

**THE COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL POLICY REFORM IN MALAWI: A
STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION QUALITY MEASURES IN
COMMUNITY DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**

Med (Policy, Planning and Leadership in Education) Thesis

By

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL/CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Patricia and my three daughters, Mwapatsa, Tileke and Dalitso for their love, support and encouragement during the time I was carrying out the study.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to understand better the education quality measures implemented in the Community Day Secondary School (CDSSs) as a result of CDSS policy reform.

Using a mixed method design where both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used, a total of ten CDSSs were sampled (five urban CDSSs and five rural CDSSs). The two sets of schools have different experiences which enriched the study and ensured wide coverage of issues in the CDSSs.

The study revealed that while the education authorities in Malawi put in place operational procedures for policy implementation, those entrusted to do the job were not doing it. If they did it, then it was not to the expected standards. This reflects a problem with the coercive nature of policy formulation and implementation. Further, most students in the CDSSs, have poor perceptions of their school environment which they believe is not conducive enough for good quality of education to be achieved. Finally, the Malawi Government has not lived to its policy promise on provision of adequate teaching and learning resources to the CDSSs to make them at par with CSSs. Most CDSSs still lacked even the most basic teaching and learning materials.

In terms of actual implementation of the CDSS policy reform, this study observed that the policy-makers had not taken their responsibility to regularly monitor its implementation. The result was that problems affecting the implementation of the policy reform could not be addressed on time. The end result is a contradiction between the policy intent and what is actually practiced on the ground.

The problems highlighted impact negatively on the quality of education offered in the CDSSs. This was manifested in the poorer national examinations results of the students in the CDSSs as compared to CSSs. It was therefore, generally recommended that those given the responsibility of implementing the policy reform should do so with a greater degree of dedication and commitment. In addition, those responsible for formulation of education policies should regularly go down to the ground to check if implementation is being carried out as designed.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSS	Conventional Secondary School
CWED	Central West Education Division
DEC	Distance Education Centre
DEM	District Education Manager
EDM	Education Division Manager
EFA	Education for All
EMAS	Education Methods and Advisory Services
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPE	Free Primary Education
GOM	Government of Malawi
GNP	Gross National Product
IEA	International Educational Assessment
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MCC	Malawi Correspondence College
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science & Technology
NED	Northern Education Division
PIF	Policy and Investment Framework
PTA	Parents and Teachers' Association
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SMC	School Management Committee
SSTEP	Secondary School Teacher Education Programme
UDF	United Democratic Front

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

There have been significant debates by researchers on whether the introduction of the Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) policy reform has improved the quality of the Secondary school education in Malawi or not. In many cases, it has been reported that secondary school education quality has remained poor even after the introduction of the policy reform. This has been evidenced by poorer national examination results in the CDSSs as compared to the Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) both before and after the policy reform was put in place. The main purpose of this study was to understand better the education quality measures which have been implemented and how they were implemented during the 1998 CDSS policy reform. This was prompted by the poor examinations results during Malawi Schools Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations both before and after the CDSS policy reform. This chapter provides background information to the study. The chapter begins with a discussion on the importance of education, the importance of Secondary school education in Malawi, history of secondary school education in Malawi and the CDSS policy reform. This context justifies the three research questions posed in section 1.7.2. The chapter then proceeds to present the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, aims and objectives of the study and rationale for the study. It concludes with a presentation of the structure of the thesis.

1. 1 Demand for Secondary school education in Malawi

The importance of education in general and Secondary school education in particular, has led to the ever increasing demand for Secondary school education in Malawi. Since the conventional government secondary schools were not sufficient for all the pupils who qualified for secondary education, the Malawi government introduced the Malawi Correspondence College (MCC) in March 1965 (Nankwenya, 1974). The reason for this was that the number of primary school leavers was higher than the places which were available in secondary schools across the country. Nankwenya, (1974 p.50) observed that:

“The balance of the primary school leavers had to be catered for in some way and this is why correspondence education was introduced in Malawi to provide a viable alternative.”

Nankwenya, (1974 p.92) further observed that:

“The problem in Malawi at independence, as in many developing countries was how to meet the growing demand for secondary school and higher education. Even with increased efforts to build more schools and train more teachers, only about five percent of the school leavers would be taken in existing secondary schools and many Malawians were still sending money out of the country to pay for courses with overseas correspondence schools”

The only way to overcome the problem at that time, therefore, was to encourage secondary learning by correspondence while the issue of establishing secondary schools was being addressed progressively.

1.2 Background to the CDSS policy reform

The first education plan (1973-1980) implemented after Malawi attained independence, prioritised secondary school education. The main objective for this arrangement was to provide middle- level manpower to fill posts left by the Colonial government (Rose and Kadzamira, 2001). This line of thought led to the expansion of secondary school education in Malawi so that by 1968, there was, at least, one government secondary school in each district (Banda, 1982). The secondary schools eventually doubled or trebled in streams in order to accommodate more and more students. In spite of such efforts, however, the demand for secondary education continued whereas the capacity and resources for educating them remained insufficient.

In 1980, the MCCs were changed to Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) (Banda, 1982). Under the umbrella of MCDE, the Malawi government encouraged communities to establish Distance Education Centres (DECs) where distance learning modules were provided. However, these DECs in many cases, became residential secondary schools where teacher supervisors found themselves teaching the school curriculum in a face to face environment more closely resembling the CSSs (Secondary School Teacher Education Programme (SSTEP, 2005). They were, however, not recognised as such and did not receive financial support from the Ministry of Education as did CSSs, apart from paying the teachers’ salaries. The Malawi government provided primary school teachers to teach secondary school students in all classes. The communities established DECs and assumed full responsibility in the financing of their

schools including the procurement of teaching and learning materials. They did not receive direct support to their operations but only sporadic supply of teaching/learning printed materials and minimal equipment from MCDE headquarters.

Ministry of Education, (1999) observed that by 1998, the DEC's were the highest provider of secondary school education in Malawi. Out of the 192,272 students enrolled in Secondary schools in 1998, 132,445 were enrolled in DEC's representing about 80 percent of all secondary school students. In addition, of the students who completed primary education in 1997, 20 percent entered DEC's and only 6 percent entered CSS's (Ministry of Education, 1998). Since most of those who completed primary school education acquired secondary school education through DEC's and not through CSS's, it became necessary for the government of Malawi to recognise these centres as secondary schools. The problem was, however, that these centres offered secondary school education of very low quality as evidenced by their very poor results during national examinations (Chimwenje, 1998). The reason for poor results was lack of infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries and laboratories together with the lack of equipment and consumables, and qualified teachers with diplomas or degrees (Chimwenje, 1998).

The general concern of the low quality of education offered in DEC's as discussed above was based on the assumption that individuals who have received good quality education are able to make a positive contribution to the development of their countries. To this end, good quality education is said to be one which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that have intrinsic value and also help in addressing important human goals (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005). The DEC's did not appear to offer such quality education given the many concerns outlined above hence the CDSS policy reform.

1.3 The CDSS policy reform.

Following the increased demand for secondary education, and the concerns on low quality of education offered in the DEC's, the Malawi government undertook a major policy reform in 1998 whereby it converted the DEC's to CDSS's and accorded them the same status in terms of support and reputation to that accorded to the CSS's.

It should be noted that this transformation took place four years after the change of government in Malawi: from the one party dictatorial rule of Dr. Hastings Banda to multi-party democracy led by Dr Bakili Muluzi. The manifesto of the United Democratic Front (UDF) promised to introduce Free Primary Education (FPE) which the UDF led government implemented upon assuming power in 1994. Another promise made in the 1993 UDF manifesto was to improve the quality of secondary school education offered to the masses through the establishment of more secondary schools.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) in a circular released in December 1998, stipulated the objectives of the policy reform which was to improve *access to quality* secondary school education offered to the masses and to improve *community participation* in the management of secondary school education in Malawi in line with what was contained in the education sector Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) (1995). The DEC's were converted to CDSSs in 1998 beginning with 520 DEC's of which 120 had their own premises while the rest were operating in borrowed premises mostly primary schools. The circular letter stipulated seven policy guidelines as follows (Ministry of Education, 1999 p.1):

1. All DEC's should from now be known as Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs)
2. All CDSSs will fall under MOE and not MCDE.
3. The responsibility to select students to Form 1 was transferred to the District Education Offices with direct community involvement in the selection process.
4. The MOE started deploying teachers who possessed diploma and degree certificates to the CDSSs.
5. All CDSSs would be provided with financial assistance to enable them to obtain basic material packages such as teaching and learning materials on the basis of cost-sharing.
6. Permission to open a CDSS would be granted only when the standards of the MoE were strictly followed.
7. Standardised management and financial systems was mandatory for all CDSSs and CSSs.

Looking at the policy guidelines above, one is made to understand that the conversion was meant to unify the Secondary school education system in Malawi with the aim of improving the quality of education in all the DEC's. It also aimed at narrowing or removing completely the gap between these two types of Secondary schools (DEC's and CSS's). In addition, it stipulated that the Ministry of Education would take full control of the DEC's. This would involve, among other things, the purchasing and disseminating of relevant teaching and learning materials, the supply of properly trained teaching staff, improving and strengthening teachers' professional competence through proper in-service, school inspections and supervision services and provision of finances. It also meant, to a larger extent, that communities were going to be involved in the governance and management of the schools.

The MoE had identified that the quality of education provided in DEC's was low. The DEC's lacked qualified teachers, infrastructure and basic teaching and learning materials (MoE, 1999). A solution to the issue was to deploy qualified teachers in the centres, introduce selection process in Form 1 in the institutions, enhance community participation through involvement of communities even on matters of selection and finally support the schools with adequate finances for the procurement of teaching and learning materials. The general understanding of the CDSS policy reform in Malawi was that the government was going to ensure that qualified teachers (teachers possessing diploma and degree certificates) were deployed in the CDSS's, resources like libraries, laboratories, science equipment, books and classrooms were to be provided. It was also expected that communities were going to take an active role in the management of the CDSS's. It was hoped that this would bring a positive impact on the students' achievement level, which in turn would improve the performance in national examinations.

To date, the CDSS's are still the highest provider of Secondary education in Malawi. According to the Education Management Information System (EMIS, 2007), there were 96 Conventional Secondary Schools (CSS's), 575 CDSS's, 27 Grant –Aided Secondary schools and 289 Private Secondary Schools. In the light of the above, the CDSS's enrolled the highest number of students than any other type of Secondary school as shown in Table 1.1:

Table 1. 1 Enrolment by school status

Status	Boys	Girls	Total
CDSS	58,406	40,766	99,172
CSS	25,144	17,590	42,734
GRANT AIDED	6,203	6,527	12,730
PRIVATE	26,073	22,677	48,750
GRAND TOTAL	115,826	87,560	203,386

Source: Education Management Information System, 2007.

Grant-aided secondary schools are secondary schools owned by the Churches but which receive some financial support from the government in the form of grants. The CSSs are public secondary schools with full support from the government. The CDSSs are secondary schools which were known as DEC's prior to the CDSS policy reform. These are in two categories: Approved and Non Approved. Approved CDSSs are those which had their own premises when the policy in question was being instituted. The Non Approved are those which were using borrowed premises at the time of the introduction of the policy reform. The general understanding at that time was that these Non Approved CDSSs were going to be upgraded to the status of Approved CDSSs once they acquired their own premises.

1.4 Statement of the problem

The poor quality of education manifested through poor performance by students in national examinations in the CDSSs both before and after the 1998 CDSS policy reform has continued to be an area of concern in the provision of secondary school education in Malawi. In the years before the CDSS policy was formulated, performance of students at Malawi Schools Certificate of Education (MSCE) in CDSSs, was poorer as compared to students in CSSs as shown in Table 1.2:

Table1. 2: M.S.C.E examination results for CDSSs and CSSs: 1991-1998

YEAR	M.S.C.E. Pass rate in CSSs	M.S.C.E Pass rate in the CDSSs
1991	62.0%	15.6%
1992	66.7%	13.1%
1993	69.5%	25.0%
1994	66.8%	23.2%
1995	55.7%	11.8%
1996	58.1%	11.2%
1997	40.9%	9.1%
1998	32.3%	5.0%

Source (Malawi National Examinations Board, 2006)

The table shows declines in performance of students in both CDSSs and CSSs but that the declines were worse in the CDSSs. However, it is observed that national examinations results at MSCE show similar trends in the subsequent years despite the policy reform in 1998. Performance of students in CDSSs in national examinations has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs although there is a gradual growth observed as illustrated by Table 1.3. It should also be noted that there are variations among individual schools to the extent that some CDSSs perform better than CSSs but the overall performance still remains that CSSs perform better than CDSSs as shown in Table 1.3.

Table1. 3 M.S.C.E examination results for CDSSs and CSSs: 1999- 2006

YEAR	MSCE PASS RATE IN CSSs	MSCE PASS RATE IN CDSSs
1999	27.8%	14.8%
2000	33.0%	11.4%
2001	37.70%	11.3%
2002	58.83%	18.25%
2003	64.48%	29.69%
2004	66.01%	36.20%
2005	63.31%	44.08%
2006	36.32%	21.11%

Source (Malawi National Examinations Board, 2006)

The table above shows that CDSSs have improved. This is demonstrated by the fact that the differences in students' performance with CSSs have narrowed. However, overall the CSSs still

perform better than the CDSSs. Moyo (2008) observed that the CDSS policy reform was meant to unify the type of secondary school education offered to the people. This understanding meant that some years after the implementation of the policy, the performance of the two sets of schools (CDSSs and CSSs) should be at par. Therefore, the fact that the performance of students in national examinations in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs eight years after the introduction of the CDSS policy reform means that there is a problem. It is important to investigate what exactly the problem is. It is important to understand why after many years of implementing the unification policy; the conditions in CDSSs are far from ideal. It is therefore important to investigate what the problem was in the policy reform processes. In many research studies the problems have been attributed to the high authorities at the Ministry of Education Headquarters. This confirms what Reimers and McGinn (1997) noted that it is common practice to identify only top officials in the education systems as policy-makers and hence responsible for all new policy problems. However, this study found it appropriate to investigate even those responsible for implementation of the policy at school level beginning with the Head teachers, teachers and students. Further, considering that the policy reform hinged on communities taking part in the management of the schools, the SMC and PTA members also participated to highlight their perceptions regarding their roles and expectations from the policy. The problem is significant as already stated above that more secondary school students are in CDSSs than in CSSs. While Moyo (2008) looked at the implementation of the policy reform in general, Chidalengwa (2006) compared factors which affected cognitive achievement in selected subjects. Further, Moyo (2008) observed that one of the problems that were identified in DECAs was lack of teaching and learning materials. The government of Malawi through the circular letter on the policy reform promised to address the problem of shortages of teaching and learning materials in the CDSSs. It is, therefore, important to investigate the current situation on teaching and learning materials in the CDSSs. In addition, unlike other studies, this study focused on all subjects taught in secondary schools in Malawi. Further, the study compared current situations which affected quality of education in CDSSs and CDSSs. This was not the case in the other studies.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine what education quality measures have been implemented and how they were implemented following the introduction of the CDSS policy reform which was aimed at unification of the Secondary school education offered in CDSSs and CSSs.

1.6 Aims and objectives of the study

The study was carried out to explore and examine the factors which have contributed to the continued poor performance of students in CDSSs compared to CSSs during national examinations in line with the 1998 CDSS policy reform ideals.

The specific objectives of the study included the following:

- To explore the extent to which qualified teachers were deployed in the CDSSs.
- To examine the professional competencies of teachers currently working in the CDSSs.
- To examine the level of availability of teaching and learning resources in the CDSS for students' use.
- To examine the impact of the implementation of the education quality measures on the quality of education in the CDSSs.

1.7 Research Questions

The study responded to the following set of research questions:

- 1) What were the education quality measures which were implemented during the 1998 CDSS policy reform?
- 2) How were the education quality measures implemented during the 1998 CDSS policy reform?
- 3) What are the social and psychological factors that affect students' performance in the CDSSs?
- 4) How has the implementation of the education quality measures impacted on the quality of education in the CDSSs?

1. 8 Rationale for the study

The rationale behind this study was to contribute to knowledge and enrich the policy debates on CDSSs which have been going on for some time now in terms of whether or not the issue of quality has been adequately addressed by the 1998 policy reform. Reimers and McGinn (1997) defined a policy as a statement of the actions to be preferred in the pursuit of one or more objectives of an organisation. In terms of the CDSS policy reform of 1998, the main objective was to improve the quality of education in the CDSSs which were observed to be providing lower quality of education when compared to the CSSs. Reimers and McGinn (1997) further observed that to implement a new policy, human, technical, material and financial resources must be allocated to the effort (Grindle and Thomas, 1991). In terms of the CDSS policy reform, the expectation was that the human resource aspect was going to be addressed through deployment of qualified teachers in the CDSSs. In this regard, other studies by McJessie-Mbewe (2002), Gwede (2004), and Chidalengwa (2008) focused on teachers' quality in terms of their professional grades and academic qualifications. This study goes beyond these two aspects by looking at the teachers' professional competences. The thinking is that academic and professional qualifications alone are not enough to determine teachers' quality. What are more critical are the behaviours and attitudes the teachers exhibit during the teaching and learning processes.

In addition to the above, Reimers and McGinn (1997), argued that not all policy change strategies produce positive benefits or results despite good intentions. Some may produce unintended or unforeseen results and or negative impacts. Considering that many policy reforms are long- term and the benefits and impacts do not show up immediately, monitoring of progress in the form of process indicators is important. Some of the process indicators relate to the set of prescribed implementation tasks of the policy reform. Tracking of these indicators would facilitate learning and error corrections which could help avoid negative policy impacts. Monitoring is also vital for purposes of accountability to ensure that policy managers and implementing agencies are fulfilling their prescribed obligations. Monitoring may be carried out by a variety of actors and not only the implementers themselves. Monitoring policy change requires mechanisms both for periodic review and for tracking policies across multiple agencies over several years. In all the studies conducted on the CDSS policy reform, however, the issue of

monitoring the implementation of the policy is not emphasised and therefore not adequately explored. This study addressed this area by investigating the availability of mechanisms in the education system which checks on the implementation of reforms in the sector and how these are utilised. The significance is more in that the majority of the students who are in secondary schools, according to EMIS (2008) are in CDSSs but are currently given a raw deal. The study attempted to contribute towards narrowing this education quality divide. Further, the study makes recommendations to policy makers not to stop at the formulation stage of the policies, but to continually monitor and assess what is happening at implementation so that the policy intent is achieved.

The thinking in this study was that if the gaps identified in the other studies as highlighted above could be addressed properly, then this area of study would be enriched in terms of knowledge for improvements in the education sector which would in the long run contribute to national development.

1. 9 Structure of the dissertation

In order to come up with a coherent discussion in this thesis, it has been structured in the following order each relating to specific themes. Chapter one gives a brief background to the study. It presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, aims and objectives of the study, research questions and rationale for the study. Chapter two discusses the literature related to the study. It presents two Education Quality Frameworks and other research evidences on critical education quality measures. Chapter three discusses research design and methodology of the study. Finally, the chapter also discusses methods of data collection. The research findings are presented and discussed in chapter four. Particular focus is on academic and professional qualifications of the teachers, teachers' professional competences, support mechanisms to enhance teachers' professional competences, the teaching and learning resources available in the CDSSs and students' psychological and sociological characteristics. In chapter five, conclusions are drawn and implications are outlined. Finally, recommendations are made to the government of Malawi on how the gaps in the CDSSs can be addressed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the issues contained in the related literature on policy implementation and the factors affecting quality of education. Although, to some extent the CDSSs are compared to CSSs, the focus is more on the CDSSs because the policy reform under scrutiny was meant to uplift the status of these schools to match that of CSSs. It was, therefore, the intention of this study to explore and investigate what has been done in the CDSSs to improve the quality of education so that the policy ideals are achieved. The education quality factors the study focused on were only those with documented reference of direct impact on performance of students. This review is necessary as Nisbet and Entwistle (1970) argued that reviewing previous work on the topic under study is the surest way of covering a wide range of possibilities. This chapter begins with a theoretical framework for education quality followed by empirical literature on factors affecting quality of education internationally in general, and CDSSs in Malawi, in particular. The chapter also gives a comparative analysis between the present and the previous studies on quality of secondary education in Malawi more specifically in the CDSSs. Some of the literature review is on primary school education because its education quality factors are similar to secondary school education.

2.1 The theoretical framework

In order to put the areas of concern into perspective for a better academic discussion, the study reviews four models: Basic Ugandan model, The Effective Schools and School Improvement Model, the policy implementation tasks framework and the education policy reform literature in other countries and related CDSS policy literature in Malawi.

