 1954 – 1958, Edinburgh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11th February 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Andrew Ross</td>
<td>A Pastor in Ntcheu and Balaka Districts, 1958 – 1965, Edinburgh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22nd February 2000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10th March 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs Ann Hepburn</td>
<td>A Teacher at Blantyre Girls' School from 1950-1954, Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2nd March, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. John McCracken</td>
<td>A Historian of Malawi, University of Stirling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29th March 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Fergus King</td>
<td>Regional Desk Officer for Central Africa and Tanzania Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hugh Trappes-Lomax</td>
<td>Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18th October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rev. Professor Kenneth R. Ross</td>
<td>General Secretary of the Board of World Mission, Church of Scotland</td>
</tr>
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<td>18th October 2000</td>
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APPENDIX TEN

Life History of a School Drop-out

KA is a school drop-out who lives at Kakhome village in Dedza District. She is 14 years old and the last born in the family of six children. All children in the family dropped out of primary school. Her two brothers work as house boys in Lilongwe (urban area). One brother is married and he lives in the village. One of KA’s sisters is also married whilst her other sister works as a house girl in Lilongwe.

KA cannot remember her good and bad experiences as a child. However, she recalls doing household chores from a very young age. Like most Malawian children, she washed dishes, cleaned the house and learned how to cook. Economically, the family depend upon subsistence farming. Her father and mother are both farmers.

KA commenced her schooling when she was 11 years old because her parents could not afford to pay her school fees. As a result of the policy of free primary education which was implemented in 1994, KA was able to enrol at School G. She cannot remember her experiences when she started school. However, she states that she found school interesting because she liked writing and reading. What KA did not like about her schooling was when girl pupils were asked to smear classroom floors.

KA repeated a Standard Two class because she was absent a lot from school. She explains that her mother asked her to carry out tasks at home during school hours. In addition, although her parents encouraged KA to go to school, they were unable to provide educational materials and clothes for all their children because of limited resources.

KA dropped out of school in Standard Two at the age of 14 because she lacked notebooks and clothes for school. Therefore, she opted to work as a house girl in Lilongwe. KA also knows a number of girls who dropped out of school and chose to work as house girls in urban areas.

KA mentions that there are a number of reasons which contribute to a lack of retention of pupils, especially girls, in school. One of the constraints is the initiation ceremony for girls. In Dedza District girls go through the nyau “chinamwali” ceremony from the age of nine years and also when they reach puberty. KA states that during the initiation ceremonies girls are prepared for marriage.

According to KA, as a result of the experiences at the initiation ceremonies some girls drop-out of school and they do not go back to school. Early pregnancy and marriage is common for girls who have gone through the “chinamwali” ceremony. Productive and reproductive roles also contribute to girls dropping out of school. KA’s life history reveals that she continued doing household chores before going to school and after
school. The responsibilities at home interfered with KA's schoolwork because she was not able to read and do her homework at home.

At present KA stays at home and does domestic duties. She argues that she cannot go back to school because of work at home. She explains that she has a sister who is not well, therefore, she has to do household chores. However, KA suggests that in order to keep children in school, the government should provide pupils with educational materials, food and clothes. In addition, parents and the community should encourage girls to go to school.
APPENDIX ELEVEN

Life History of a Standard Seven Pupil at School Z

MT aged 12 was born at Chinombo village in Mzimba District in the Northern Region of Malawi. She is the 6th born in the family of 8 children. Like most Malawian children, she started carrying out tasks at home at a very young age of 4. She helped her mother with household chores such as washing dishes and clothes, cleaning the house, fetching water from the river and firewood.

MT's childhood days consist of both good and bad experiences. She remembers going to church with friends which made her very happy. She also enjoyed playing with friends whenever she was free from housebound duties. Her childhood days were also pleasant because both parents worked; the father worked in the army whilst her mother worked as a nurse. Unfortunately, her father passed away when MT was young and her mother took full responsibilities of looking after young children. In regards to bad experiences, MT claims that she was not happy when her mother sent her to fetch firewood and to wash clothes. She was particularly sad when she was awakened very early in the morning to fetch firewood. In addition, MT resented doing household chores while her friends played games.