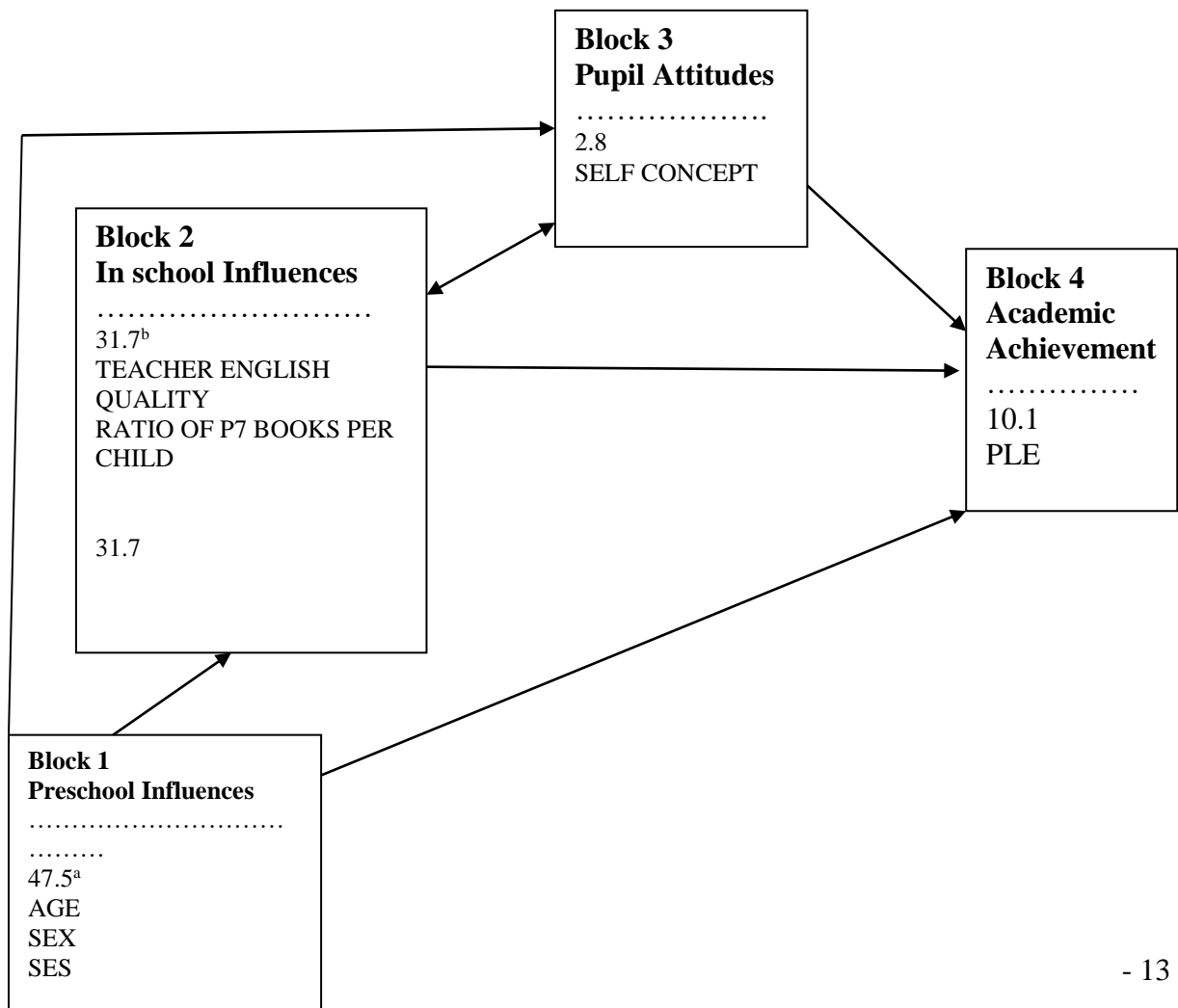
2.2 Basic Ugandan Model on Factors Affecting Quality of Education.

According to Farell (1989), during the early 1970s, a series of studies concerning factors that affect student achievement in developing countries similar to those undertaken in the United States and United Kingdom began to be reported beginning with Chile (Schiefelbein and Farell, 1973) and then Uganda (Heyneman, 1976). Results of these studies and many that followed showed a marked difference between developing and industrial nations in the importance of

school related factors on student achievement. The quality of the school (in-school variables) seemed to influence student achievement more in developing nations than in industrial nations where school quality was overshadowed by the child's background (out of school variables).

In line with the developments as highlighted above, the International study of Education Achievement (IEA) has been pursuing questions of academic performance with the corporation of educational administrators in 19 countries. It sponsored the testing of pupils in mathematics, science, reading comprehension, English and French as foreign languages, literature and civics. Following the results of the studies conducted in the 19 countries, the following model known as the Ugandan Basic Model; Proportionate effects of three variable Blocks on the 10.1 percent Explicable Achievement Variance was developed.

Figure 1: Ugandan Basic Model: Proportionate effects of three variable Blocks on the 10.1 percent Explicable Achievement Variance (Heyneman, 1976)



The model demonstrates that teacher characteristics, availability of materials like books combined with students' attitudes significantly contribute to student achievement.

In the Uganda study, the IEA model accounted for 10.1 percent of the total variance in academic achievement. Of this 10.1 percent, 47.9 percent (4.9) was attributed to preschool influences; 31.7 percent of it (3.18) to school influences, and 20.8 percent (2.02) to attitudinal effects (figure 1). Schiefelbein and Farrell (1974, 1975) suggested that relatively more variance in physical facilities will be found among societies at lower levels of industrialization. However, this may not be true in Africa where the educational role of the central government tends to be more pronounced. In Uganda, for example, it was found that a particular facility or teacher characteristics has more effect on less privileged children. Coleman et al. (1966) found this to be the case with laboratories. The availability of enough text books for use by each student (of critical value in areas of lower teacher quality) and the quality of the teachers have proved to be critical determinants of good quality of education especially in less industrialised societies.

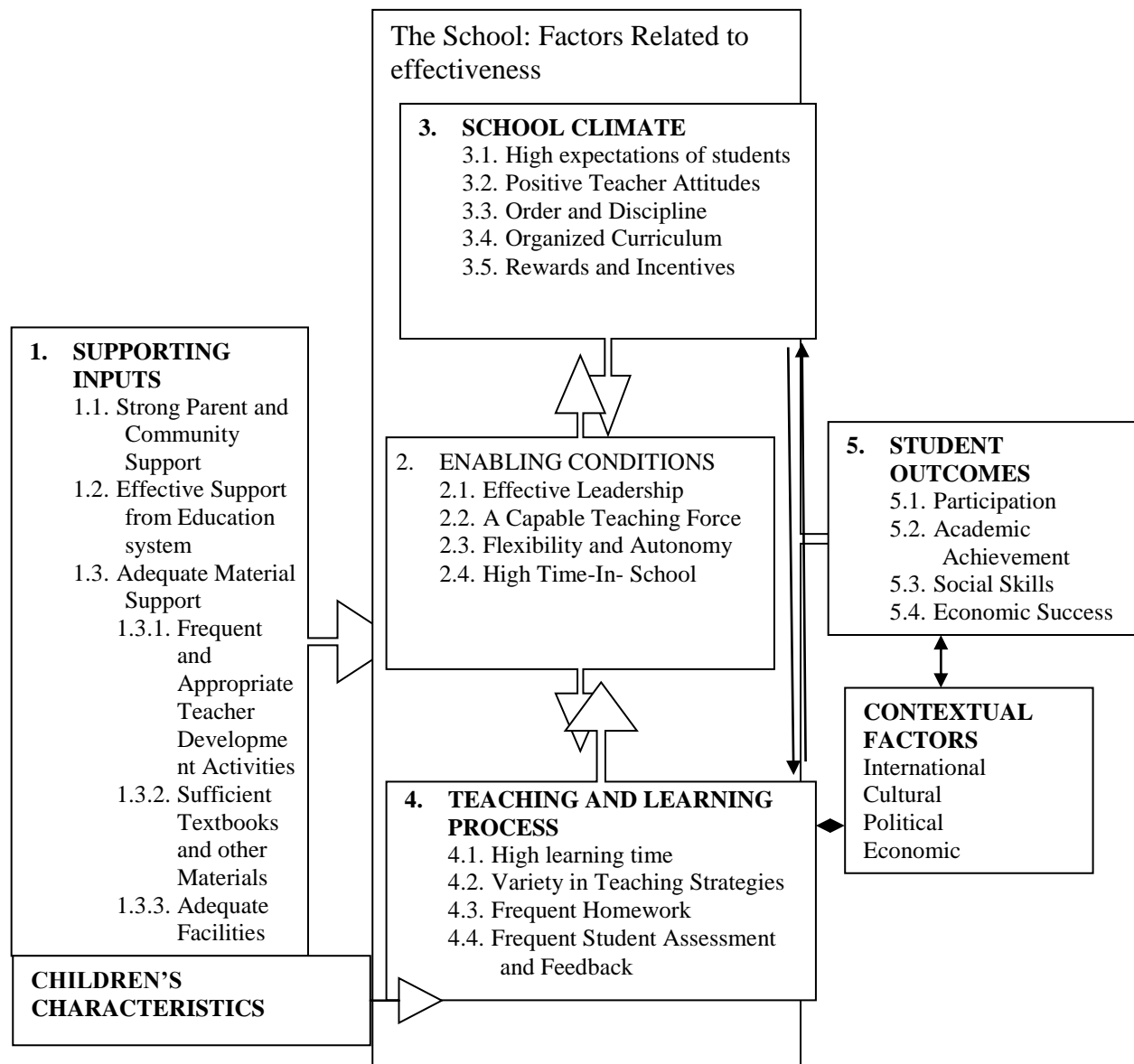
2.3 The Effective Schools and School Improvement Model

The effective Schools and School Improvement model is consistent with the Ugandan model in terms of the three critical variables which significantly affect education quality. However, the effective schools' research identifies other variables to the list making a total of eighteen variables. The research used quantitative input-output analyses of data from large scale surveys to identify significant systems-wide variables. School Improvement research on the other hand, relies on in-depth qualitative case study methods to understand process variables within schools more fully including an understanding of which inputs are most significant. Both traditions should be considered considering that assigning some studies to one tradition or the other may be arbitrary. Heneveld and Craig (1996) observed that it was important that such studies on effective schools and school Improvement considered developing countries because what is workable in the industrialised countries cannot always be generalized to the developing countries. To this end, the effective schools literature is based on the research some of which have been done on developing country education systems. Research from the Effective Schools movement uses the production function system to determine causal relationships between educational inputs and process on one hand, and student outcomes on the other. The emphasis is

on using quantitative analytic techniques to determine how much of student's academic achievement can be explained by different inputs.

The School Effectiveness and School Improvement research traditions look at the problem of how to make schools effective from different perspectives that complement each other. To make use of the findings that are common to both traditions, there is need for a conceptual framework that integrates them in a form that can be used for programme planning. Based on the review of the literature on factors that determine School Effectiveness, therefore, Heneveld and Craig (1996) developed a Conceptual Framework that identified eighteen key factors that influence student outcomes. The factors are divided into four categories as follows: (i) supporting inputs from outside the school, (ii) enabling conditions, (iii) school climate and (iv), the teaching and learning process. All of these interact with each other and are themselves influenced by the concept surrounding the school. The diagram summarises the characteristics of the factors and their general relationship to each other in influencing educational outcomes. For each of the factors, conclusions were taken from the research to formulate operational definitions and to select indicators that show how present each factor is in a school.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework: Factors that determine school effectiveness
 (An adaptation from Heyneman, (1976): Influences on Academic Achievement: A Comparison of Results from Uganda and More Industrialised Societies. Sociology of Education)



2.4 Critical education variables from the Conceptual Framework

Although the Conceptual Framework identified eighteen variables for education quality, this study will concentrate on eleven of these due to their consistency with both previous and present studies on the subject. In addition, their significance on student achievement is somehow greater than the others. These are elaborated below.

2.4.1 A Capable Teaching Force

The Conceptual Framework divides the characteristics of teachers in effective schools into two categories. There are conditions that the literature suggests make the teachers in a school capable of being effective, and there are the behaviours and attitudes they exhibit in their work. Attitudes and behaviours fall under the factors of the school climate and of the teaching/learning processes. Among the conditions that define the capability of a school's teaching force are: (i) the teacher's mastery of the materials they are supposed to teach (Huberman and Miles, 1984; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). (ii) the amount of teaching experience they have Haddad et al. 1990) (iii) the length of time they have been in a school (Purkey and Smith, 1983) and (iv) the extent to which the group is full time in the school (Fuller 1986). It is expected that African schools like schools elsewhere, will also be effective if they have teachers who know the subject matter, who have experience, who are stable in their assignment and are always available in the school to attend to students' academic needs.

2.4.2 Positive Teacher Attitudes

Positive teacher attitudes can help improve the quality of education of a particular school. Literature confirms that schools are more effective when teachers have confidence in their ability to teach, care about teaching and about their students and cooperate with each other (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Duttweiler and Mutchler, 1990; Huberman and Miles 1984; Joyce, Hersh and McKibbin 1983; Levine 1990; Purkey and Smith 1983; Shann, 1990). These characteristics are reflected in the teachers' comfort in using learning materials and in trying new ideas, by low teacher absenteeism and tardiness, and in a high level of group involvement in planning teaching and in resolving whole school issues. Such characteristics can be strengthened by providing regular in-service trainings to the teachers. Changed attitudes and behaviours and new skills and strategies are the result of most in-service programmes (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Heneveld and Hasan 1989). In their study and review of educational systems in selected developing countries, Dalin et al. (1992) Farell (1989) and Fuller (1989) found that local in-service trainings particularly those focused on pedagogical skills, were key determinants for teacher mastery and student achievement. A relatively short pre-service training programme followed by relevant, practical participatory in-service programmes were highly recommended.

In African primary schools, it is expected that student achievement will be enhanced too by a positive teacher attitude, but teachers' general lack of subject mastery and lack of confidence in the ability to teach probably hinders the development of such attitudes (World Bank, 1994). It is observed that what enhances student achievement in primary school has similar effects on secondary school education hence the need to focus on teacher attitude in this study.

2.4.3 Variety in Teaching Strategies

Students' differences and learning needs can be better accommodated by teachers employing a variety of teaching practices (Hathaway 1983; Joyce, Hersh and McKibbin, 1983; Levine, 1990; Shann, 1990). These teaching practices may include individual assignments with worksheets, class discussion, group work, explaining, drill-and-practice, asking questions and cross age tutoring. An emphasis on higher order thinking is important. In his review of five studies in developing countries, Fuller (1986) found confirming evidence in four of these that when a teacher spends more time preparing for class, these preparations raised the quality of instruction and improved student achievement

2.4.4 Frequent Student Assessment and Feedback

Frequent monitoring of student progress in conjunction with prompt constructive feedback are factors that enhance school motivation and school effectiveness (Blum, 1990; Brubaker and Partine, 1986; Hersh and McKibbin, 1983; Lezotte and Bancroft, 1985; Scheerens and Creemers 1989; Steller, 1988). Edmonds (1979) observed that frequent assessments of students' progress could lead to school effectiveness. Monitoring student work helps teachers diagnose what students know and where further instruction is needed. These regular evaluation procedures and feedback should be an integral aspect of the curriculum. Research from developing countries demonstrating the effectiveness of close monitoring of student work and prompt constructive feedback confirms these positive results elsewhere (Ariagada, 1981; Lockheed and Komenan, 1989).

2.4.5 Teaching/ Learning Process

High learning time refers to the amount of time a student spends on a learning activity during which he or she is achieving a high rate of success. This learning time can be maximised when classroom time is used efficiently. Teachers in effective schools waste less class time in starting and ending instructional activities; they select curriculum activities which are appropriate to students' abilities, they emphasise academic instruction and active learning strategies; and they provide immediate constructive feedback to students (Berliner and Casanova, 1989; Blum 1990; Joyce, Hersh and McKibbin, 1983; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Robinson, 1985). Research from a variety of countries has shown that both the amount of time available for instruction as well as how well this time is used by students and teachers is consistently related to how much children learn at school (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991).

2.4.6 Frequent Homework

Giving homework to students can help improve student outcomes. Assignments and the close evaluation of homework boost student learning even in developing countries (Fuller, 1986; Haddad et al. 1990). Homework implies to students that learning is more than just a classroom activity, and that independent learning is valued. When teachers check homework and provide students with constructive feedback, they let students know that they care about their progress as well as the assessment of that progress (Joyce, Hersh and McKibbin, 1983). While the giving of homework is strongly recommended in African Primary schools, this may be difficult to implement because of the lack of available out-of- class time, of materials to take home or of light at home in the evening. In secondary schools in Malawi, the same problems apply. Students lack materials to take home. In addition, light is a big problem in most homes especially for CDSS students. Studying at night, therefore, is a very difficult task.

2.5 Effective support from the Education System

Support to individual schools by the Education system's management structure is important to enhance school effectiveness (Huberman and Miles, 1984; Purkey and Smith, 1983). The literature suggests that in terms of demonstrating its support, the system needs (i) to delegate the responsibility for improvement to the schools themselves (Blum, 1990); (ii) to communicate expectations and exert pressure where necessary for successful academic results (Levine, 1990);

(iii) to provide services to the schools to help them succeed including information and training regarding instructional practices and protection from political turbulence (Blum, 1990) Huberman and Miles, 1984). To monitor and evaluate schools' academic performance and the efforts of the school heads, particularly as instructional managers (Blum, 1990; Dalin et al. 1992). The establishment of a system of clearly defined policies for authority delegation and of expected students' competencies is necessary to promote high academic standards.

2.5.1 Adequate supply of textbooks

The impact of text book use is far much greater in African countries because of their scarcity compared with the abundance of textbooks available in industrial countries. The evidence is very strong that children in developing countries who have access to textbooks and other reading materials learn more than those who do not have access (Farell 1989, Heyneman, Farell and Sepulveda-Stuardo, 1981; Heyneman and Loxley 1984; Lockheed and Verspoor and associates 1991). Harbison and Hanusheck (1992) found that improved facilities were systematically beneficial to student learning in rural North East Brazil when these facilities were defined as a hardware composite of classrooms, sanitation facilities offices and storerooms.

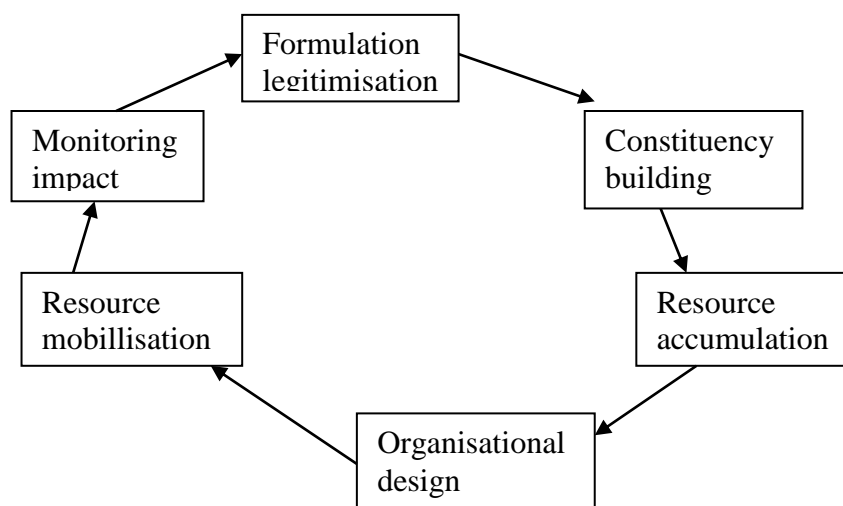
On sufficient textbooks and other materials and adequate facilities, Chimombo (1999) observed that work within primary schools continues to register positive achievement effects from the textbook supplies and utilisation. While other studies have focused on the availability of the resources alone, Chimombo (1999) noted that mere availability of the textbooks *per-se* cannot help bring about the intended quality education. There is need to assess how this critical education quality resource is utilised in the schools.

2.5.2 Students' attitudes and expectations

One of the factors that affect student achievement is the attitude of the student. The type of attitude in a person usually develops as a result of both psychological and sociological factors surrounding an individual. Most educators agree that "the behaviour of children in a school, especially their achievement in academic subjects, is partly a function of social and cultural characteristics of the school social system," that is the school's climate (Bookover et al. 1977).

On students' expectations, there is considerable evidence in the research literature that high staff expectations for all students to do well contribute to making an effective school (Brubaker and Partine, 1986; Chubb and Moe, 1990; Fredrick, 1987; Joyce; Hersh and McKibbin, 1983; Levine, 1990 Lezotte and Bancroft, 1985; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Robinson, 1985; Scheerens and Creemers, 1989; Steller, 1988). In effective schools, the concept of the school as a place of commitment to learning is communicated clearly by the head teacher; teachers and students' performance is monitored regularly. In addition, student assignments are sufficiently frequent and difficult so as to convey this high expectation and teachers' confidence in students' abilities. Further, confidence in students is reinforced by giving them many opportunities to take responsibility for school activities. These expectations translate into more positive self concepts and greater self reliance among students.

2.6 Figure 3: The policy implementation task framework-(Adapted from Brinkerhoff and Crosby, (2002 p. 32) Managing Policy Implementation)



Policy implementation task framework

The framework is useful in the implementation of new policy reforms in a number of ways. First it can help to assess where the policy implementation process stands at any given point and provide a more accurate view as to what steps to take next and how long the process might take to accomplish. Further, it may be used as a diagnostic instrument for pin-pointing potential or existing trouble spots, problems and roadblocks facing the policy reform effort. Additionally, it

can be of considerable assistance in mapping out implementation strategies. Finally, it makes it simpler to identify what needs to be done and when (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002).

What is very clear in the policy implementation task framework is the issue of monitoring the implementation process at every stage (Brinkerhoff and Crosby, 2002). It was therefore critical that the study explored as to whether the stages were observed during the CDSS policy reform implementation. This was more especially considering that policy implementation is rarely a linear and coherent process as evidenced by the fact that the much desired change is rarely straight forward.

2.6.1 Education policy reform implementation literature from other countries

Before looking at the literature of how Malawi implemented the CDSS policy reform, it was important for the study to look at what literature tells us on the implementation of education reforms in other countries. In this regard, the study looked at education policy implementation in three other countries according to Haddad, (1995).

First, in Peru, the government undertook a policy reform in a synoptic and comprehensive model embracing the entire education system. Although, the policy reform was well calculated and comprehensive as it was developed through a systematic process of diagnosis, response and action within a carefully planned programme, it failed to achieve the intended results due to lack of the monitoring mechanism of the implementation process.

Second, in the 1970s, the government of Jordan introduced a policy of secondary school diversification to resolve issues of man power supply and employment. While Peru used a synoptic approach with very minimal monitoring, Jordan used an incremental approach with intensified impact assessment. The result was that the education policy reform contributed towards the economic boom of the country.

Third and final in this study, in 1966, the government of Thailand introduced a scheme to pilot a new policy for secondary school diversification whose aim was to resolve a perceived mismatch between general secondary school education and the needs of a swiftly changing labour market.

Ten years later, based on the monitoring reports, it was expanded on two levels: geographically to cover the nation, and politically to resolve strategic issues of equity, democratisation and national unity. The broadened policy was well received and implemented. It was relatively successful in meeting its main objectives.

What the above literature is telling us is that there is need to continually make an assessment of how a policy reform is being implemented and what impacts are being observed. It was therefore prudent for this study to review the implementation and impacts of the CDSS policy reform.

2.7 Literature on Education Quality

The degree of participation and performance by students in the education processes is regarded as an indicator of its quality. According to Chakwera (2005), the main indicator of education quality is students' performance in national examinations. The World Bank Policy Study, (1996, p.31) noted:

“The quality of a school or education system is properly defined by the performance of its students and graduates- the so-called output”.

It is, therefore, generally believed that the quality of education is achieved when children reach their fullest potential in terms of cognitive, emotional and creative capacities (UNESCO, 2004). During examinations, candidates are asked to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills acquired over a certain period of time. Schools which offer good quality education demonstrate this fact through their students scoring well in the examinations. Examination scores are what are referred to as '*outcomes*' in a quality framework. However, there are other measures of quality which contribute to the outcomes/outputs.

Consistent with Coleman et al. (1974) Heyneman (1976); in defining variables concerned with quality of education, Adams (1995), UNICEF (2005) and UNESCO (2005) agreed on six broad categories of variables. They are:

1. Quality in terms of outputs and outcomes (for example; performance during examinations)
2. Quality in terms of content of material delivered to learners.

3. Quality in terms of resources and inputs
4. Quality in terms of reputation (whether stakeholders view the education institutions in high esteem or not).
5. Quality in terms of the process of delivering the content material.
6. Quality as value-added.

2.7.1 Quality as outputs and outcomes

Within the education *quality* framework, it may be appropriate to begin by looking at quality as outputs and outcomes as a starting point. Outputs may be referred to as the immediate results of the teaching, learning, management or governance activities undertaken to make learning happen. On the other hand, outcomes refers to longer term benefits of the learner or community resulting from education. This may include advancement in employment, health, and social justice (Uganda Ministry of Education, 2005). As alluded to earlier on, improved performance in examinations is one of the key indicators of improved quality of education. It therefore, follows that, where performance of students during examinations is poor, the education and the institution in general is described as poor with regard to quality education. This understanding is very much popular among policy-makers (Adams, 1995). Typical measures of this understanding of quality of education are the achievements in cognitive skills and high promotion rates to the next levels of education. This is common among professional bodies of accreditation and is also extensively reflected in the work of international agencies such as UNESCO (Adams, 1995). In terms of education quality as outputs with regard to the CDSSs, a number of studies have been carried out. Gwede (2005) observed that six years after the introduction of the CDSS policy reform, quality of education remained poor. Chakwera, (2005) observed that performance of students was still poor in the CDSSs. However, not much has been said on education outcomes for those people who have had their education through the CDSSs. Nonetheless, this study does not focus on this gap as well.

2.7.2 Quality as inputs and resources

In terms of inputs and resources, World Bank Review Report (1995, p. 83) observed that:

“A wide variety of policies and inputs tailored to specific conditions, can bring about effective teaching and learning.”

According to the Uganda Ministry of Education (2005), this may refer to any resource that is provided to the education system such as teachers, school buildings and instructional materials. Physical resources, the number and educational qualifications of teachers and the extent to which teachers, school buildings, instructional materials and other available facilities are used at the school, feature highly when it comes to the analysis of the quality of education in terms of resources and inputs. From this perspective, availability of laboratories, libraries, books, qualified teachers and the commitment of the students themselves is deemed critical in the analysis of education quality at that level (Milner et al, 2003). However, in whatever case, the mastery of subjects by teachers, an intended outcome of pre-service training, is strongly and consistently related to student performance (Adams, 1995). This was also confirmed by the World Bank Review Report (1995, p. 82) which observed that:

“Teachers with a better knowledge of the subject matter and greater written and verbal language proficiency have better performing students”

With regard to the CDSSs, Gwede (2005) observed that the resources supplied to the CDSSs have been inadequate even after the introduction of the CDSS policy reform. However, he did not proceed to explain why the situation continued to be like that. This study questions the status quo and gives the reasons which were analysed through consultations and interviews with officials responsible for budgets in the Ministry of Education.

2.7.3 Quality as content delivered to learners

Quality in terms of content reflects the agreed subject matter taught in schools in a country, community or institution. This may reflect the type of knowledge and skills to be taught in schools with due regard to the agreed curriculum. However, Adams (1995) noted that content is not an adequate synonym of a curriculum since the curriculum may be conceived as a process of interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves. This interaction involves a wide variety of cognitive, affective and social activities in the search for meaning. In case of the CDSSs, it is important to check whether the content

delivered to the students is standardized. It is learnt that the government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education controls what is taught in schools. However, this is in principle but there may be some variations in the content taught by different schools during the implementation of the curriculum. Variations have been noted by many researchers on the content used by some schools depending on the circumstances in the schools.

2.7.4 Quality as reputation of the school/ system

According to Adams (1995) education quality when considered in terms of reputation, refers to the perceptions stakeholders have on the type of education offered. Employers and other stakeholders make comments in terms of the suitability for employment of those who complete certain levels of education. When stakeholders' perceptions of the education offered are good, it implies that the education offered is of good quality and when the perceptions are poor, it also means that the quality of education offered is poor as well. MacJessie-Mbewe (2005) observed that students' and community's perception of the CDSSs was generally poor. Since this gap was already addressed in the study above, it is not the main interest of the present study to focus on it. However, some references will be drawn to the observations made in the study.

2.7.5 Quality as the process of content delivery

On quality as the process of content delivery to learners, Adams (1995) suggested that the nature of the intra-institutional interaction of students, teachers and other educators, or '*quality of life*' of the programme, school or system should be valued. The Uganda Ministry of Education (2005), described the processes of content delivery as the teaching, learning, management and governance activities undertaken to make learning happen. This understanding is from the fact that teaching is only said to have taken place if learning has taken place. The teaching/learning relationship can be equated to that of a seller/client relationship where selling only takes place when a client buys some items. Teachers usually prepare for their lessons and the fact is that when a student is taken through the prepared processes, he/she internalises some knowledge and skills. The teacher, for example, may begin with a theoretical presentation and conclude a lesson with a practical example.

Such a process will ensure that the desired knowledge and skills are acquired. Perhaps this is the reason why teachers need to be well trained for their job.

It is, therefore, important to note that having the resources/inputs in place in the schools is one thing, but making use of them is yet another. The process should, therefore, ensure that the resources/inputs are used in such a way that learning will be said to have taken place at the end. It is for this reason that quality as inputs/resources work hand in hand with the processes of content delivery.

The duty of a teacher in this case is to ensure that the content as it appears in the books is explained and simplified so that the students understand it better. It requires mastery of the subject matter for the teacher to achieve this. In this study, delivery of content was focused on beginning with the planning for lessons, the teaching/learning process and the students' evaluation undertaken by the teacher in the CDSSs.

It has been alluded to earlier on that students have different learning capabilities and because of this reason, there is need for teachers to use varied approaches and methodologies in their teaching to cater for a wide spectrum of their students' needs in the learning process. Therefore, this study focused on the quality of the available teachers in the CDSSs. The thinking was that if quality teachers were deployed in the CDSSs, it was going to be one way of ensuring that quality education is provided in the CDSSs. This study was intended to find out if qualified teachers were indeed deployed in the CDSSs.

2.7.6 Quality as value-added

Quality as “*value added*” refers to the impacts, influence, or effects of the institution or system on the student. This, therefore looks at how effectively the student has changed because of the programme, the culture and the norms of the school. These factors if assimilated can influence change of behavior in the students. As they change due to the school influences, the likelihood becomes high for them to achieve their potential. The change in behaviour being examined could focus not only on the individual students, but also on social groups or institutions. The “*value added*” understanding implies that the higher the quality of the

education, the more the contribution to the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the students. Here, the focus is on some assessment of students' growth and development. In practice, this understanding works better by combining output or outcome considerations with important baseline data on the student at the point of entry to the school (Adams, 1995).

2.7.7 Identifying quality variables for the present study

As observed, some of the six education quality variables are controlled by the state in Malawi. For example, the content taught in CDSSs is the same as that taught in CSSs. The issue of quality as *Value-Added* on the other hand, was not articulated in the CDSS policy reform. Furthermore, MacJessie-Mbewe, (2004) tackled the issue of education quality as reputation where it was found that stakeholders' perceptions of CDSSs were poor. The issue of education quality as outcomes and outputs has already been discussed by other researchers like Gwede (2005) and Chakwera (2005) where it was generally found that performance of students during examinations was generally poor in the CDSSs. This has been the case both before and after the policy reform. MSCE examination results from 1991 to 2006 confirm these assertions. However, there may be some remarkable differences in the process of content delivery in the CDSSs and in CSSs depending on the type of teachers, the students and the teaching and learning resources available.

On the type of teachers, for example, teachers' professional competence is manifested in the process of content delivery to learners and as such, the quality of planning and scheming by teachers in preparation for teaching is very vital. Further to this, the planned activities should aim at developing pupils critical thinking, problem solving skills and creativity, active involvement and participation of pupils in the learning process. Therefore, emphasis is made on maximum utilisation of time for lessons, and the use of appropriate instructional materials in the teaching process in the CDSSs. Finally, the quality and frequency of assessment and the records kept, are considered at both CDSSs and CSSs for comparability purposes.

With regard to teachers' professional competence, Adams (1995) observed that effective teaching and learning takes place when required teaching and learning materials are

available. However, it is also observed that in many settings, the length of the school day, time spent on particular curriculum areas, and the efficient use of instructional time within classrooms are more strongly determined by management practices than by material parameters (Adams, 1995). This implies that the available resources alone are not sufficient but require their effective use on the part of both the teacher and the learners to bring the intended results.

Further to what has been discussed above, it is also noted that classes vary enormously in the period of time actually spent on instructional tasks rather than keeping order, checking each students' homework, or arranging lessons. Efficient time management in the class room is strongly related to pupils' performance within industrialised nations (Adams, 1995). Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) also observed that good time management when teaching led to student achievement in developing countries. Teachers, therefore, need knowledge and skills to achieve competency in this area. The competencies however need to be enhanced in the system through inspection and supervision services. A qualified teacher will more often ensure that time is properly utilised.

On education quality in terms of resources and inputs which partly impact on the process of content delivery, SACMEQ report for Malawi (Milner *et al.* 2003), observed that although its intended focus was the primary school education sector, the six policy related questions on educational inputs still hold across all educational levels as follows:

- ✓ What are the learning characteristics of pupils?
- ✓ What are the academic and professional qualifications of the teachers?
- ✓ What are the teaching conditions in the schools?
- ✓ What aspects of the teaching function designed to improve the quality of education are in place?
- ✓ What is the general condition of school buildings?
- ✓ What level of access do students have to books?

By emphasising on qualified teachers' deployment in CDSSs and increasing resource allocation to them, the policy reform of 1998 was actually trying to respond to the issues raised in the questions as highlighted. This study was intended to assess if CDSSs were made at par with CSSs and this explains why the study is guided by the framework described above.

2.8 Other research evidences of critical education quality measures

A number of studies have been conducted on factors that affect quality of education. However, in many cases, education quality factors that do not directly affect students' cognitive achievements have been highlighted. To this end, Chidalengwa (2006) observed that some education factors are not about effectiveness in themselves, but their importance is based on the fact that they lead to effectiveness. One example, in this respect, is the availability of a classroom. So far, no studies have explicitly demonstrated that those who learn inside a classroom perform better than those who learn in the open air. In this study, therefore, only those factors with empirical reference of having a direct bearing on students' cognitive achievements are discussed. They are quality of teachers and students and the availability of books and laboratories. The system itself in terms of mechanisms for quality is equally discussed. The understanding here is that it is the system that regulates the education quality factors to produce positive results on students' achievements.

This part, therefore, will discuss various literature both local and international on education quality factors with empirical evidence of having a direct impact on performance of students. As indicated earlier, this will focus on quality of a teacher, material inputs, content delivery and quality of the learners. At the end, the section gives a brief analysis of the previous studies on the subject and the significance of the present study.

2.8.1 Teachers' quality

Quality of a teacher as discussed above is one of the factors that directly affect quality of education in terms of cognitive achievement. Studies have demonstrated that teachers as resources to the schools play a very important role in the learning process. Anderson (1991),

argued that it is through teachers and teaching that to a large extent, the learning process is organised. Anderson, (1991, p.24) further noted that:

“A teacher works within a school with certain structures and curricula. The teacher plans the environment of the class, organises and manages the class, determines the detailed content and its sequencing and pacing, the overall structure of the lessons, the homework, the feedback mechanisms to know how each pupil is getting on and the corrective measures to be made”

Consistent with the view on teacher quality above, achievement effects are more consistent with teachers' length of tertiary education and the number of teacher training courses attended (Adams, 1995). This view is further advanced by Fuller, (1996, p.34) who noted that:

“In 21 of the 30 studies, a significant association between teachers' level of general university or specific teacher training and the later achievement of their pupils was found. One study of 89 secondary schools in west Malaysia (7,674 pupils) found a notable correlation between the length of teacher training and student achievement ($r=.27$)”

Fuller, (1996, p. 48) also noted that:

“In Bolivia, a study of 53 primary and secondary schools found a relationship between students' achievement and the head teacher's length of tertiary education. The magnitude of this factor was comparable to the influence of expenditures per pupil in a simple model which included just seven other school quality factors. Each of the two predictors of achievement was stronger than the student's social class background”

All the above assertions confirm the fact that teachers' quality in terms of qualifications and knowledge have a bearing on the achievement levels of the students. In line with this understanding, the CDSS policy reform promised deployment of qualified teachers to the CDSSs. A deliberate move was made to train the unqualified teachers at Domasi College of Education through a special programme: Secondary School Teachers Education Programme (SSTEP). This study, therefore, focused on how these teachers were deployed to the CDSSs after qualification.

According to Waterhouse and Dickinson (2001), in classes run by effective teachers, pupils were aware about what they were doing and why they were performing a particular activity.

Anderson (1991), added that effective teaching is concerned with how best to bring about the desired pupil learning by some educational activity. Waterhouse and Dickinson (2001), further argued that effective teachers are very actively involved with their pupils at all times. It is therefore concluded that one will only become an effective teacher if one makes effective learning to take place. For this reason effective teachers are those who employ a variety of teaching strategies and techniques to engage pupils and keep them on task.

Waterhouse and Dickinson (2001), also argued that effective teachers achieve the management of the class by having a clear structure for each lesson, making full use of planned time, using a realistic and practical pace and allocating his/her time fairly amongst pupils. In this case, activities run smoothly, transitions are brief and little time is lost getting organized to start a particular phase of the teaching/ learning process or dealing with disruptions like students' noise or movements (Waterhouse and Dickinson, 2001).

From the above observations, it becomes clear that teachers are probably the most important component in the educative process. Rose and Kadzamira (2003) observed that Ministry of Education does not have the culture of consulting the lower levels of the education system in the formulation of policies. The observation was confirmed by McJessie-Mbewe (2004), Gwede (2005) and Moyo (2008). However, this study observed that those at lower levels of the education system, like the teachers, are very critical for the success of any policy reform. If they are not pleased with the policy reform, they can frustrate the efforts of the higher authorities in terms of the actual implementation of the policy reform. Warwick *et al.* (1992) observed that implementation of an innovation is most likely to succeed when those directly responsible for carrying out that innovation understand its purposes and methods, are able and motivated to carry it out; and do what it necessary to make it happen. In view of the observations made, this research study investigated the quality of teachers in the CDSSs in terms of academic qualifications, professional grades, motivation, and teacher support from the education system. The thinking was that these are the actual implementers of the CDSSs policy reform and therefore very critical and its success or failure depends on the caliber of teachers in the CDSSs.

2.8.2 Methods of content delivery to learners

Related to the issue of teacher quality in terms of professional competences discussed above, are the various methods the teacher employs to cater for all learners with different abilities. In this respect, the Ministry of Education emphasises to all teachers to use a variety of methods in order to reach all the learners. This is because research has proved that some learn better by seeing, or by dancing, while others learn better by touching, by counting, by singing or by analysing.

Consistent with the Ministry of Education (2003), the Ugandan Ministry of Education (2005, p.17) made the following observations to meet individual learners' needs:

- ❖ The quality of planning and scheming by teachers in preparation for teaching. It is important for teachers to read adequately in preparation for lessons. After reading, there is need to plan for the lesson so that the lesson process is sequential following prescribed steps. Within this process, the teacher previews the anticipated difficult parts of the lessons and comes up with appropriate remedies before its actual delivery to learners.
- ❖ The relevance of the teaching to the real needs of the learners. Learners need not learn everything just for the sake of learning. What is taught should be relevant to the learner and to the society at large. This means that the learner should be able to draw a relationship between what is learnt and his/her every day experiences.
- ❖ The selection and effective use of varied and appropriate methods of teaching and learning. Learners have different abilities and different ways of learning. As such, the teacher should employ a variety of methodologies to reach every learner under his/her charge.
- ❖ The active involvement and participation of the learners in the learning process. When learners participate in the teaching/learning process, it becomes very difficult for them to forget the concepts learnt. They will always remember because they were actively involved and were part of the learning process. The issues learnt through participation are easily internalised.
- ❖ The extent to which time is fully utilised and lessons well paced. In many cases, time is wasted at school because of late starting of lessons by teachers as well as late reporting for classes by the students. A quality school will always maximize teacher/student learning time.
- ❖ The level of collaboration among the teachers in the planning of their work. There is power in unity. At school level, the teachers need to work hand in hand assisting one another professionally. Weak teachers get strengthened by experienced teachers in the process and at the end of it all, all teachers work effectively resulting in improved performance of the students.
- ❖ The effectiveness with which records of learner progress and attendance are kept. Even when the teachers are doing a very good job, as long as there are no proper records, it becomes difficult to identify the learners' needs and therefore, individual learners' problems cannot effectively be addressed. There is

also need to have records of students' attendance so that those who absent themselves regularly can be reproached and assisted accordingly”.

All the above points by the Ugandan Ministry of Education highlight the professional competences of a quality teacher with regard to behaviour and attitudes. As explained earlier, one of the aims of the study was to explore the competences of teachers currently teaching in the CDSSs. This was going beyond what the previous studies on this area have focused on. These elements above were, therefore, focused on during the study and it exposed a number of shortcomings on the part of the teachers in the CDSSs.

2.8.3 Material inputs

Another factor with proven empirical evidence of directly affecting education quality in terms of students' achievement is the availability of material inputs for the teaching and learning processes. Studies have demonstrated that the level of material inputs for teaching and learning has an effect on education quality. According to Adams (1995), the level of material inputs per pupil (including text books, desks and writing materials) undoubtedly influences students' achievements. Children learn differently, some would learn better by seeing, others would do it better by being actively involved. This calls for the use of a variety of methods by teachers in the teaching process as explained earlier on and this again calls for a variety of teaching and learning materials to be put into use. Research has shown that students who have access to books both at home and at school, develop a reading culture and therefore, improve in their reading abilities unlike students who only access a book at school.

The influence of textbooks on students' achievements appears to be stronger within rural schools and among students from lower income families. Fuller, (1996, p.30) for example, observed that:

“ In rural Brazil, students with parents who had received no education were almost three times as likely to pass primary school if they had used two or more books, (67 percent graduating as compared to 24 percent graduating) of students in the same group who had no textbooks in school”

The World Bank (2004) described Malawi as the 5th poorest country in the world. This tells us that most students come from low income families and therefore students' access to books, both at school and at home, is very important if effective cognitive achievement is to take place. Due to extreme poverty levels at household level, most families cannot afford to buy textbooks for their children. The understanding and the general expectations from the public was that after the policy reform, the CDSSs would be able to provide adequate teaching and learning materials like text books. However, Chimombo (1999) observed that Malawi does not have the economic vitality to effectively manage large scale reforms. The CDSS policy reform is one of the large-scale policy reforms. This is the reason why the study investigated the availability of critical teaching and learning materials like text books considering the economic challenges for Malawi as highlighted above. The thinking was that if these were adequately supplied to the CDSSs, then we would conclude that good quality education is now being offered in these institutions as a result of the policy reform and therefore, we would be in a position to proclaim that the CDSS policy reform is achieving its intended objectives.

According to Fuller (1996), there is clear evidence of high levels of textbooks effects on students' achievements as he noted:

“Clear evidence on the magnitude of textbooks' effect comes from more recent studies which employed experimental research designs- thereby holding constant student background and other school factors. For instance, a controlled experiment in the Philippines provided textbooks to 2,295 first and second grade pupils within 52 schools. A control group of similar schools was also selected. Books were then introduced at ratios of 2 pupils per book and 1 pupil per book in alternate classrooms. Achievement gains resulting from the intervention were substantial more especially for those who had a book each”

In view of the above arguments, it is generally found to be appropriate that an investigation on students' achievement levels as a result of material inputs should not only assess their availability and quality but also their use. Critical areas in this regard included: use of textbooks and other instructional materials, the relevance and appropriateness of the available instructional materials and the level of utilisation of the instructional materials by the students. This was because these form an integral part of the teaching/ learning process. In addition to the above, the focus was also on the availability of materials for independent study by the students and the effort made by teachers to improvise and produce teaching and learning materials.