MT started her school in 1992 in Mzuzu in the North and then moved to School Z in 1997. MT recalls that when she started school, teachers asked pupils to sweep the school surroundings. When the bell rang, pupils would assemble outside and sang the national anthem and then they would proceed to respective classrooms. MT's early school life also includes bad experiences. For instance, older girls took advantage of younger pupils by demanding food and asking younger pupils to carry their notebooks on the way home after school. If MT refused, the older girls would threaten to beat her up. Teachers also gave MT and other pupils punishment when they were late for school. The punishment involved picking up rubbish from school grounds. Sometimes a teacher would make late comers stand in the class while teaching.

Despite bad experiences in school, MT finds school interesting because of the learning experience. She appreciates that at least she has learnt how to write and speak in English. MT tries to attend school regularly although sometimes she is absent from school as a result of duties at home. She is one of the clever girls in school and she never repeated classes.

MT does not remember whether her mother paid fees when she started school in 1993. However, MT points out that the policy of free primary education has helped parents who do not have money to send their children to school since many parents are poor in her village. MT is lucky because her mother still works as a nurse and, therefore, buys educational materials. Her mother also encourages her to take advantage of free primary education by working hard in school and not to be playful. In addition, her
aunt advises her not to be absent from school. After doing household chores her aunt also encourages MT to do her schoolwork.

MT’s experiences at school reveal that teachers are also supportive. For instance, one teacher offered to teach pupils in MT’s class after school. Teachers also encourage pupils to read books and to do homework. However, MT complained about teachers’ and pupils’ attitudes towards girls in classroom. One teacher, for instance, likes picking up boys to answer questions when teaching Maths. This annoys MT and other girls who sometimes shout the answer without the teacher’s consent. As a result, the teacher gets angry and beat up girls who made noise. Sometimes during a creative class, girls do jobs like smearing floors and hoeing while boys do nothing.

MT also explains that in class boys put letters of proposal for sexual relationships which MT and other girl pupils hate. Sometimes they report the incident to the headteacher who just ignores them. MT’s experiences at school are not all rosy, as she and other girl pupils hate male teachers. According to MT, male teachers expose girls in school. For instance, teachers explain in detail issues concerning initiation ceremonies (chinamwali) and how the fisi (a man) sleeps with girls at night during the ceremonies. Boys really laugh at girls in school in a mockery manner. MT and other girls who have not reached puberty feel very embarrassed and shocked because they do not know issues concerning the fisi.

MT also complained about the multilingual teaching. She states that teachers mix languages in class because pupils are different. For instance, some pupils understand English language whilst some do not. MT does not understand some of the English words, but she still thinks that the teacher should teach in English language only because of the implications which students have during the examinations. MT states that during the examinations, pupils answer questions in English. When they ask teachers to explain the English words they refuse. This makes it difficult for pupils.

Apart from the difficulties of the learning process in the classroom, MT also describes some constraints which continue to affect her schooling. For instance, her mother and aunt still expect MT to do household chores before going to school and after coming from school. Before going to school she sweeps and mops the house, lit fire and heat water for bathing. She then prepares breakfast for other children at home. After school, she eats and washes dishes, fetches firewood and water. Sometimes she goes to the market to do some shopping. Responsibilities at home interfere with her studying because she forgets to do her homework.

MT also mentions that three girls dropped out of school mainly as a result of pregnancy and early marriages. MT suggests that girls should be encouraged to read and do school work after school rather than engaging in different tasks at home. In addition, to help girls stay in school the school should encourage girls to work hard and not to engage in sexual relationships. Girls should also be encouraged to attend school regularly. One
drop-out was absent from school a lot and teachers did not help her much in this aspect. Most importantly, families and the community should encourage girls to go to school.