Another very critical facility which the study focused on was a school library. This was because this is another instructional resource which may significantly influence pupils' academic achievement. According to Adams (1995), significant students' performance effects have been found in 15 of 18 analyses. The most consistent findings came from Latin America where multiple measures of school library utilisation were used. Fuller (1996, p. 32) noted:

“Building on the early instruments from the Coleman and IEA projects, a survey of school quality was conducted in seven Latin American countries in 1975. The number of books on loan from a school library was significantly related to students' achievement levels within Argentina, Mexico and Brazil. At the individual level of analysis, students who reported that they used the library more frequently, performed at higher levels. Other researches indicate that the mere presence of a school library is related to the schools' average achievement level in El Salvador, Botswana and Uganda”

By promising to improve the material support to the CDSSs, the general expectation of the CDSS policy reform by the public was that facilities like libraries were going to be a priority in the CDSSs considering their critical contribution towards achievement of quality education as revealed by the literature review. Therefore, the CDSSs were investigated to find out if they had well-stocked libraries with relevant books and if students utilised them appropriately and regularly. This was necessary with regard to the power coercive strategies for policy implementation (Chimombo, 1999). The fact is that in many cases, what is intended at formulation stage of the policy is not necessarily what is implemented. Those in authority and at formulation stage of the policy reform may have certain assumptions and expectations in the way the policy should be implemented. Those at the lower levels sometimes have their own reservations and limitations to implement the policy as designed.

2.8.4 The psychological and sociological characteristics of the learners.

When investigating inputs in the schools, the Ministry of Education in Uganda (2005), proposed that the learners should be given priority. This is important because the learners are said to be one of the most important inputs. Psychological factors in terms of likes, dislikes, fears and social interactions with fellow students, parents, community members and the entire environment all come into play to determine the achievement levels of students. As observed by Dzama,

“The basic function of schools is to help students in their learning of prescribed content and skills. Poor performance of students in national examinations

simultaneously reflects failure of students in their learning of content and skills presented to them, and failure of schools in facilitating students' learning"(Dzama, 2006, p.14)

Studies conducted in the 1960s through to 1970s (Coleman *et al*, 1966; Plowden, 1967 and Jencks, 1972) specifically established that students' social economic background was a major determinant of school attainment in different types of schools (cited in Lewis, 1993). The studies concluded that other things being equal, school factors were less important determinants of scholastic success than home background. In so doing, the studies established that the students' social economic status had a positive correlation with achievement without considering what went on in the classroom. Chidalengwa, (2006) found faults in such studies because they downplayed the role students' motivation plays in determining achievement by making students from low socio economic status level invest effort into school tasks to do well. I cannot agree more to this understanding. We have evidence of people in both industrialised and developing countries that have excelled in academic cycles but from very poor socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, there is every reason to look at the students themselves holistically (both psychological and sociological wellbeing) when addressing issues of their academic performance. This was the reason why students' psychological and sociological characteristics were also focused in this study.

This line of thinking is premised on the fact that students who have family problems, for example, cannot consistently put their minds on the school tasks given. This, notwithstanding, learners have no backup systems at home to enhance their learning in the form of books, newspapers or educated parents for example, become psychologically affected as they fail to accomplish certain academic tasks given. This is the social dimension of the teaching and learning processes. If the learners' perception of the teachers, the teaching and learning environment or the school system in general is poor, the result is that they get psychologically affected and may choose to behave differently to the expected norms to demonstrate their frustrations. This is the psychological dimension of the teaching and learning processes.

I would, therefore, hasten to add that poor performance of students in national examinations simultaneously reflects failure of the students in their learning of content and skills presented to

them, and failure of schools, *homes* and *education systems* in facilitating students' learning. It is from this understanding that the students' characteristics (psychologically and socially) and the education systems support to the teaching and learning processes were found critical in this study and therefore investigated.

2.9 Related CDSS policy literature in Malawi

Chimombo (1999) defines a policy implementation as transforming policy initiatives and goals established during formulation into programmes, procedures and regulations. Reimers and McGinn (1997) defined a policy as a statement of the actions to be preferred in the pursuit of one or more objectives of an organisation. In terms of the CDSS policy reform of 1998, the main objective was to improve the quality of education in the CDSSs. This was to make these institutions at par with the CSSs. Reimers and McGinn (1997) further observed that to implement a new policy, human, technical, material and financial resources must be allocated to the effort (Grindle and Thomas, 1991).

Reimers and McGinn (1997) further observed that if policy changes are successful, then their impact will be evidenced in some manner or another, such as transformed behaviours, greater or improved benefits to consumers or clients, and more effective and efficient production and use of resources. On the other hand, Reimers and McGinn (1997) observed that in many countries, education policies are designed and implemented without the most basic information about the intended beneficiaries, the options that can best achieve certain objectives or the actual impact of the policy being implemented.

In addition to the above, Reimers and McGinn (1997), argued that not all policy change strategies produce positive benefits or results despite good intentions. Some may produce unintended or unforeseen results and or negative impacts. Considering that many policy reforms are long- term and the benefits and impacts do not show up immediately, monitoring of progress in the form of process indicators is important. Some of the process indicators relate to the set of prescribed implementation tasks of the policy reform. Tracking of these indicators will facilitate learning and error corrections which can help avoid negative policy impacts. Monitoring is also

vital for purposes of accountability to ensure that policy managers and implementing agencies are fulfilling their prescribed obligations. Monitoring may be carried out by a variety of actors and not only the implementers themselves. Monitoring policy change requires mechanisms both for periodic review and for tracking policies across multiple agencies over several years.

Further, Warwick (1991) observed that effective policy implementation requires that intelligence be applied at every stage of policy analysis and programme execution. In terms of the CDSS policy reform, therefore, the general expectation was that an assessment of the policy reform was going to be conducted periodically on system quality and efficiency so that those entrusted with the implementation responsibility have an opportunity to re-orient resources or to clarify new roles in the wake of new needs and changing circumstances.

As explained earlier on, following the many concerns on implementation of a new policy, in general, as highlighted above, a number of researchers have carried out studies on the implementation of the CDSS policy reform. For example, using a mixed method approach with a strong bias towards qualitative design, MacJessie-Mbewe (2004) came up with a study whose principle purpose was to better understand the problems of repetition, selection and Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) policies and their impact on rural students' access to secondary education. While it is accepted that the study focused on the CDSS policy reform, it is, however, noted that this was from the perspectives of teachers in primary schools, pupils in primary schools and parents of pupils in primary schools. Furthermore, it is noted that these are not key stakeholders in CDSSs. The key stakeholders are the CDSS students, the parents of students in the CDSSs, the teachers in CDSSs and the Ministry of Education which is the authority. Secondly, policy issues on secondary school education quality can best be investigated in the schools themselves and not on people who aspire to go to those secondary schools.

Using a mixed method approach to investigate the quality of education in the CDSSs in view of the 1998 policy reform with a focus on the quality factors in general, Gwede (2005), found that the CDSS policy, like all other educational policies, had good intentions only that it was made in a hurry and that it would take some time before the intended

results could be achieved. His study was wide as it focused on education quality factors in general including those that indirectly affect student achievement and those whose impact on student achievement was very minimal according to the research literatures. Perhaps this was the case because students' performance in the CDSSs was not his central area of focus.

Chakwera (2005) observed that quality of education in CDSSs is still poor as evidenced by poor examination results. However, he does not proceed to establish the reasons why this was the case.

Using a mixed method design, Chidalengwa (2006) carried out a study aimed at expanding the understanding of the factors behind the difference in students' performance in CDSSs and CSSs. His area of focus, however, was on students' cognitive motivational characteristics. Chidalengwa, (2006) argued that previous studies done on performance in the country by Malunga *et al.* (2000), Jenda (1984) and Liwewe (1978) all attributed the difference in performance in the two school types to variables which all fall under the input level in a system's model (Hoy & Miskel, 1996 and Burdin, 1989). As alluded to earlier on, Chidalengwa (2006) observed that the studies neglected the role that is played by students' motivation (throughput process) in determining performance hence his study. This study adds knowledge to the contributions made by the researchers cited above by providing more information on sociological and psychological factors which affect students' cognitive achievement in the CDSSs. It takes off from the studies as highlighted in the literature review after observing that the review of the literature on the CDSS policy reform reveals inadequate focus on issues of teachers' professional competency, students' psychological and sociological characteristics and input variables that directly affect students' cognitive achievement. However, this study cannot claim in any way to be conclusive on this important subject matter, but the idea is to add to the existing knowledge on the gaps as identified.

Haddad, (1995) pointed out that while policy implementation mechanisms need to be reviewed continuously, policies themselves should be allowed to mature, preferably after ten years, before a judgement is passed on their impact. Most studies on CDSS policy reform were carried out before the maturity period. The danger is that one may quickly draw conclusions that the policy

reform has failed. Further, Haddad, (1995) observed that even if impact assessment concludes that the desired changes have been successfully implemented, policy makers and planners should maintain vigilance for new changes required, given the rapid pace of contemporary society and the intimate links between the education system and its environment. This is the spirit in which this study was carried out.

2.10 Summary

The review of the literature has revealed that to implement a new policy, human, technical, material and financial resources must be allocated to the effort. While the need for adequate resources for policy implementation cannot be over-emphasised, the literature has demonstrated that mere availability of the resources (for example; qualified teachers) is not sufficient to ensure its successful implementation. There is need to change the behaviours and attitudes of those implementing the policy reform so that they work towards achieving the policy objective. In the previous studies by the other researchers, the issue of education quality measures was highlighted in terms of the status: what materials were available and which ones were missing. The literature has demonstrated that effective use of the resources available is very critical to achieve education quality. Further, the literature has demonstrated that those making policies should always go down and check what is happening during their implementation so that what is not working properly can be addressed. If this is not done, then the problematic nature of the power coercive strategies will come into play. This study, therefore, focused on the classroom practices by teachers and the education quality measures which directly affect education quality in the CDSSs. In addition, due attention was given to the role of policy-makers in addressing the problematic nature of the power coercive strategies in the implementation of the CDSS policy reform. The literature review has revealed that these are areas which are very critical if quality of education is to improve in the schools including the CDSSs. Unfortunately, the literature on the implementation of the CDSS policy reform has revealed some gaps in these key areas which this study intends to fill.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter provides an overview of the study in terms of the methods through which data was collected, analysed and used to address the research questions listed in chapter one. The topics discussed in this chapter include methodological choices, overall approach and rationale, the sample and sampling procedures, data collection, management and analysis, ethical considerations and the reliability of the research study.

3.1 Choice of methodology

This chapter begins by drawing a distinction between methods and methodology used in the study. Guba and Lincoln, (1989) define methods as tools and techniques used in a study. On the other hand, they describe methodology as the overall guiding strategy of the research study. Overall, there are qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

3.1.1 Qualitative methodology

Qualitative methodology is used for those inquiries that are intended to add knowledge or understanding. The general view is that responses from respondents simply represent the momentary construction of those who participate in a study. This, according to Guba and Lincoln, (1989), is grounded in the *constructivist* paradigm. When using the instruments therefore, one has to ground them according to the perceptions of the respondents. These are referred to as *emic* views.

Crosley and Vulliamy (1996), argued that qualitative researchers tend to use data collection techniques, such as observation and unstructured interviewing which produce words as data. Qualitative research, according to Crosley and Vulliamy (1996), provides descriptions and accounts of the processes of social interaction in natural settings, usually based upon a combination of observation and interviewing of participants in order to understand their perspectives. Culture, meanings and processes are emphasised rather than variables, outcomes and products. Further, Patton (1990) observed that a qualitative enquiry strategy emphasises and builds on several interconnected themes. According to Creswell (1998)

some of the limitations of qualitative research are; data reduction difficulties, procedures not standardized and difficult to study large population. Data reduction difficulties and procedures not standardised were overcome by use of an interview guide while difficult to study large population was overcome by purposely selecting only the critical participants to the study.

3.1.2 Quantitative methodology

A qualitative approach, as described in the preceding section, however, is in great contrast to the *positivist* paradigm where an inquirer assesses a state of affairs (quantitative). In this case, an inquirer interprets responses as representing “*real needs*” according to Guba, (1987). The inquirer in this case devises the questions asked on the basis of some *a priori* theory or position where the respondents can only confirm the perceptions of the researcher which are referred to as *etic* views. Crosley and Vulliamy, (1996, p. 48) observed that:

“The danger with such *etic* view is that even if confirmed by the respondents may nevertheless, miss what is important in the respondents as they cannot register those other elements since the structure of the instruments neither elicits nor provides a means of registering them”.

Quantitative researchers, in contrast to qualitative researchers, therefore, tend to use techniques such as questionnaire surveys or experiments which produce numbers as data. The advantage of the quantitative approach is that the reality is objective and as a researcher, you are independent.

3.1.3 Mixed methods design

Depending on the subject under study, it is not always appropriate to use data collection methods which are purely qualitative or quantitative. In that case, the researcher may use a combination of both. For example, in a study where some statistical data will be collected and analysed but at the same time, some data will be collected and analysed qualitatively, then the researcher may be obliged to use both though at different levels. This is called mixed method (Creswell, 2003). The mixed method theoretical perspective is advanced by the *pragmatists* whose position in research is to choose a method or paradigm that will work best to achieve the goals of a particular enquiry (Creswell, 2003). According to

Creswell (2003), pragmatism does not commit itself to a single system of philosophy or reality. This is because the problem is more important than methods, and researchers use different approaches in order to understand the problem (Creswell, 2003). The pragmatists contend that research usually takes place in a particular historical, social and political context, and as such, the research design should open the door to multiple methods, different world views and different assumptions, as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis in a mixed methods study (Creswell, 2003).

This study, therefore, was carried out using mixed method design. In terms of the qualitative approach like the interviews, I found that it generated a lot of data as the participants introduced other important ideas which the study did not originally anticipate to collect. This could not have been possible through questionnaires as the respondents restrict themselves to the questions given. Although this was the case, the study cannot, in any way claim to have concluded the debates on CDSS policy reform in terms of whether or not it resulted in improved quality education offered to the students. With time, the situation can change either for the better or for the worse.

With qualitative methods, the participants were able to provide other relevant information outside the prepared Focus Group Discussion (FGD) or interview schedule. This was not going to be possible with quantitative methods alone. Therefore, the two methods complemented each other for the benefit of the study.

It was the qualitative approaches, therefore, which helped to generate new information and insights grounded in the participants' own experiences. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, helped to provide information that could be quantified so that, together with the data collected through qualitative approaches, a holistic understanding of the problem was reached. Under the circumstances stated above, therefore, both quantitative and qualitative methods provided a better way of generating the much desired data.

3.2 Overall approach to this study and rationale for selection

This study was not committed to one particular method and source of data. As contended by Creswell (2003), this was deliberately done to understand better the research problem. The focus was on what could work for the phenomenon under investigation so as to make the results clear and credible. Therefore, influenced by the pragmatic perspective, the overall approach for this policy study was guided by mixed method design which combined both qualitative and quantitative paradigms in order to obtain collaborating evidence and a deeper understanding of the causal factors for students' poor performance in national examinations in the CDSSs. The study needed statistics on teacher information, amounts of teaching and learning materials supplied to the schools and students' enrolment- hence quantitative. However, on the other hand, the study focused on the issue of quality of education and therefore, selected quality interconnected themes were raised, with particular focus on performance of students in CDSSs in national examinations. As such, the study was also influenced by the *constructivists'* paradigm. This is because the present state of affairs in CDSSs is not expected to remain static. With time and changes, the findings can be negotiated and re-negotiated as long as the exercise seemed fruitful. Mixed method design as an approach to the study helped me in many ways. First, I discovered that the information collected using different methods was cross-checking each other. At CDSS 7 DZ, for example, the information collected from a questionnaire given to the head teacher did not correspond to information gathered from students and SMC/PTA members. A follow-up was made and it was discovered that the head teacher had erred. Had only one approach been used, wrong data could have been used for the analysis.

Burgess (1993) argued that central to all research projects is the relationship between the questions that are posed and the methodology employed. This means that there is need to link the questions to be addressed and the methodology to be used in the collection and analysis of data. Essentially, this tells us that the choice of the particular methodology employed depends on the type of research questions the study is responding to.

3.3 Sample and sampling procedures

A total of ten CDSSs were sampled (five urban CDSSs and five rural CDSSs). Rural CDSSs are those CDSSs which are located in a remote area far away from the town boundaries and where

basic amenities like banks, electricity, and safe running water are not available in most cases. Urban CDSSs on the other hand, are those located in towns and townships where the basic amenities are available and the road network is improved. Both rural and urban CDSSs were sampled for the study because experiences in urban and rural settings are in most cases different. The two sets of schools have different experiences which enriched the study and ensured wide coverage of issues in the CDSSs. Based on the same premise, different districts were sampled. Three CDSSs were sampled in Dedza district (one urban and two rural). Two CDSSs, (one urban and one rural) were sampled in NkhataBay. Finally, five CDSS were sampled (three in the city of Lilongwe and two in Lilongwe rural West).

The selection of the districts and schools was both convenient and purposeful. Firstly, Lilongwe city has all its schools in the urban setting by virtue of its status as a city. Therefore, sampling any school in the city meant a representation of urban schools. NkhataBay district has only three Approved CDSSs out of which only one is in the urban setting and therefore was automatically selected but the selection of one from the remaining two rural CDSSs was randomly done through writing the names of the schools on pieces of paper and putting them in a box, shaking the box and asking someone who does not know anything of the names to pick one piece of paper. The same procedure was followed in the selection of schools in Dedza and Lilongwe districts. The selection of the districts as well, in the two regions followed the same procedure except for Lilongwe City which was purposely selected for having schools in the urban category only. Among the three major cities of Blantyre, Mzuzu and Lilongwe, Lilongwe was selected by random sampling. The cities of Mzuzu and Blantyre could have been targeted had there been sufficient time and resources

Secondly, both *urban* and *rural* CDSSs were sampled to ensure fair representation of issues in the two set-ups. This attempt was deliberately made in the study to come up with a fair representation of the issues affecting all CDSSs. Three education districts in Central Region (Dedza, Lilongwe Rural East and Lilongwe City) and another one in the Northern Region of Malawi (NkhataBay) were chosen because the other studies on CDSS policy reform by McJessie- Mbewe, (2004) and on education quality in particular, by

Gwede in 2005 were conducted in the Southern region of Malawi (Zomba and Mulanje districts), to be specific. It is, however, observed that there are some variations in the implementation of education policies from region to region. According to Rose and Kadzamira (2001), disparities in terms of enrolment, persistence and performance exists among the three regions of Malawi. This observation spelt out the need for another study on CDSS policy reform to be conducted in the Central and Northern regions of Malawi with the hope that the findings from the other studies done in the South would fill the methodological gaps created in the present study. It was therefore, possible that in the end, a general understanding of CDSSs could be reached.

In addition, the districts were also selected randomly using the same procedure of putting pieces of paper with names inscribed and asking an independent observer to randomly select the pieces one at a time. The same procedure was followed for teachers to participate in the study. However, head teachers were selected by virtue of being at the school while PTA and SMC members were invited by the head teachers themselves and when I asked them how they did the selection of the members to participate in the FGDs, most of them indicated that they invited all members who were active in the committees.

All in all, it should be made clear that the ten CDSSs sampled in the study do not represent the CDSSs in Malawi. However, it is hoped that findings from these CDSSs would reflect the issues impacting on students' cognitive achievement in most of the CDSSs. Table 3.1 below summarises the study population.

Table 3.1 Study population

Participants	Type of Participation	Number
Head teachers	Questionnaire & Interview	10
Teachers	Interview	36
Students	FGD	96
SMC/PTA members	FGD	80
	Total	222

Although the study targeted 222 participants, only 210 participated. This was because some targeted members of the SMC/PTA FGDs did not turn up for the sessions. In addition, CDSSs with higher enrolment figures like one urban CDSS in NkhataBay and another urban CDSS in Dedza had ten students participating in the FGDs while other schools with lower enrolments had eight students participating. A boy and a girl in each form were randomly selected making a total of eight student participants from each participating school apart from the two CDSSs highlighted above. In terms of the teachers, CDSSs with ten or more had four teachers participating in the interviews while CDSSs with less than ten had only two teachers participating in the interviews. In the CDSSs with female teachers available, effort was made to ensure that they should participate depending on their numbers against the male teachers. All this was done to ensure a fair representation of issues.

Furthermore, an attempt was made in the selection of participants to ensure that vital information on factors leading to poor performance in CDSSs during national examinations in terms of processes of content delivery to students, resources and inputs was collected. The teachers were selected randomly by putting pieces of paper with names of teachers inscribed in a box and picking the pieces of papers randomly after shaking the box. Names of male teachers were deliberately separated from names of female teachers to ensure that at every school, both male and female teachers participated in the study.

3. 4 Methods of data collection

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the collection of data during the study. First, the quantitative method was used to obtain statistical data on school resources like number of teachers. Second, the qualitative methods were meant to establish what the head teachers, teachers, students and PTA/SMC members believed and perceived as the underlying reasons for the poor performance of students in CDSSs in national examinations. The first and second research questions on teachers' academic and professional qualities were answered through a questionnaire followed up with interviews with Head teachers and teachers. Observation of lessons and analysis of relevant documents were also used to answer the research questions.

The third research question on availability of resources in the CDSSs was answered through interviews with head teachers and teachers, document analysis in terms of stock books, FGDs with PTAs/SMCs and students.

The fourth research question on students' psychological and sociological characteristics was answered through interviews with teachers and head teachers, FGDs with students and PTAs/ SMCs and document analysis in terms of school registers and progress reports.

All the choices made on the type of methods to use in the study were based on the questions the study was trying to respond to. Deliberate effort was made to use these approaches when soliciting stakeholders' perceptions on the availability of educational resources and inputs which enhance students' achievement in CDSSs and which may affect performance in examinations. This was also the case while investigating the processes teachers in CDSSs undertake in terms of planning and actual content delivery to learners for improved performance in national examinations. One quantitative method and five qualitative methods were therefore used in the collection of data in the study as explained in the next sub-section.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires were used to collect statistical data on the CDSSs studied from the head teachers. These were sent to head teachers in advance so that they had adequate time to give responses on the questions. The advantage of this method was that time was saved during the actual period of the study. However, statistical information provided on the questionnaires by head teachers was cross-checked with documentation at the schools to ensure reliability and validity of the data collected. The data collected from the questionnaires were cross-checked with data collected using qualitative methods like interviews and observations in triangulation. This ensured the trustworthiness of the data.

3.4.2 Interviews

Cohen and Manion (1996), described an interview as a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him/her on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation. In this study, the head teacher and three teachers were interviewed at each sampled CDSS. In some CDSSs with more than ten teachers, five teachers were interviewed. The advantage of using this method, as Yin (1986) argued, is that interviews provide very important background information on respondents which is useful in terms of reliability of source of data. In addition, they also provide access to information such as perceptions and opinions that cannot be accessed through documents. In this study, both structured and unstructured interviews were used. Broad questions were asked to participants followed by probing questions which sought clarifications on the various issues and elaborate responses provided by the respondent. Various issues emanated from the interviews like processes of content delivery to learners which included planning and administration of tests. As a researcher in a qualitative research, the tactic was to do little talking in terms of asking questions so that the interviewee did more talking. Each interview was recorded by audio-tape with the permission of the respondent. In addition, notes were taken on critical issues raised by the participants.

In addition to recording the interview, detailed notes were taken so that if the audio tape failed to function, the field notes would be available. Bell (1993), argued that before you continue with

your planning, it is important to check that as a researcher, you should be familiar with the methods of keeping records and making notes. He added that finding information in the first place can be tedious. Finding it again sometime later, can be even harder unless your methods of recording and filing were thorough and systematic. There were sometimes cases where messages in audio tapes did not become clear. The field notes helped to cover such gaps. This was very helpful because at CDSS 9 LLE, for example, the audio-tape developed problems and the notes were used. If I had relied on the audio-tape only, it meant that all the information could have been lost and the interview could have been conducted once more. This was going to be costly both in terms of time and resources. Another thing that struck me during the interviews was that while some SMC/PTA members may not be competent to write, they have important knowledge on how education should be managed. In addition, a good relationship was ensured between interviewer and any of the interviewees during the exercise by making the interviewees at ease throughout the interview and clarifying certain questions which they seemed not to have understood properly. This was necessary because the success of the interview technique is largely dependent on the information gathered from the respondents and as such, there was every reason to ensure that a good rapport existed between myself as an interviewer and the respondents so that the latter were at ease when giving out information.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Secondly, relevant documents on the subject matter under study were reviewed. This method involved review of relevant official and unofficial documents with the objective of complementing data collected through other qualitative means by way of verification. The reason why document analysis was used in this research is that interviews alone could not give a complete picture of the issues under investigation (Esner, 1991). Creswell (2003) also argued that documents are important as they represent “*thoughtful data*” in that participants have already checked them when compiling. Documents save the researcher’s time and expenses that could have been incurred during the research. This method was also important as it helped the researcher to supplement information gathered during the interviews with information which came up naturally in the course of every day events or constructed specifically for the research at hand. The disadvantage of using this

method was that sometimes some institutions do not properly record important information as such, and hence this method would only work effectively if complemented by other methods. The following documents were analysed:

- ❖ Staff returns
- ❖ Records of previous examination results
- ❖ Inspection files.
- ❖ Schemes and records of work of the targeted teachers.
- ❖ Lesson plans of the targeted teachers.
- ❖ Stock books
- ❖ Financial records
- ❖ Minutes of PTA meetings
- ❖ Students' progress books possessed by the targeted teachers.

3.4.4 Focus Group Discussions

A Focus Group Discussion is a special type of group discussion in terms of purpose, size, composition and procedure. It is composed of seven to ten participants who are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic to be discussed, (Krueger,1988). The Focus Group Discussion (FGD), in summary, can be defined as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment. The main advantage of using this method is that more and diverse data can be generated as people with a variety of experiences make their contributions to the topic of the subject being studied. Its disadvantage, however, is that some people are shy to speak in a group and may choose to remain silent even when they have brilliant ideas on the topic.

Using this method, my role was to facilitate a discussion with the respondents (students and PTAs/ SMCs) on the subject matter rather than leading it. In this case, the participants were empowered to address and suggest solutions to the issues of quality of education in the schools in terms of why their performance was poor as compared to CSSs. The participants discussed this subject while I facilitated the discussion through asking questions where appropriate. This was particularly the case when eliciting opinions from the students, on the quality, availability and use of resources which enhance students' learning

achievement. It also involved careful selection of the members of the FGD so that there was a fair representation of the students at school level. In this respect, two students, a boy and a girl from each of the Forms/classes were randomly selected through pieces of paper with inscribed names of the students, put in a box, shaken and picked at random making a total of eight participants for each FGD session in the CDSSs with low enrolment figures and ten participants in the CDSSs with high enrolment figures. This ensured that no one (whether a boy or a girl) dominated the discussions, no individual felt uncomfortable to participate and that no sex or class of students in the groups felt excluded. The location and timing of the FGDs were given serious considerations. For example, student groups had their discussions after classes so that their learning was not disturbed.

In terms of SMC/PTA FGDs, seven members per committee were invited and as a researcher, I could not dictate which members should attend. This was decided by the head teachers. However, when the head teachers were consulted, it was noted that they invited those members who were active in the committees. It was hoped that with the considerations as highlighted, the FGDs became powerful tools in gathering adequate qualitative data which supplemented other qualitative methods of data collection as alluded to earlier on.

3.4.5 Observations

According to Patton (1990), this method of data collection involves direct participation of the researcher in the observation of the phenomenon of interest. This method is supposed to complement other qualitative methods like interview and Focused Group Discussions. The basis for this is that there are limitations as to how much can be learned from what people say and write (Patton, 1990). Patton, (1990) argued that observational data more especially participant observation, permits the researcher to analyse a programme or treatment in a manner not entirely possible using *only* the insights of others obtained through interviews. The disadvantage of this method is that sometimes people change their behaviour for the better when they know that they are being observed. For example, teachers may teach following the necessary steps when there is an observer in the classroom. It was therefore, explained to the teachers before the lesson that my presence was not

to assess their competency levels, but simply for academic purposes. I cannot, however, rule out completely the possibility of some teachers changing their behaviour due to my presence in the classroom.

A total of ten lessons were observed, one lesson at each CDSS school. Subjects observed were English Language, English Literature, Geography, Physical Science, Biology, Mathematics, Bible Knowledge, Chichewa, History and Agriculture. After the lesson, the teacher observed was also interviewed so as to clarify certain observations made during the lesson. Only Form 1V classes were observed because this is the class that was preparing to sit for national examinations that year. These are common subjects taught in all the CDSSs. According to Patton (1990) cited in Becker and Geer (1970) participant observation is the most comprehensive of all types of research strategies.

According to Weiss (1998), the observational techniques enable the researcher to gather information that is often not available when collected through other means. According to Blaxter *et al.* (2001), the observation method involves the researcher watching, recording and analysing events of interest. In case of the study in question, observations focused on quality of teaching in terms of use of varied approaches in the teaching / learning processes, use of teaching/learning aids, level of students' participation in the teaching / learning process including the condition of school infrastructure and the school surroundings in general. This was necessary as Rossman (2003) observed that observation is fundamental to all qualitative inquiry as it takes the researcher inside the social setting and enables him/her discover the complexities there-in.

In this study, observations as a method was included in two categories as follows:

a. Structural analysis

Using this approach, more attention was given to the content of the lessons. The researcher was basically concerned with the logic of teaching. The researcher focused on the strategies which included a set of verbal and non-verbal actions that serve to attain certain results and guard against others. For instance, strategies that serve to induce students

to engage in verbal exchange (discussions) to ensure that certain points in the discussion will be made clear and to reduce wrong responses as students participate in the discussions. The purpose of this approach was to reveal the rich and varied classroom life in the CDSSs with a primary focus on the teachers and students.

b. General outside observations

This focused on the general outlook of school infrastructure to determine the condition and hence, the anticipated effectiveness in enhancing students' achievement levels. From this analysis, school infrastructure were rated from poor, fairly good, average, good, to very good.

The two approaches gave a good view on what type of teachers were present in the CDSSs, what and how they taught, vis-a- vis the professionally accepted norms and teaching procedures as well as resource levels in the schools.

3.5 Data analysis

The data which were collected through different quantitative methods were analysed in percentages against the total or set bench marks. From this, trends emerged as there appeared variations in terms of lower percentages and higher percentages on the issues under study.

The data which was collected through the different qualitative methods was reorganised according to specific themes with due regard to the specific areas the study was focusing on as follows: Teachers' academic and professional qualities, students' learning qualities, school type/status, teaching processes (planning and actual content delivery), inspection and supervision. The bench marks for the analysis were the Ministry of Education policies: the PIF and the CDSS policy itself.

3.6 Ethical considerations

There were a number of ethical considerations which were followed by the researcher during the study. First, it was ensured that participants to the study had the right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at anytime so that no one was coerced into participation.

Secondly, it was emphasised that the purpose of the study was made known to all participants so that everyone involved understood the nature of the research and the possible impacts of it on him/her. In addition, the right to privacy of the participants was respected: that is, names of those who participated in the study as well as what they contributed to the same were treated with the highest confidentiality. There was also no need for participants to give their names.

Finally, permission was sought from those individuals in authority at different levels to provide access to study participants at research sites. This involved writing letters to the Director of Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education, Headquarters, Education Division Managers (Central West and Northern Education Divisions), the District Education Managers for NkhataBay and Lilongwe, and the Desk Officer for Dedza District Education Office, head teachers of the targeted CDSSs and local leaders.

3.7 Reliability of the study

Although the results of this study cannot be generalized to the national context as it is merely a sample, efforts were made by the researcher to ensure that the findings are reliable and trustworthy. It was important as a researcher to ensure that the data collected was appropriate to the study and at the same time reliable and valid. Bakewell (2003), observed that data which is valid is that which is appropriate for the interpretations, while on the other hand, data which is reliable is one which is dependable and trustworthy. This implies that only data which measures what it was designed to measure can be said to be valid and only that which can give similar results when repeated at different times can be said to be reliable. I ensured validity and reliability of results by pre-testing the instruments in two CDSSs (1 urban and 1 rural) in Kasungu district of Central East Education Division. Nisbet and Entwistle (1970) argued that this is an essential stage and must never be omitted even when working under pressure. After this stage, the responses were reviewed and this provided the probable range of answers to be expected and a basis for a system of recording and classifying the answers to each question. It was therefore, easy to come up with patterns and themes which made the task of data analysis easy at the end. Consistent with this view, piloting was also very important as it helped the researcher to make corrections on areas of ambiguities and inconsistencies in the

data collection instruments before the actual study was conducted. During this process, interview questions were re-phrased and FGD guidelines reviewed following wrong responses to the questions by all respondents in the two pilot schools. The target populations during the pilot study were similar in characteristics (Head teachers, teachers, students, PTA/SMC members and relevant documents) in the CDSSs. In addition, this process ensured that biases were removed from the main study experiences by totally removing my personal experiences from the actual findings of the study. This on its own, was a challenge as the temptation to use personal experiences kept on coming time and again. Further, while all other studies on CDSS policy reform in Malawi were confined to the Southern region, this study sampled CDSSs in the Central and Northern regions. This was because there are, in some cases, variations from region to region, in terms of the manner in which policies are implemented.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Some methodological issues which were found as limitations for this study are given below:

First, the literature review does not claim to cover everything in its scope and its methods. However, I have tried to cover what I felt was most relevant to the debate on CDSS policy reform in terms of its impact to the quality of secondary education with a focus on students' cognitive achievement.

Secondly, the time and resource restrictions did not allow for prolonged fieldwork study which would have allowed for more observation and could have shed more light in terms of the reliability and validity of the sources. However, the data collection was adequate for purposes of answering the research questions.

Thirdly, and related to the issue of resource constraints as already alluded to above, was the fact that the researcher was a District Education Manager for Dedza, one of the four education districts where the study was conducted. It was generally feared that some respondents would end up giving false information so as to please him by virtue of his position. However, contrary to my fears, familiarity with the setting in terms of the participants brought a certain degree of informality to the interviewing process which strengthened the case for the interview as “mere

conversation”. This situation enabled the participants to be at ease throughout the interview process.

Finally, there were situations when the researcher was tempted to use more of his experience than the actual research findings on the ground but this was checked by ensuring that only actual findings on the ground were recorded and not past experiences. I proceeded as if I knew very little about the people and places I visited. Plans evolved as I learnt about the setting, the subjects and other sources of data through direct examination. A full account of the procedures was best described by way of review: a narrative of what actually happened and written after the study was completed.

3.9 Summary

In summary, the methods used in the collection of data in this study depended on the type of research questions the study was responding to. The choice of the methodology that was used in the study was influenced by both the *constructivists* and *positivists*. This was very helpful as the two approaches complemented and cross-checked each other. As a result, the data could to a larger extent be deemed valid and reliable.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. As explained in chapter one, the purpose of conducting the study was to explore and examine how education quality measures have been implemented as a result of the CDSS policy reform which was aimed at unifying the secondary school education offered in CDSSs and CSSs. To achieve this, several research questions were set on specific themes as follows: the teachers' quality in terms of academic qualifications, professional qualifications and professional competency. The professional competency is discussed in terms of teacher preparedness for lessons, administration of tests to the students, the quality of the tests administered to the students, teachers' promptness for lessons and process of content delivery to the learners. This is followed by support systems in the education sector aimed at enhancing the professional competencies. On the part of the students, the findings looked at their psychological and sociological characteristics. Finally, on material inputs to the CDSSs, the study looked at availability of those teaching and learning resources with empirical evidence having direct impact on education quality and hence on students' achievements.

4.1 Teachers' academic and professional qualifications

As discussed in the literature review, teachers are one of the most important elements in the learning and teaching process. There is empirical evidence that well qualified teachers are consistent in producing better performing students. Adams (2005) and Heyneman, (1976) agreed that language proficient teachers are a pre-requisite to better performing students. To this effect, the CDSS policy reform included deployment of qualified teachers in the CDSSs to improve the quality of education. According to the Ministry of Education, qualified teachers to teach in secondary schools are those with diploma or degree certificates in Education. Those with diploma or degree certificates in other fields other than education need to undergo University Certificate of Education course to qualify. Using a questionnaire, a total of 80 teachers in urban CDSSs and 39 teachers in rural CDSSs were asked to give information about their academic and professional qualifications.

4.1.1 Teachers' academic qualifications.

Of the 80 teachers available in the five urban CDSSs, 41 were qualified to teach in secondary schools (22 with diploma and 19 degree certificates) representing 51.3 percent. The information regarding teacher qualification is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Teachers' academic qualifications in the CDSSs

	MSCE		DIPLOMA		DEGREE		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	TOTAL
Rural	35	4	11	0	1	0	51
Urban	19	20	9	13	10	9	80

Table 4.1 shows academic qualifications of teachers in both rural and urban CDSSs. The data reveal that some urban CDSSs were at least better in terms of availability of qualified teachers as compared to rural CDSSs. For example, of the 80 teachers in the sampled 5 urban CDSSs studied, 40 teachers were qualified representing 50% of the total number of teachers available.

The picture for rural CDSSs was however different. Table 4.1 for example, shows that only 23.5 percent of the teachers were qualified to teach in Secondary school in rural CDSSs. However, of the qualified teachers available, there was no teacher qualified to teach Science and Mathematics. These were also the subjects where students performed very poorly during examinations. Chimombo (2010) confirms this assertion in his unpublished study report to UNESCO where he observed that lack of teachers in specific subject areas such as Mathematics and Science is a big challenge for secondary schools. However, this study observed that this problem was more critical in the CDSSs than the CSSs. Further, Chimombo 2010 observed that it is very difficult to attract teachers to go and teach in the hard to reach areas in Malawi and this is a big challenge. Most CDSSs are hard to reach in Malawi. It should be noted that according to the Ministry of Education, the minimum qualification for someone to teach in Secondary school, is a diploma. Table 4.1 above, shows that there was no female teacher who was qualified to teach in secondary school in the rural CDSSs.

4.1.2 Teachers' professional grades

In line with the CDSS policy reform, the Ministry of Education created the positions of Head teacher at P6 grade as an incentive for senior teachers to head the CDSSs. The Ministry also created positions for Heads of Departments at P7 grade in the CDSSs. The thinking was that the qualified head teachers and heads of Departments would improve the quality of teaching in these schools as the unqualified teachers would gain some competency from them. As explained earlier, there is power in unity. The Ugandan Ministry of Education(2005) noted that at school level, the teachers need to work hand in hand assisting one another professionally. Weak teachers get strengthened by experienced teachers in the process and at the end of it all, all teachers work effectively resulting in improved performance of the students.

Table 4.2 Teachers' professional grades in the CDSSs

	PT4		PT3		PT2		PT1		POE		POC		POB		P8		P7		P6	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Urban	6	5	10	10	4	4	3	2	8	11	4	4	4	0	2	1	2	0	0	0
Rural	20	2	14	1	3	1	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

Table 4.2 shows the professional grades of the teachers in the CDSSs. The data reveal that of the 41 teachers qualified to teach in secondary school in the five urban schools, five (three teachers at P8 grade and two teachers at P7 grade) were at senior grades for secondary school management. Of the 39 teachers unqualified to teach in secondary school, but qualified to teach in primary school: 13 (eight teachers at PT2 and 5 teachers at PT3 grades) were in senior professional grades for primary school teaching. These teachers in senior grades but for primary school teaching represented 33.3 percent of the unqualified teachers in the CDSSs. This signifies the gravity of the problem in these schools. This means that 66.7 percent of the unqualified teachers were on low professional grade (PT4) and therefore lacked teaching experience.

In the rural CDSS on the contrary, of the seven teachers qualified to teach in secondary school, only two were in senior professional grades of the secondary school management: one teacher was at P8 grade and the other one was at P7 grade. This represented 22.2 percent of the qualified teachers. However, only five of the 42 unqualified teachers were at senior grades representing

11.9 percent of the unqualified teachers. Four teachers were at PT2 grade while only one teacher was at PT1 grade. The data also revealed that it was mostly *Urban* CDSSs which had a good proportion of the qualified and experienced secondary school teachers. The rural CDSSs mostly have the least number of qualified teachers and in most cases, it was only the head teacher who was qualified. It is also noted that most of the unqualified teachers in the CDSSs were qualified and experienced teachers in the primary education sector. The data also revealed that there were few female teachers in the rural CDSSs. Thus, there are a lot of disparities in the distribution of teachers between the urban and the rural schools. According to EMIS (2009) there were 1113 female teachers against 6640 male teachers in rural secondary schools in Malawi (See appendix 10).

While the literature review suggested that adequate supply of trained teachers is critical for attainment of quality education, the findings revealed that most of the teachers in the CDSSs were still unqualified to teach in secondary school.

4.2 Teachers' professional competence

While teacher qualification remains a very important component of the education process, it is not sufficient on its own to bring about the intended results. There are examples of well qualified teachers who fail to teach properly due to sheer negligence of the skills, knowledge and practices gained during training. It is therefore important to check whether the teachers utilise their professional competences when teaching.

4.2.1. The process of content delivery to the students

A good lesson begins with good preparation. It is from this premise that the discussion on the process of content delivery to learners in the CDSSs is begun in this study. Teachers were observed teaching during a lesson and at the end of it, the lesson was analysed to establish whether the necessary steps were followed.

First, there was some evidence that teachers did plan for lessons. Lesson notes were available which teachers used but were written on loose papers. However, where qualified teachers were available, their lesson plans were available and used during the teaching processes.

Schemes and records of work were available but mostly focused on what the teachers did/or intended to do but not focusing very much on what the students were able to do. This scenario was very much reflected in the remarks column where the teachers commented on how the lesson was conducted. Currently, the practice is that the teachers should focus on the students and not on their own activities such that the remarks column in the schemes and records of work should reflect learner activities and achievements. While all the teachers have been oriented to the new approaches, it was found that in many instances, the unqualified teachers conducted the lessons using the old approaches where the teacher was the centre-piece.

When it was put to the teachers as to whether they felt that they prepared their lessons thoroughly, most of them said that they did so by following the syllabus when making schemes and records of work. However, when the question was put to the head teachers, it was reported that some teachers pretend not to understand what they are expected to do even after advising them on several occasions.

“There are others who become hostile or show signs of not being interested to do what is expected of them more especially on preparation of lesson plans” one head teacher observed.

However, when the same question was put to the students as to whether they thought their teachers prepared adequately for lessons, most of them indicated that very few teachers prepared thoroughly for the lessons. Asked how they would know if a teacher had not prepared for lessons, they said it was very easy to know.

“When they are not prepared, they remain in the staffroom when it is their turn to teach. When we go to call them as advised, they pretend to get angry and tell us we are rude and therefore they will not teach us that day. Others just come to the class and chat and chat until the end of the lesson”. This was the observation by one Form 111 student in Dedza district).

Defending themselves, the teachers indicated that they did not write lesson plans for their teaching but write lesson notes. Asked how effective this would be considering the fact that lesson plans are more detailed than lesson notes, they replied that this is the practice in Secondary schools. One teacher argued that:

“Lesson plans are for primary schools. In Secondary schools, we use lesson notes”.

This was a comment that frequently came from the unqualified teachers when they were asked as to why they do not write lesson plans.

Since this was a critical area as it directly touched on matters of policy on education methods and quality control, I consulted a Senior Education Methods Advisor (SEMA) in one of the Education Divisions on the matter. The Education Officer explained that those teachers who did not use lesson plans when teaching were not following the policy. He went further to explain that even when undergoing training to get diploma and degree certificates in the realm of education from the universities, it has been made clear that teachers should have lesson plans available to guide them in their teaching. He observed that:

“It is because most teachers are lazy or are not committed to their work. Otherwise, when Inspectors find them teaching without lesson plans, they are seriously reprimanded”

The issue of laziness and lack of commitment by most teachers as alluded to by the SEMA collaborated with the responses as given by some teachers. This was clearly an indication of the fact that they were de-motivated in the education system. They cited low salaries as the reason for lack of interest in their profession. To them, maximum performance and adequate lesson preparedness require a motivation and this is what was lacking to raise their morale in the profession. One teacher at a rural CDSS in Nkhata-Bay complained:

“Imagine we cannot even afford to buy a bicycle to enable us travel to school to teach. Our salaries are very poor, we have been teaching for a long time without promotion. Each time we attend interviews for entry into Domasi College of Education, we are told at the end that we have not been successful. Yet we see young men and women straight from Secondary schools going to the same College for higher education. How can we be motivated? The College should have been there for us teachers already in the system”.

In addition to the above, it was observed that teachers lacked commitment to their job as demonstrated by their frequent absenteeism from duty. This was reported by the learners during the FGDs. However, most teachers defended themselves that they absented themselves for

good reasons like sickness and funerals and went further that they always ensured that additional lessons were prepared for the lost time. On the other hand, students contradicted with their teachers. To them, they were not told the reasons each time a teacher absented himself/herself from school. What they saw was that teachers become busy with their private teaching at the expense of their education. This was common in urban centres. One student observed that:

“We don’t believe that the reasons teachers give for being absent are true. Most teachers claim to be sick but we meet them at the market place after classes. Some teachers come to school and remain in the staffroom. When we go to inform them that it’s time for their lesson, they shout at us and some just say “I am coming” but don’t come to class.”

There was evidence of teacher/ students’ interaction in terms of teachers giving instructions and asking questions and the students responding to given instructions and attempting to answer the questions. However, it was also noted that most qualified teachers followed professional procedures while teaching, of course with very exceptional cases to the contrary. An extreme case to the contrary, was a case in one of the CDSSs in Dedza where a well qualified teacher was reported to be a drunkard and did not report for duties regularly. A form four student in a CDSS in Dedza commented that:

“We have a very well qualified teacher in the school, who rarely reports for duties. Sometimes he comes for duties while drunk and shouts at everyone. There are many instances when this teacher comes to class without any lesson plan especially if he had been drinking beer the previous day. You just look at his red eyes and you know how bad the day will be.”

Apart from answering questions, the students did very little to stimulate their cognitive abilities. The teachers, in most cases, did not give activities to the students during the course of the lesson. This was happening mostly with the unqualified teachers. The use of questioning as a teaching technique appeared to pose some problems to most teachers. Some of the questions lacked clarity and in many cases the students were given an opportunity to ask questions more often at the end of the lesson and not in between.

Another observation was that teachers were not consistent enough when it came to making and using teaching resources. In a Bible Knowledge class which required the use of a map indicating the route that Jews travelled, the teacher spent some time drawing the map on the chalk board. At the end of the lesson, the map which took a lot of time to draw was rubbed off from the chalk board as another teacher had to use it for another lesson. The classroom walls had nothing in terms of *re-alia* which facilitates learning.

It was observed that local resources were not used during the lesson. One teacher complained at the end of the lesson that the school lacked resources. However, the Physical Science lesson I observed at CDSS 7 DZ did not require materials from the shop but local resources which the teacher or the students, with guidance from the teachers could easily have sourced out. However, it was observed on the contrary that other unqualified teachers did perform professionally better in the teaching process than the qualified teachers in certain cases. This happened in very rare cases more especially with teachers with long years of experience in teaching in the CDSSs.

It was noted that some unqualified teachers lacked thorough knowledge on the topic they were teaching. During a Physical Science lesson, at one of the rural CDSSs, for example, the unqualified teacher clearly failed to explain some scientific definitions and experiments on ‘**electricity**’. He kept on reading from the text book which he had but which students did not have. The students were not motivated by the lesson as a result, some started reading other books while others started making noise to frustrate the teacher.

In addition to the above, in one CDSS, a lesson was conducted outside the classroom but there was no clear justification as to why the location was chosen. One would have thought that by taking the students outside the classroom, the teacher wanted to make use of the environment during the lesson. However, this was not the case. This was also an unqualified teacher.

4.2.2 Student assessment

Administration of tests to students is the surest way a teacher has to assess whether the students have understood or not what they have been taught. Therefore, a good teacher will always ensure that the students are assessed regularly. This helps to identify the gaps within individual learners and organise remedial lessons for those who have problems.

When the teachers were asked whether they administered tests to their students, 80 percent indicated that they administered tests regularly and that the tests were of good quality since they used past question papers from MANEB for conformity and direction. There was enough evidence from the students and the scholastic records that teachers in the CDSSs administered tests. The frequency however, varied from teacher to teacher. Some teachers administered tests fortnightly, while others on monthly basis. Twenty percent of the teachers, however, indicated they did not administer tests at all in the CDSSs except for end of term tests. These tests were of poor quality because in most cases, it was observed that the teachers prepared multiple choice questions even in areas which demanded prose writing in the national examination. According to the students, this was deliberate so that the tests were easy to mark. In general, most CDSSs administered end of term tests.

Contradicting their teachers, the students were of the view that the tests given to them were of very poor quality. One Form 1V student in Nkhata-Bay complained as follows:

“Teachers give tests which would be easy to mark. They give us very easy tests because they don’t want to spend a lot of time marking them. You can imagine that in Form 1V they don’t give us essay questions during tests but one word answers”.

Reacting to the students’ observations on tests administered to them, one teacher was honest enough on this and commented as follows:

“We are very few teachers and marking is a problem”.

I followed this up by requesting for a copy of a test from one of the teachers and compared it with a national examination paper of the same subject. Remarkable differences in the two papers

were observed in that the national examination paper required students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge in a variety of areas while the teacher's test focused on one or two areas. Considering that this was an end of Term 11 test for Form 1V students, it should have reflected the standard of national examination paper in terms of areas of focus.

4.3 Education system's support to enhance teachers' professional competency.

The education system in Malawi has professional back-ups in place to ensure compliance to professional and ethical norms by all stakeholders. Such back-ups include inspection and supervision of schools, in-service trainings for teachers and school managers, community participation in the governance and management of the schools. The study found that, in many cases, the support systems were not enhanced. They were there on paper but not practiced in the schools. This made the system weak. As a result, the quality of education in the schools was greatly compromised.

4.3.1 Inspections conducted in the schools

Every respected profession has its guidelines which clearly define expected standards of professional conduct. An inspection is a purposeful visit to an educational institution undertaken by an appropriately appointed official to assess the quality of education being provided. This exercise checks on the following three areas: quality and standards of teaching and learning, how well the institution is being managed and the levels of attainment of the learners. Inspection of schools, therefore, forms the basis for quality control in the schools as head teachers and teachers are assessed on how well they are managing the schools to achieve good quality education. When schools are visited by a team of inspectors, there are recommendations which are made to the school for improvement. Normally after such visits, the inspectors are supposed to come back to check if the recommendations made to the school were adhered to. If not, then disciplinary action may be taken on the authorities of the school. Additionally, such purposeful visits to schools can enable the policy-makers to check on the progress of implementation of a new policy.

According to the policy of the Ministry of Education Guide on Inspection of Schools (2000), every secondary school is supposed to be inspected at least once every three years. As for

general supervision of the schools, they are supposed to be supervised as regularly as possible. In this study, out of the ten CDSSs studied, only two had been inspected over the past three years. A request for a copy of the inspection report was made in each of the two schools which had been inspected within the previous three years. The inspection report was an elaborate professional document highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the school in all critical areas ranging from academic, professional ethics, sanitation and hygiene, governance and management, community participation in actual practices of the classrooms. At the end of the report, there were recommendations made to the school in order to improve on the observed weaknesses. For example, CDSS 6 NB which was inspected once in the previous three years was given the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that all teachers have schemes and records of work which should be checked regularly.
2. Ensure that all teachers prepare fully for lessons.
3. Develop an action plan for the improvement of the school.

When the Head teacher at one of the CDSSs was asked what the school did after receiving the report in question, it was reported that the school came up with an action plan. This was true because three points in the action plan were boldly pasted in the head teacher's office.

Asked if the action plan had been implemented, the head teacher indicated that only one action point was implemented. Asked why this was the case, it was said that staffing was a big problem at the school.

“We are heavily understaffed and it is very difficult to implement all the recommendations which were made by the inspectors to the school. We are very busy all the time preparing for lessons or teaching”.

This was the observation made by a teacher at a rural CDSS in Dedza. This means that even if a school had good ideas, implementation may be thwarted because of inadequacy in staffing.

The schools which had not been inspected over the past three years indicated that the problem was that the Division Office does not have enough inspectors.

“Imagine that the whole division has only two Education Methods Advisors. Can they manage to visit all the schools in the Division? We are told that some Methods Advisors retired and others are now at the Ministry of Education headquarters”.

This was the observation made by another teacher in Nkhata-Bay.

The issue of inadequate Education Methods Advisors was followed up with the Education Division Manager in the Central West Education Division who acknowledged the existence of the problem as a big challenge and attributed this to the fact that all Education Advisors in the division were posted to the Ministry of Education Headquarters except one. In addition, the Teaching Service Commission has taken a long time without conducting interviews for Secondary school Methods Advisors and hence the critical short fall.

Inadequate staff in the Methods and Advisory Services which results in low inspection and supervision levels by both Education Division Offices and Ministry of Education Headquarters contradicts what the literature review suggests on education quality improvement. The literature review, for example, suggests that the education system should regularly communicate expectations and exert pressure where necessary for successful academic results.

4.3.2 In-service trainings attended by teachers in the CDSSs.

In-service training is the most effective way of ensuring that teachers are competent enough in their teaching profession as they are kept up to date on new developments in the system for the good of the learners.

On in-service trainings for teachers, the study revealed that very few teachers had ever attended some in-service training. In the first school (rural), it was found that out of the eleven teachers in the school; only three had ever participated in an in-service training on secondary school teaching (two at Mzuzu University and one at Domasi College of Education). This is a serious flaw on the part of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education was expected to emphasise on in-service trainings for the teachers in the CDSSs considering the fact that most of them were not qualified to teach in Secondary schools.

Most of these teachers felt that upgrading of teachers already teaching in CDSSs would benefit the education system in the country. They were of the opinion that it would be prudent on the part of government to increase the intake levels for those teachers already in the system as primary school teachers.

“Our colleagues in the CSSs attend professional trainings regularly yet they are already better - off professionally than us. The government should have concentrated more on us who are under-qualified than those who are already qualified to teach in Secondary school.”

This was a general complaint by most of the under-qualified teachers in the CDSSs in the four districts where the study was conducted.

When I consulted the Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education, I was informed that Human Resource Department, Department of Education Methods and Advisory Services (EMAS) and Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED) were responsible for teacher trainings. The Controller of Human Resource and Development and the Director of the Department of Education Methods Advisory Services acknowledged the problem and indicated that this was due to inadequate funds allocated to the Ministry of Education. An official from

DTED, on the other hand, explained that their mandate is on pre-service training for teachers and not on in-service training.

All the senior officers I consulted on this matter, however, generally agreed that in-service training for the under qualified teachers in Secondary school was of paramount importance and regretted the current situation where it appeared that the exercise was, to a larger extent, neglected.

4.3.3 School governance and management

In the event that the inspectors and supervisors are centrally situated and therefore visit the schools at very irregular intervals, the community offers a better option in terms of checking the on-going processes in the school setting. Legally accepted school governance and management structures in the name of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parents and Teachers' Association (PTAs) play a very significant role in this respect. In this study, information was collected from the SMC and PTAs through FGDs.

The study found that most committees had overstayed. For example, at CDSS 4 LLC, the committee had been in place for over five years. Further, it appeared that nobody was ready to initiate the prospects for conducting elections for new office bearers. In addition, most members did not actively participate in the running of the schools. However, on a good note, it was reported that most SMCs had initiated development projects in the schools which they hoped would lead to improved students' performance during national examinations. At CDSS 7 DZ, for example, the SMC had initiated the construction of a classroom block.

Asked whether they found occasion to check the affairs in the school in terms of teacher absenteeism and promptness for lessons, most of the members of the SMC and PTAs felt this was not their area of concern but that the Ministry of Education officials should play that role. It was, therefore clear that these committees in most cases were not aware of their roles in terms of their involvement in the overall management of the schools apart from participation in development projects at the school. These projects have been in a form of construction of classroom blocks, teachers' houses where communities contributed bricks, quarry stones and sand. In some cases, the communities have contributed towards the provision of lunch

facilities at the school to enable students learn better in the afternoon sessions as they cannot manage to rush home and have lunch and report back to school on time for afternoon classes.

Asked if they have ever attended any training upon being elected into the committees, all committees reported that they had never been trained. In addition, most committee members in the CDSSs had not gone through Secondary education themselves and therefore could not fully participate in checking the quality and policies of education. This therefore, explained why their contribution to the schools and the education system in general was so minimal.

4.3.4 Accommodation for teachers

Accommodation for teachers is one of the conditions for effective teaching to take place. If teachers operate from very far, they would be tired and cannot teach effectively. In the rural CDSSs, either teachers walk to school or use bicycles. However, the distance covered in many instances is very long. Most of the teachers, therefore, attributed their dismal performance in delivering content to students to the long distance they traveled to reach the schools. One teacher in Lilongwe Rural East made the following observation:

“There are no rentable houses around this school. We therefore travel a long distance to reach this school. Some of us operate from the primary school houses we were occupying before we came to teach at this school. When new teachers are posted to the primary school, we would be chased out from their houses”.

4.3.5 Teacher transfers to other schools

Transferring teachers from one school to another is a policy matter that aims at strengthening the schools and the teachers’ professional competencies. For example, if a teacher goes to a good quality school where high professional standards of teaching and learning are maintained, the professional performance of the teacher will improve. Conversely, if a teacher of high professional values goes to a weak school, teachers of that school may end up benefiting professionally as they learn the skills from the in-coming teacher. However, when the postings are done without due consideration to the academic calendar, they can have negative effects on the performance of the teachers as they fail to complete what was started with the students of the previous school. The transfer of teachers to other schools during the academic year, according to

the students, also greatly affected their performance. One student in a rural CDSS in Nkhata-Bay commented as follows:

“We had a very good Physical Science teacher but he got transferred to a CSS two months ago. May be the government thinks that we do not deserve good teachers but our friends in CSSs are getting good teachers. We have stayed all this time without a Physical Science teacher and the examinations are near. This is killing us. Why can’t they transfer the teachers during the main holidays?”

It was apparently clear that students whose teachers were transferred to another school got affected psychologically, unless the teacher was instantly replaced by an equally competent teacher. If not, the result would be the failure of students in national examinations in the particular subject the teacher was teaching.

4.4 Material inputs to the CDSSs.

As explained in the previous discussion, material inputs to the schools provide a very important factor for quality teaching and learning to take place. This section examines the availability of some of these materials.

4.4.1 Infrastructure in the CDSSs

The data revealed that all rural CDSSs lacked laboratory and library facilities. So far, in all the CDSSs studied, there were no laboratories for science subjects. Unfortunately, however, there were also no qualified teachers in science subjects in most of the CDSSs. Out of the 10 CDSSs studied only 2 CDSSs had a qualified teacher in science subjects. The result was that students performance was very low although in some few cases slightly better when compared to others. The data also revealed that only three urban CDSSs had libraries.

Even in the urban CDSSs, the data revealed that most CDSSs lacked laboratory and library facilities except in one CDSS (CDSS 1 NB) where a Biology laboratory was available.

Table 4.3 Availability of infrastructure in the CDSSs

	No of CDSSs	Out of	Remarks
CDSSs with P/Science Labs	0	10	Teaching and learning of Physical Science is difficult
CDSSs with Biology Labs	1	10	Teaching and learning of Biology is difficult
CDSSs with Libraries	3	10	Most of the CDSSs have libraries but they do not stock adequate number and variety of books

The data revealed that most CDSSs lacked laboratory and library facilities. As a result, students' performance in science subjects is very poor. The data also revealed that only three out of the ten CDSSs studied had libraries. In most cases the libraries were stocked with few books mostly old and outdated. In many schools, the books were donations from well wishers and not very relevant to the secondary school curriculum in Malawi but used as supplementary reading anyway. Even in the urban CDSSs, the data revealed that they too lacked laboratories and libraries except one (CDSS 1 NB) which had a biology laboratory.

As explained earlier, the study did not focus on the availability of the facilities available but went further to establish level of their utilisation by the teachers and students in the CDSSs. The study found that even in the CDSSs where facilities like libraries and laboratories were available, these facilities were grossly under-utilised because of lack of necessary materials. For example, most students said they rarely went to the library to read because most of the books available were outdated and important books related to their syllabus were not available.

Yes we have a library but there are no books available. What will be the benefit of going to a library where the relevant books for our academic life are not available? One form four student in CDSS 6 DZ complained.

4. 4.2. Availability of textbooks per Form in the ten CDSSs.

The following two tables show the availability of textbooks for individual subjects in the schools studied in the four districts.

Table 4.4 Available text books per Form per subject per student in the urban CDSSs.

School	Enroll	Chic	Mat	Eng Lit	Eng Lang	P/S	Bio	Agr	Geo	His	B/K
CDSS 1 NB	222	3:1	3:1	222:1	2:1	12:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	2:1	17:1
CDSS 2 DZ	507	8:1	39:1	507:1	15:1	63:1	20:1	507:0	42:1	507:1	507:1
CDSS 3 LLC	349	6:1	70:1	29:1	349:1	13:1	44:1	3:1	10:1	14:1	70:1
CDSS 4 LLC	293	4:1	5:1	20:1	2:1	5:1	13:1	17:1	9:1	7:1	29:1
CDSS 5 LLC	352	1:1	2:1	352:1	2:1	6:1	2:1	70:1	25:1	15:1	27:1
Average ratios	1723	4:1	37:1	226:1	76:1	20:1	16:1	119:1	18:1	109:1	130:1

From the data, one will observe that most CDSSs did not have adequate textbooks for students to carry to their homes for use. The textbooks were shared only during lessons. With a total enrolment of 1723 students in the five CDSSs, it is quite clear that there were serious shortages of books in the CDSSs as evidenced from the data. English Literature had the lowest number of books available. Only in CDSS 5 LLC where the number of Chichewa textbooks was more than the total enrolled.

Table 4.5 Availability of text books (per student) in the rural CDSSs.

School	Enrol	Chic	Mat	Eng Lit	Eng Lang	P/S	Bio	Agr	Geo	His	B/K
CDSS 6 NB	185	1:0.6	1:0.47	1:0.35	1:0.72	1:0.12	1:0.4	1:0.45	1:0.81	1:0.87	1:0.3
CDSS 7 DZ	424	35:1	17:1	424:0	13:1	53:1	17:1	424:0	35:1	424:0	424:0
CDSS 8 DZ	348	2:1	3:1	348:0	2:1	5:1	14:1	8:1	8:1	7:1	6:1
CDSS 9 LLE	237	4:1	237:0	237:0	4:1	237:0	237:0	11:1	11:1	2:1	119:1
CDSS10 LLE	244	3:1	7:1	244:0	3:1	7:1	244:0	9:1	6:1	6:1	41:1
Average ratios	1338	9:1	52:1	191:1	5:1	55:1	103:1	91:1	12:1	88:1	117:1

As explained earlier, the data shows that the CDSSs had considerable shortages of text books in almost all the subjects. The enrolment for the five rural CDSSs was 1338 and this tells us that on average, all CDSSs had serious book shortages. English Literature was the worst hit subject in terms of availability of text books. For example, there were only 30 English Literature textbooks against 1338 students in the five schools. The prevailing very high student: textbook ratios in the CDSS was not in line with what the literature review has suggested that adequate supply of text books to students is a major factor for the attainment of quality education. This is academically challenging. On the other hand, it is observed that the student: text book ratios were slightly better in Chichewa and English than the rest of the subjects. Interestingly, these were the two subjects in which many students performed better in the CDSSs. As was the case with important facilities like laboratories and libraries, the focus on textbooks did not end at establishing the availability of the text books in the CDSSs but went further to assess the level of their use by the students. The available textbooks were not used adequately by individual students mainly because of their scarcity. As seen from the table, there were cases where 119 learners shared a bible in one of the CDSSs. For an individual student to access that bible for reading, it may have been after two months or more.

In addition, the study found that the CDSSs lacked adequate teaching and learning materials while in CSSs which participated in the study; these were adequately available in most cases. However, the urban CDSSs were slightly better than the rural CDSSs. One student in a rural CDSS in NkhataBay commented:

“Even our friends in urban CDSSs have adequate teaching and learning materials than us”.

4. 5.Financial support to the CDSSs

The Malawi government, through the CDSS policy, promised to support *all* CDSSs financially to enable them procure teaching and learning materials so that the quality of education is improved.

4.5.1 The Malawi government’s financial support to the urban CDSSs

The CDSS policy promise on financial support to the schools was that they would all be adequately provided for. Moyo, (2008) observed that there was a contradiction between the

policy intent and the policy implementation. The researcher further observed that this was due to poor planning as it originated from the political platform. The meager funding to the CDSS seems to confirm such assertions as seen from the table below:

Table 4.6 Financial support to the urban CDSSs

The table below shows the amount of money the CDSSs received from the government annually.

School	Amount receives from the government in a year for T/Ls	Enrollment	Remarks
CDSS 1 NB	K219,000 per annum	222	Not adequate
CDSS 2 DZ	K600,000 per annum	507	At least some basic teaching and learning materials are procured
CDSS 3 LLC	K250,000 per annum	349	Not adequate
CDSS 4 LLC	K250,000 per annum	293	Not adequate
CDSS 5 LLC	K126,000 per annum	352	Not adequate

Although no public school in Malawi can claim to have adequate finances for their operation, the resources in the CDSSs are far on the lower side for schools to respond properly to their educational needs. The table shows all CDSSs did not receive adequate funds from the Malawi government for procurement of teaching and learning materials.

4.5.2 The Malawi government's financial support to the rural CDSSs

Table 4.7 Financial support to the rural CDSSs.

School	Amount receives from the government in a year for T/Ls	Enrollment	Remarks
CDSS 6 NB	K600,000 per annum	185	Not adequate
CDSS 7 DZ	K333,320 per annum	424	Not adequate
CDSS 8 DZ	K250,000 per annum	348	Not adequate
CDSS 9 LLE	K247,500 per annum	237	Not adequate
CDSS 10 LLE	K193,000 per annum	244	Not adequate

The situation in the rural CDSSs was similar to that obtaining in the urban CDSSs. The data revealed that the CDSSs received very little financial support from the government which was very inadequate for the procurement of teaching and learning resources. CDSS 10 LLE, for example, received on average the sum of K16,083.33 every month. This was too little considering the needs of the schools in line with the number of students enrolled for effective teaching and learning to take place. For example, CDSS 10 LLE received K193,000 against a population of 244 students. This means that each student was provided K790.98 for the whole year. This amount is not enough even to buy the cheapest book used which in many cases costs in excess of K1000. However, this amount of money excludes the materials to be used by the teachers in the teaching process.

4.5.3 Financial support to CSSs

The idea to adequately support the CDSSs was to ensure that they should be upgraded to the level of CSSs. However, a sample of four CSSs randomly selected shows that the gap in financial support to the two sets of schools still remains too big even after the implementation of the policy reform.

Table 4.8 Financial support to the CSSs randomly selected)

School	Amount of funding for T/Ls	Enrollment	Remarks
<i>CSS 1</i>	K2,400,000	390	Quite adequate.
<i>CSS 2</i>	K4,800,000	424	Some basic T/Ls can be procured.
<i>CSS 3</i>	K6,000,080	436	Some basic T/Ls can be procured.
<i>CSS 4</i>	K12,000,000	385	Some basic T/Ls can be procured.

By way of comparison between the CDSSs and the four randomly selected CSSs above, the study found that CSSs received quite adequate funds that would enable the schools procure basic needs in the teaching and learning processes. There were very big disparities in the distribution of financial resources to CDSSs and CSSs by the Malawi government. While the least funded in the CSSs receive K2,400,000 per annum which translates into K200,000 per month

for teaching and learning materials, the least funded CDSS receives K126,000 per annum for similar activities and this translates into K10,500 per month. What was surprising was that the enrolment figures were not considered when making financial provisions to the secondary schools. For example, CSS 4 has the least enrolment number of students but received the highest amount of funding for procurement of teaching and learning materials. In addition, the school had the best infrastructure in place among the four schools. The intention of the CDSS policy reform, also known as the unification policy reform was to level the playing field for all secondary schools in terms of what can be obtained from these institutions that can enhance quality of the education offered. In which case, the teaching and learning materials provided to these schools were supposed to be equal or based on standard criteria like levels of enrolment. However, this did not seem to be the case as illustrated by the above evidence.

4. 6 Students' psychological and sociological characteristics.

As the literature review has suggested, student attitude which is a result of social and cultural characteristics of the school social system greatly affects students' achievement levels. In this study, students' psychological and sociological characteristics as a result of their school environments were observed and discussed.

On students' psychological and sociological characteristics, the focus on this study was on students safety and security both at school and at home, fears, likes and dislikes both at school and at home and availability of both academic and social amenities at school and at home. Frequency of absenteeism, time students report for classes, students' willingness to learn, use of the library by the students, students' ambitions and discipline were also areas of focus in this study.

4.6.1 Students' psychological characteristics

When the schools' information forms which were sent to the schools in advance were analysed, it was noted that most of the CDSSs were under-enrolled as opposed to the CSSs which were in most cases over-enrolled. From the discussions I had with the students, the teachers and the SMCs, I gathered the information that the students did not like the idea of being in the CDSSs

based on their poor perceptions of these education institutions. One of the students at a CDSS in Dedza commented that:

“You cannot call this a Secondary school. The primary school I attended is much better than this. After all, some of the teachers who were teaching us in primary school are here. I do not notice any difference”

This contradicts what the literature review has revealed that students’ high expectations of themselves and the school contribute to making an effective school (Brubaker and Partine, 1986)

The parents and the SMC members shared the views of the students. They observed that most materials that would be expected in a normal Secondary school were not available in the CDSSs. To them, for example, the students could perform better if electricity was available in the CDSSs. A member of SMC in Lilongwe Rural East made the following comment:

“Most families are poor and cannot afford to buy paraffin or candles every day for our children to use at night for learning. If the school had electricity, our children could be coming to the school to read in the evening especially those who stay close to the school”

From the observations made by the parents and the students themselves, it was clear the students were psychologically affected by their being selected to a CDSS. Instead of celebrating, the students were at pains thinking of how they can move out of such poor educational environments. Any opportunity to go to a CSS or a private secondary school could be taken without haste. Further discussions with the students who remained in the schools after their classmates had transferred to CSSs or private schools revealed that they were very frustrated with their school environment and could not consistently focus on their academic tasks even when they had a qualified and competent teacher in place.

The study also revealed that there was a certain degree of hostility between the teachers and the students. One of the factors which most students did not like in the CDSSs was the presence of the unqualified teachers. This frustrated them as they thought they could get very little academic support from such teachers. The teachers, on the other hand, were aware of their short-comings in terms of their qualification to teach in Secondary school. They were, therefore, equally frustrated as they felt the government was doing very little to uplift their status both

professionally and academically. This scenario sparked a lot of suspicions and mistrusts as most of such unqualified teachers felt underrated by the students they taught. Their anger and frustrations were vented to the students in various forms including use of unwarranted punishments. At CDSS 8 DZ, for example, the students narrated that some teachers who came to the school from the nearby primary schools were fond of acting emotionally to any slightest provocation. In addition, they gave unwarranted punishments to students anyhow. Considering that this information corroborated with what was said by students at CDSS 6 NB, this aspect was taken to be true.

4.6.2 Students' sociological characteristics.

A number of sociological factors affecting students' performance in national examinations in the CDSS were revealed in the study. First, I noted in the study that the records in the registers showed that quite a good number of students left school due to lack of fees. When the head teachers and teachers were asked on this, it was reported that most of these students were orphans and could not afford to pay tuition fees. Obviously, at school, before they drop out, these students lacked other essential materials like pens and exercise books. When the parents were asked on this, it became clear that they were very willing to support their children at school but due to high poverty levels, there was very little they could do. As a result of this, they turned to the government to get assisted in almost all areas of material support. It may be that poverty levels were high in communities around the CDSSs mostly in rural settings and this impacted negatively on the students' education. According to National Statistical Office (2002), ninety percent of the Malawi population live in rural areas and poverty levels in the rural areas was at 65 percent as opposed to 60 percent in the urban areas and the above findings confirms this assertion. A study conducted by Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi in 2010 which reported that lack of basic needs due to poverty was a major push factor for many girls to drop out of school further confirms the assertion.

In relation to the above, the SMC members queried the government for not supplying the CDSSs with note-books for students to write and this meant that parents were usually over-burdened in terms of provision of learning materials for their children. One PTA member in Nkhata-Bay lamented the following during an FGD session:

“We are very poor people in the villages. From where does the government expect us to get money for buying notebooks for our children? It pains us to see our children failing to go to school due to lack of notebooks. The government is supposed to look after us by supplying our children with the necessary school materials”

Second, it was observed in this study that facilities that can make the students socialise better were not in place in most CDSSs. One of the factors which most students did not like in the CDSSs was the absence of such facilities as volleyball courts, netball courts and, in rare circumstances; it was only the football ground which was available in very few schools. After classes, when students go to the playing field, they relax and socialise very well amongst themselves even with their teachers. The absence of such facilities denied the students the chance to socialise. The good thing about the sporting activities at school level is that even the spectators get socialised in the process when supporting teams and players of their choice.

Third, there seemed to be some form of discipline when it came to punctuality on the part of the students in the urban CDSSs. The reason for this could be that most students in urban CDSSs do not travel long distances to school. However, for rural CDSSs, punctuality was a big problem on the part of the students. The reason for that was that most students came from faraway places. Classes were supposed to begin at half past seven in the morning but some students and teachers, in some CDSSs, arrived in the schools some minutes past eight. It was reported that some traveled a distance of 12 kilometres to the school. One student in Dedza commented as follows:

“You can imagine that I walk 12 kilometers to school and 12 kilometers back home every day. I cannot manage. I therefore rest one day each week. I know that other students have left school here because of long distances. Unfortunately, my parents cannot afford to find a place at a good Secondary school”.

In view of the above, the students felt that boarding facilities in these institutions would help improve their performance in national examinations as they would spend all the time at school doing school activities. They further indicated that their studies were negatively

affected by household chores and long distances to be travelled to school and back. This view was shared by both SMC members and the teachers.

On students' commitment to studies, the study found that the reading culture is not enhanced among students in the CDSSs. Records of students who borrowed library books showed that very few students had the habit of borrowing books from the library to read at home. The students from both rural and urban CDSSs however, expressed willingness/ great interest in education. This was demonstrated in the FGDs when they were asked to indicate what they wanted to become in the future. Most students indicated that they wanted to excel in education. One from one student in CDSS 7 DZ commented as follows:

“I want to work very hard so that I can become a medical doctor when I finish school”

In addition, most of them said that they had the ambition to be selected to study at the University of Malawi.

4. 7 National examination results by school and average results for previous three years.

As alluded to in chapter two, examinations results are a major indicator of the quality of education offered in a school. Chakwera (2005) observed that a good quality school demonstrates this fact by good performance of students during examinations. The sampled CDSSs were requested to furnish the researcher with information on the students' performance in national examinations in 2008. Further, they were requested to give their examinations results for the past three years. Table 4.9 shows the results.

Table 4.9 MSCE examination results in the ten CDSSs in 2006.

CDSS	MSCE pass rate in 2006	Average pass rate over the past three years for the school	Remarks
CDSS 1 NB	48	50	Good passes in subjects taught by qualified teachers.
CDSS 2 DZ	48	45	Average passes in a good number of subjects taught by qualified teachers.
CDSS 3 LLC	40	40	Average passes in a good number of subjects taught by qualified teachers
CDSS 4 LLC	30	30	Very poor in most of the subjects.
CDSS 5 LLC	62.7	60	Very good performance more especially in subjects taught by qualified teachers.
CDSS 6 NB	37	32	Students performed poorly in Physical Science, Biology and mathematics
CDSS 7 DZ	31.4	30	Students performed poorly in Biology Geography and Mathematics
CDSS 8 DZ	42	40	Students performed poorly in Biology Geography and Mathematics
CDSS 9 LLE	49	45	Students performed very poorly in Science subjects
CDSS 10 LLE	38.6	36	Students performed very poorly in Science subjects

4.8 National examinations in the CSSs

Table 4.10 Pass rates for the CSSs in the four districts

School	Pass % at MSCE in 2006	Average pass % over the past 3 years	Remarks
<i>CSS 1</i>	70	70	Good performance in all subjects
<i>CSS 2</i>	57	60	Good performance in most of the subjects
<i>CSS 3</i>	60.7	65	Good performance in most of the subjects
<i>CSS 4</i>	48.3	50	Average performance

In short, one will observe that performance of students in the CSSs was better in comparison to CDSSs. This can be attributed to the fact that over 90 percent of the teachers were qualified and they had the basic teaching and learning materials available. In addition, they received a reasonable funding from the government.

4.9 Chapter summary

Although the findings have revealed a number of weaknesses in the implementation of the CDSS policy reform in Malawi, it has also been observed that there are positive results of the policy reform. For example, some CDSSs have adequate qualified teachers, they have the much needed science facilities and performance is better than in the CSSs. Additionally, some qualified teachers do not contribute effectively to the quality of education in their schools. Perhaps this study has managed to unearth positive aspects of the CDSS policy reform because the policy itself has now matured. It is therefore not proper to generalize that quality of education in CDSSs is poor or that the CDSS policy reform has completely failed to achieve its intended purpose. However, although this is the case, the weaknesses of the CDSS policy reform implementation out-weigh its strengths. The weaknesses highlighted have impacted negatively on the anticipated results of the policy reform. Therefore, the result is that in most cases, quality of education in the CDSSs is still poorer than in the CSSs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

5.0 Chapter overview

This section discusses what is obtaining from the research findings. Specifically the discussion focuses on the research questions posed in chapter one as follows: (1) what were the education quality measures which were implemented during the 1998 CDSS policy reform? (2) How was the implementation of the education quality measures conducted during the 1998 CDSS policy reform? (3) What has been the impact of the implementation of the education quality measures on the quality of education in the CDSSs?

5.1 Teachers' academic qualifications

As seen from the literature, teachers' quality is a significant factor for student achievement. On teacher quality in the CDSSs, the study found that the Malawi government had made some efforts to ensure that qualified teachers were deployed in the CDSSs. It was found from document analysis that the first step in this direction was the introduction of Secondary School Teacher Education Programme at Domasi College of Education. The understanding was that graduates from the programme would quickly fill the gaps in the CDSSs regarding availability of qualified teachers. However, it was saddening to note that most rural CDSSs continued to be manned by under-qualified teachers.

In addition, these schools were heavily under-staffed thereby impacting negatively on students' performance during national examinations. In terms of numbers, CSSs had more qualified teachers in all subjects than the CDSSs. Moyo (2008) observed that there was a contradiction between the policy promise and its implementation. This study observes that this contradiction is as a result of power coercive strategies for policy implementation. For example, the Education Division Offices are responsible for deployment of teachers in their respective divisions. The expectation of Ministry of Education headquarters after designing the CDSS policy reform was that these offices will take up their responsibilities in ensuring that both CDSSs and CSSs share equally the number of graduates from the colleges. In fact, the CDSSs were supposed to be given a priority in terms of numbers of qualified teachers to be deployed. On the contrary, what the study found was that those who graduated from the colleges were not willing in most cases to go

and teach in the CDSSs which are in most cases situated in very remote areas. The qualified teachers therefore go to the Division offices with a number of excuses. Since these excuses are entertained in most cases, the deployment process appears to favour the CSSs. As a result, what is designed is not what is implemented. This is detrimental to the development of education in Malawi more especially considering that teachers are a very important resource in the teaching/learning process (Adams, 1995).

As alluded to in the above, a teacher who is well qualified for the teaching job, in many cases, follows the necessary steps in the teaching process to enable students acquire knowledge and master the necessary skills. First, the quality of a teacher impacts on the quality of planning and scheming in preparation for teaching. The Ugandan Ministry of Education (2005) observed that it is important for teachers to read adequately in preparation for lessons. After reading, there is need to plan for the lesson so that the lesson process is sequential following prescribed steps. Within this process, the teacher previews the anticipated difficult parts of the lessons and comes up with appropriate remedies before its actual delivery to students.

In addition, a teacher who is well qualified for the teaching job usually uses a variety of approaches when teaching. Such a teacher, in most cases, will select and use varied but effective and appropriate methods of teaching and learning. This is because learners have different abilities and different ways of learning.

Further, a well trained teacher will always ensure active involvement and participation of the learners in the learning process. When learners participate in the teaching/learning process, it becomes very difficult for them to forget the concepts learnt. They will always remember because they were actively involved and were part of the learning process. The issues learnt through participation are easily internalised.

Furthermore, records of learner progress and attendance are kept consistently and effectively. Even when the teachers are doing a very good job, as long as there are no proper records, it becomes difficult to identify the learners' needs and therefore, individual learners' problems cannot effectively be addressed. There is also need to have records of

students' attendance so that those who absent themselves regularly can be reproached and assisted accordingly. All these will help students to perform well in their academic life.

Additionally, the CDSSs in general, experienced critical shortages of qualified teachers in science subjects. When it came to national examinations results, it was observed that most students in the CDSSs failed badly in the science subjects. While the students in the CDSSs performed fairly well in the arts subjects, the overall average was negatively affected by the results in the science subjects. The Ministry of Education has taken a step to ensure that unqualified teachers in the CDSSs are sent to Domasi annually for upgrading. However, the problem is that these teachers upon qualifying refuse to go back to teach in the CDSSs. Moyo (2008) observed that although the objective of the 1998 CDSS policy reform was to unify the two systems of secondary education in Malawi, the current status of the CDSSs has demonstrated that the two systems are nowhere nearer to each other. They prefer to teach in the CSSs where in most cases basic social amenities are available. Therefore, unless something is done to improve the general conditions in the rural CDSSs, these schools shall continue to be of poor quality and hence will continue to perform poorly in national examinations more especially in the science subjects.

5.2 Teachers' professional competence

On the second research question regarding professional competencies for teachers, the study has revealed serious deficiencies on the part of teachers in the CDSSs. Lack of the appropriate knowledge and skills contribute greatly to this problem. Lack of knowledge and skills on the part of most teachers, translates to poor content delivery to the students. The result was that the lessons were not interesting since the teachers stick to the text book reading approach all the time instead of explaining the concepts hence poor quality of education as evidenced by poorer national examinations' results in the CDSSs as compared to the CSSs. Students' differences and learning needs can be better accommodated by teachers employing a variety of teaching practices (Hathaway 1983; Joyce Hersh and McKibbin 1983; Levine 1990; Shann 1990). In his review of five studies in developing countries, Fuller (1986) found confirming evidence that when a teacher spends more time preparing for class, these preparations raised the quality of instruction and improved student achievement. Lack of highlighted competencies by the teachers

of science subjects in the CDSSs put the students at a disadvantage during examinations as most concepts were not clearly explained, and therefore, not properly understood by students.

It is clear from the findings that teachers in CDSSs were not motivated. There were concerns on lack of clear career path for them, lack of decent accommodation and lack of in-service trainings for them. As a result, the teachers found it hard to concentrate on the teaching when their career path in terms of professional growth was not clear. The result was a *laissez-faire* approach to the teaching ending in very low cognitive achievement on the part of the students. For example, due to lack of motivation and poor attitude on the part of the teachers, in general, the study found that most teachers in the CDSSs rarely administered tests to students.

Further, the quality of tests administered was of poor quality. This is a serious problem. Frequent monitoring of student progress in conjunction with prompt constructive feedback are factors that enhance school motivation and school effectiveness (Blum 1990; Brubaker and Partine 1986; Joyce Hersh and McKibbin 1983; Lezotte and Bancroft 1985; Scheerens and Creemers 1989; Steller 1988). Edmonds (1979) observed that frequent assessment of students' progress could lead to school effectiveness. Monitoring student work helps teachers diagnose what students know and where further instruction is needed. These regular evaluation procedures and feedback should be an integral aspect of the curriculum. Research from developing countries that has examined the effectiveness of close monitoring of student work and prompt constructive feedback has confirmed these positive results elsewhere (Ariagada, 1981; Lockheed and Komenan 1989). It was observed that most teachers were not motivated to teach in the CDSSs due to among other things lack of accommodation in the rural settings. Most teachers, specifically in rural CDSSs had to look for houses for rent and in many cases, such houses were not available. As a result, the teachers walked long distances to school and arrived at the school already tired and frustrated. This has an impact on their performance in terms of planning and actual content delivery. This again put the students in the CDSSs at a disadvantage in terms of what and how they learn and thereby affecting their subsequent performance during examinations. In addition, the absence of teachers' houses and houses for rent in the surrounding areas make such schools unattractive to teachers, hence, the critical understaffing levels in these schools compared to urban CDSSs and CSSs in general. Thus, while the system

managers may put in place the necessary curricula to be delivered, those to deliver it are not given the necessary support to do their job. This is one of the major obstacles to policy implementation in developing countries.

5.3 Education system support to enhance teachers' professional competence

Further to the above, the study observed that most teachers in the CDSSs were frustrated due to so many short-comings related to their professional career in terms of under-qualification, low professional grades and lack of in-service trainings. The support systems to enhance professional competence had not been enhanced so much that the teachers saw a gloomy future in terms of improving their professional competence. The situation on teacher quality has still remained poor in the CDSSs in spite of the implementation of the CDSS policy reform. This is worsened by the fact that the education system failed to enhance the teachers' professional competences in many ways.

First, the study has established that the education system in Malawi has provisions for inspection and supervision of the schools to ensure that education quality improvements are achieved. However, these activities are not regularly conducted in the schools. This implied high probability of laxity by the schools on issues of adherence to education quality control measures. The laxity on the part of the schools and the teachers in particular had negative impact on the process of teaching as teachers resorted to short cuts when planning for lessons, delivering the content to the students, assessing the students and providing feedback on students' performance to relevant stakeholders.

Second, inspections were rarely conducted in the schools. Some CDSSs had not been inspected for three years. Support to individual schools by the Education system's management structure is important to enhance school effectiveness (Huberman and Miles, 1984; Purkey and Smith, 1983). The inspection visits to schools assist education administrators to monitor and evaluate schools' academic performance and the efforts of the school heads, particularly as instructional managers (Blum 1990; Dalin *et al.* 1992). Inspection visits are vital in terms of quality control in the schools. When a school has been visited by inspectors, its strength and weaknesses are exposed and advice is given to the school management in terms of what the school should do to

address the weaknesses. Most schools had improved after team inspection visits. Schools try to address the problems contained in the inspection reports. They come up with action plans and ensure they are implemented. This is because they fear that if another inspection team comes to the school and finds the same weaknesses not addressed, that can have serious consequences to the management of the school. As a result, most schools have ended up registering improvements in terms of the quality of education offered. In the absence of such important professional visits which act as checks and balances for the schools, it is very doubtful if they can strive to achieve anything in terms of students' cognitive achievement. As a result, performance of students continued to be poor in these institutions.

Third, legally acceptable bodies meant to assist in the governance and management of the schools like SMCs and PTAs had not been properly trained on the roles to be played by them on the overall management of the schools. As a result, although the bodies were available in the CDSSs, their contribution towards achievement of good quality education was very minimal.

In addition, the study found that Division officials transferred subject teachers at will during the school sessions. Sometimes such transfers were made due to requests from the teachers themselves on account of hard conditions they face in the CDSSs. When these transfers were implemented, no considerations were made for replacement in some cases. This resulted in poor teaching and learning situations which in turn affected the students' performance very negatively; hence poor performance during national examinations.

What we learn from these findings is that while authorities in the Ministry of Education direct and put in place operational procedures, those entrusted to do the job are not doing it. This reflects a problem with the coercive nature of policy formulation and implementation (Chimombo, 1999).

5.4 Material and financial support to the CDSSs

On the first research question in terms of what quality education measures were implemented during the CDSS policy reform, the study finds that most critical education quality measures were not implemented. For example, the study found that teaching and learning materials

provided to the CDSSs, were inadequate more especially in *rural* CDSSs. The non-availability of teaching and learning materials, more especially in rural CDSSs put the students at a very big disadvantage in terms of performance in national examinations. It should, therefore, not come as a surprise when students in rural CDSSs continue to perform dismally during national examinations.

The first resource that is greatly in short supply in the CDSSs is textbooks. Fuller, (1996) observed that the influence of textbooks on students' achievements appears to be stronger within rural schools and among students from lower income families. The impact of text book use is far much greater in African countries because of their scarcity compared with the abundance of textbooks available in industrial countries. Further, the evidence is very strong that children in developing countries who have access to textbooks and other reading material learn more than those who do not have access (Farell, 1989, Heyneman, Farell and Sepulveda-Stuardo, 1981; Heyneman and Loxley, 1984; Lockheed, Verspoor and associates, 1991). Therefore, the critical shortage of textbooks in the CDSSs is a serious problem that requires immediate attention if performance of students is to improve.

Further to the above, the study revealed that laboratories were also seriously lacking in most of the CDSSs. This was a big problem considering that most teachers in these CDSSs were under-qualified. The absence of laboratories puts students in these institutions at a very big disadvantage when it comes to performance of students during national examinations more especially in Science subjects. If students in CDSSs and CSSs were to be given equal opportunities in Science subjects, then obviously, the CDSSs ought to be provided with the necessary equipments as is the case with most CSSs.

Another important facility that was found lacking in the CDSSs was libraries. Again in schools where books were present, the stocks were very limited. The library in one CDSS had less than 800 books in stock. Worse still, most of them were donations from well wishers and at the same time; outdated. This meant that in terms of access to extra reading material, the students in CDSSs were at a very big disadvantage. Studies which have been conducted so far as observed

from the literature review have shown a direct relationship between reading of extra materials and improved performance by students.

On financial support for procurement of teaching and learning resources in the CDSSs, the study found that the amount of money the CDSSs received on monthly basis from the government for procurement of teaching and learning resources, was very inadequate. This is a serious problem considering that the majority of Secondary school learners at present as was the case in the past before the policy reform, are enrolled in CDSSs. The result is that most of the Secondary school students in Malawi have no adequate teaching and learning materials, hence the poor performance during national examinations. In addition, the 1998 policy reform did not stipulate anything to the effect that the CDSSs will receive less support from the government than the CSSs. It stated that all CDSSs, just like CSSs, will receive financial support. There is, therefore, a contradiction between the policy promise and its implementation.

The little financial support provided to the CDSSs is in sharp contrast to what is provided to the CSSs within same vicinities in the districts which received considerable amounts of money from the government every month for the procurement of teaching and learning resources. With such support the schools can manage to procure reasonable amounts of teaching and learning materials. This meant that students in these schools were at an advantage over their colleagues in CDSSs who lack basic teaching and learning materials. In terms of performance, therefore, one cannot expect these two types of schools to perform at the same level.

All the above highlighted issues confirm what Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) noted that gathering sufficient resources for the new policy means, in many instances, cutting from resources directed to the old policy. This is the case because new policies in many instances do not come with budgets. Usually this is verbal or written promise. To ensure progress, therefore, it requires lobbying for new funds, identifying existing sources of implementation support and negotiating for new resource allocation towards the implementation of the new policy. This is called mobilization of resources and it shifts the paper exercise into action.

However, gathering sufficient resources for the new policy means, in many instances, cutting from resources directed to the old policy. To ensure progress, therefore, it requires lobbying for new funds, identifying existing sources of implementation support and negotiating for new resource allocation towards the implementation of the new policy. This can be done if the policy-makers continually go down to the grass root to check how the policy is being implemented. The mechanisms of checking the progress of policy implementation is weak as evidenced by very irregular inspections conducted in the schools. Additionally, it is noted that if policy changes are successful, then their impact are evidenced in some manner or another, such as transformed behaviours, greater or improved benefits to consumers or clients, and more effective and efficient production and use of resources. Further to the above, it has been argued that many policy reforms are long- term and the benefits and impacts do not show up immediately, monitoring of progress in the form of process indicators is important.

5.5 Students' psychological and sociological characteristics

In defining education quality, Heneveld and Craig (1996) observed that students are the subjects in the educational process and that the educational outcomes are defined in terms of their achievement. From this understanding, therefore, a study on education quality should include the students themselves. This study, therefore, also looked at the students' psychological and sociological characteristics. The findings of the study showed that students were not motivated by their educational environment as evidenced by the good number of students from the rural CDSSs to CSSs or private secondary schools. This confirms what Moyo (2008) observed that drop-out rate is higher in the CDSSs than the CSSs due to poor conditions in the schools. The reason is that the CDSSs are not attractive to students in terms of teaching and learning facilities. Most students selected to these Secondary schools sought transfers to urban CDSSs, CSSs or completely moved to private Secondary schools if they could afford. This suggested that students selected to the CDSSs felt bad about their situation. Such negative feelings about their educational environment may have a negative impact on their performance during national examinations. Therefore, this study observed that the low performance and esteem of the CDSSs, the sociological and psychological characteristics were contributing factors to low performance of the CDSSs. The bad feelings the students expressed about their schools in the CDSSs

confirmed what Mac Jessie-Mbewe (2004) found that stakeholders have very bad perceptions of the CDSSs.

In addition to the above, many students dropped out from school in the CDSSs due to lack of tuition fee. The tuition fee is not much but considering the high levels of poverty at household level, a good number of students dropped out of school due to lack of fees. In addition, most students who dropped out on this ground were reported to be orphans. One would have expected that because the classes were usually small, quality of teaching and learning would improve as teacher/student contact time was maximized. However, this was not the case in many CDSSs. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the factors which contributed to poor quality of education out-weighed those that could improve the quality of education in these schools.

On the impact of the policy reform, it required focusing on how the teachers, the students and the communities had benefitted in terms of students' cognitive achievement which could best be demonstrated by good performance during examinations. The way teachers undertook the teaching processes and the way the students viewed themselves as rejects for being in the CDSSs tells the whole story. Teacher performance in the CDSSs is poor. Students' performance in the CDSSs is equally poor. Reimers and McGinn (1997) further observed that if policy changes are successful, then their impact will be evidenced in some manner or another, such as transformed behaviours, greater or improved benefits to consumers or clients, and more effective and efficient production and use of resources. This study observed that the positive impacts of the policy reform were still far from being achieved in full. The students' in the CDSSs were psychologically affected by the prevailing poor education conditions in their schools. Further, it was found that the prevailing environments in the CDSSs and in the homes of the students posed so many psychological and sociological challenges to the students. Most families were reported to be poor and could not afford social amenities to uplift the academic life of the students. The schools were equally lacking in this respect. The teachers felt underrated by the students while the students, on the other hand, felt academically insecure in the hands of the unqualified teachers. This contributed to all sorts of suspicions and very often, a hostile relationship between

the two groups concerned. The result was that no effective teaching and learning took place. In the end, the students did not perform well in national examinations.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The findings have revealed that while the CDSS policy reform in Malawi had all the good intentions to improve the quality of education in the CDSSs, this has not been achieved as expected. It is observed that there has been partial implementation of the critical education quality measures in terms of material support. In addition, the actual implementation of the policy reform has a number of short falls. The findings revealed that the education system's support to enhance teachers' professional competency is weak as the policy intent by the policy – makers is not followed up by action on the ground which points to the problematic nature of the coercive power strategy when implementing educational reforms. The partial implementation of the policy promise in terms of supply of material and qualified human resources and the inadequacies in the actual implementation of the policy in terms of monitoring what was actually happening on the ground during implementation have had negative impacts on the Secondary school education in Malawi. The education quality in the CDSSs where the majority of Secondary school students enroll is still poorer than in the CSSs.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Chapter overview

The purpose of this study was to examine and explore what education quality measures were implemented and how they were implemented during the CDSS policy reform in Malawi. The main focal points that were used to achieve the purpose were: (1) the education quality measures which were implemented during the 1998 CDSS policy reform (2) how the education quality measures were implemented during the 1998 CDSS policy reform and (3) the impact of the implementation of the education quality measures on the quality of education in the CDSSs. These questions were explored and examined through a mixed method design. The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary, the implications of results and some policy recommendations.

6.1 Conclusions

To begin with, the CDSS policy reform had intended to improve education quality by providing adequate qualified human resource in terms of teachers and adequate teaching and learning materials to the CDSSs. The study found that these two critical education quality measures were partially implemented in the CDSSs. To begin with, the study has found that the Malawi government had deployed some qualified teachers in some of the CDSSs. However, the problem was that they were not adequate. At the time of the study, a good percentage of the teachers in the CDSSs was still unqualified. In extreme cases, more especially in rural settings, there were no more than three teachers qualified to teach at a CDSS. This number was insufficient and resulted in most of the subjects being taught by unqualified teachers. As evidenced by the literature review, one cannot expect such teachers to perform the same way as qualified teachers did. This, however, is not to deny the fact that there were in the system very rare cases when things happened contrary to the expected norm. For example, we had cases of unqualified teachers performing better than the qualified teachers. This was a rare occurrence and in most cases associated with long experience of teaching at Secondary school level. However, according to this study this was critical as it confirmed the fact that mere teachers' qualification by way of certification is not enough to achieve quality education. The behaviours and attitudes of the teachers in the teaching and

learning processes are of utmost importance hence the concentration in this study on teachers' competences.

To elucidate the observation above, poor performance was seen to be serious in science subjects like Physical science, Biology and Mathematics. Outside these three subjects, the CDSSs seemed to be fairing quite well. In fact, the overall pass rate in the CDSSs was seriously affected by low grades in these three subjects. This did not come as a surprise because these were subjects which in most cases lacked qualified teachers as well as facilities for their teaching in the CDSSs.

This scenario, as explained above, meant that many students did not learn better in subjects taught by unqualified teachers hence continued poor performance in national examination. This, in the long run, has a great impact on the socio-economic development of the country more specifically considering the fact that the majority of Secondary school students are in the CDSSs. On the same issue of unqualified teachers above, participants felt that Domasi College of Education should increase the capacity of those under-qualified teachers in the CDSSs to train them and thereby motivate them.

The participants also felt that there was need to improve on teachers' accommodation. In most rural settings, there were no institutional houses in the CDSSs and worse still, even rentable houses were not easy to find. Some teachers, therefore, operated from distant urban settings and this made them walk long distances to the schools. As a result, their contribution in terms of enhancing improved learning on the part of the students was negatively affected as they came to the school already tired and frustrated.

In addition to the above, the participants felt that teachers in the CDSSs lacked motivation. The teachers performed the duties of a secondary school teacher with a very low salary. Worse still, in the rural settings, there were a number of hardships which the teachers had to persevere in contrast to their counterparts in urban settings or CSSs. To this end, participants felt that their contribution in the education sector was not appreciated by the authorities.

Further, the study found that the education system in Malawi does not fully enhance teachers' professional competencies although the system has provision for doing so. In this respect, one observed that the inspectorate section for quality control, PTAs and SMCs for school governance and management were all in place but were not adequately supported to carry out their roles on education quality control effectively. For example, on inspection and supervision of the CDSSs, the study established that these were not regularly carried out in the schools and therefore the issue of education quality control was greatly compromised. It was established through consultations that there were no adequate EMAS personnel at both Education Division Offices and Ministry of Education Headquarters. The general consensus, however, was that this area of concern ought to be addressed urgently.

On material resources, the CDSSs still remained disadvantaged in that they were not provided with adequate resources as was the case in the CSSs. The situation was still very bad in spite of the policy reform which promised provision of the teaching and learning materials to these institutions. As already discussed earlier, resources will never be adequate in our learning institutions, including the CSSs. However, the situation in the CDSSs left a lot to be desired. It should, therefore, not come as a surprise when the CDSSs perform poorer than CSSs in national examinations. This unfair distribution of important teaching/learning resources puts other schools at an advantage over others during national examinations. The situation can only improve when the CDSSs are provided with equal amount of resources as the CSSs.

Participants also felt that important facilities which could help the students perform better in national examinations were not available in the CDSSs. Laboratories and libraries were noted as critical if the students were to perform better in national examinations more especially in Science subjects. This problem was made worse with inadequate number of Science teachers in the CDSSs.

Similarly, financial resources were also unevenly distributed. The CDSS policy of 1998 stipulated that *all* CDSSs were to get financial support from the Malawi Government for procurement of teaching and learning resources as a matter of cost-sharing with the

communities. However, until the time of the study, all CDSSs were still getting very little financial support from the Malawi Government and this made teaching and learning a difficult task in the schools due to lack of essential materials. This confirms the problems of policy implementation which requires proper planning in terms of resource allocation for the implementation of the policy in question. .

In terms of the manner in which the policy was implemented, the study notes some short falls pointing to the problematic nature of the power coercive strategies for the implementation of education policies. It is observed that the policy-makers have not committed themselves to continuously monitor the implementation of the CDSS policy reform. As a result, they are not in a position to tell if the implementation is being done according to the policy intent. This confirms what Chimombo (1999) observed on policy implementation in Malawi. He observed that in a vast and heterogeneous country like Malawi the nature of policy implementation is far more complicated than Central Planners may envisage. Ministry of Education (the policy- makers) should not follow a simplistic model of implementation whereby an adoption of change by schools is viewed as the final stage in the innovative process. Chimombo (1999) noted that this approach reflects part of the implementation problem where the sequence of the process is developed but there is no concern for the feasibility of the implementation process itself. The absence of follow-ups on the implementation of policies creates a gap between the policy-makers and the policy implementers and this causes a problem of linkage. More often one will note that there is a missing link in the hierarchy and this causes system breakdown and disintegration as demonstrated in this study by schools implementing the CDSS policy reform contrary to the policy-makers' expectations. This shows elements of the problems of fidelity perspective of implementation where policy-makers erroneously draw assumptions that the policy to be implemented is clear and consistent while this is not the case on the part of the implementers.

Further to the above, not enough resources were mobilized to cater for the majority of secondary school students who were largely in the CDSSs. The national budget for secondary education still shows some biases towards CSSs. It looks like there was no proper planning for the intended beneficiaries: the teachers, the students and the communities. This to a certain extent confirms what Reimers and McGinn (1997) observed that in many countries, education policies are

designed and implemented without the most basic information about the intended beneficiaries. As a result they do not come up with options that can best achieve certain objectives or the intended impact of the policy being implemented. For example, the Ministry of Education's budgetary allocation to the CDSSs cannot bring about the quality education which was the sole reason for the 1998 policy reform.

The findings of the study also emphasised the need for boarding facilities in the CDSSs. Participants felt that if performance of students in national examinations in the CDSSs was to match the performance of students in the CSSs, one of the most critical factors to be considered was the availability of boarding facilities in the CDSSs. The participants felt that with boarding facilities in place, more time would be spent on studies than when one is operating from home. In a study by MacJessie-Mbewe (2004), it was recommended that boarding facilities in schools should be introduced and be run by a separate committee or private institution and those students who secured a place in a secondary school must choose whether to apply for boarding or commute from home. This would help the students to concentrate on their studies.

6.2 Recommendations

In the preceding discussions, many problems have been identified in the CDSSs. In addition, it has discussed how the problems impact on the quality of education. It is established that the problems impact negatively on the quality of education offered in the schools. The result is that students perform poorly in national examinations. This part draws some recommendations as to how the problems can be addressed so that the quality of education is improved in the CDSSs.

If the problem of continued poor students' performance in national examinations in the CDSSs is to be addressed, the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education should consider the following recommendations. It should be noted that in some cases, by implementing some recommendations, it will mean that other problems will automatically phase out naturally. However, it may require implementing many of them together.

On teachers' competency, the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education should increase the number of secondary school teachers being trained annually at Chancellor College, the Polytechnic, Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education to urgently fill the qualified teacher shortages in the CDSSs more especially those in the rural settings.

Further, more in-service trainings should be organised for the unqualified teachers in the CDSSs while awaiting their turn to be trained at any of the secondary school teacher education institutions for certification.

In addition, the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education should train more secondary school Science teachers. This will address the problem of poor performance of students in the CDSSs in Physical Science, Biology and Mathematics.

The policy-makers in the Ministry of Education should take occasion to regularly check how its policies are being implemented in the schools to make timely corrections where necessary.

Further to the above, the Education Division Offices should ensure that deployment of secondary school teachers should prioritise the CDSSs so that the big gap existing with CSSs in terms of availability of qualified teachers is narrowed.

On orphans and other needy students who fail to pay tuition fees, the Malawi government through the Ministry of Education should support them through bursary schemes. This should be well coordinated with the Social Welfare Offices in the districts which were already reported to be supporting some needy students with bursaries. This coordination will ensure that a good number of needy students are identified and supported accordingly.

On important facilities in terms of learning infrastructure, the Malawi Government should come up with a deliberate programme aimed at improving infrastructure in the secondary schools including *rural* CDSSs. Teachers' houses, laboratories and libraries, should be made available in the CDSSs. This will make the rural CDSSs attractive to diploma and degree

teachers. It will also ensure that students in the CDSSs are offered the same opportunities in Science subjects as their counterparts in the CSSs.

On boarding facilities as raised by some participants, the Ministry of Education should re-introduce these and if the Ministry cannot manage them, should allow Local Councils or private institutions to run them. This will ensure that students are kept under control to strictly focus on their studies as it was observed that many students travel long distances to school and to their homes. Where Local Councils fail to come up with boarding facilities in the CDSSs, the communities around the schools should be encouraged to construct private hostels which can be let out to the students.

The Ministry of Education, through the Education Division Offices, should ensure that vacant places left because students selected to the CDSSs have opted to look for places elsewhere, are urgently filled to facilitate optimum use of the educational facilities in the country.

The Malawi government through the Ministry of Education should adequately support all Secondary schools, CDSSs inclusive, financially to enable them procure adequate teaching and learning materials. This will ensure that all secondary schools, have adequate teaching and learning materials which will in turn enable the students learn better and consequently perform well in national examinations.

The Ministry of Education should strengthen the capacity of EMAS section at both Ministry of Education Headquarters and Education Divisional Offices by ensuring that adequate qualified personnel is in place to carry out inspection and supervision exercises in the secondary schools regularly.

The EMAS section of the Education Division Office and the Ministry of Education Headquarters should intensify inspection visits to secondary schools in general, and, CDSSs in particular. The policy of every school being inspected at least once every two years should be strictly adhered to.

Finally, all the teachers in the CDSSs should prepare detailed lesson plans and not rough lesson notes as was mostly the case. This will ensure effective teaching on the part of the teachers as they will have detailed notes of the steps to follow when they are teaching. The Ministry of Education, through EMAS section, should come up with a deliberate policy on teaching only using detailed lesson notes which should be made available to the teachers through a circular letter. This will ensure that students in all secondary schools including CDSSs are taught following professionally laid down procedures which will in the long run lead to improved learning which will eventually result in good performance in national examinations.

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APPENDIX 1

INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA DURING THE STUDY

1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

INSTRUCTIONS

My name is Billie Chikhwana Banda. I am currently conducting a research study in Community Day Secondary Schools in Dedza and Nkhata Bay districts to look at how the CDSS policy reform was implemented and its impact on the quality of Secondary school education in Malawi. Your school is one of the 10 CDSSs selected to participate in the study. The findings of this study will help policy makers to identify key areas which are leading to poor quality of education in CDSSs in spite of the policy reform which was introduced in 1998.

I would very much value your contribution to this process. I would be very grateful if you could spare some time to answer some questions.

Your answers will be fully confidential and I would encourage you to express your opinions freely.

Would you please ensure that you answer every question? If you find some difficulties, please say so.

Thank you for your corporation.

SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION DATA**SCHOOL NAME: ID:**

Data	Details (Tick only one)
District	01 Dedza
District	02 Nkhatabay
District	03 Lilongwe City
District	04 Lilongwe Rural East
Location	001 Urban
Location	002 Rural

STUDENT ENROLMENT

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1			
2			
3			
4			
Grand Total			

Number of teachers and their qualifications

	MSCE	DIPLOMA	DEGREE	MASTERS' DEGREE	TOTAL
MALE					
FEMALE					
TOTAL.					

1. SEX

Male	1	Female	2
------	---	--------	---

2. How old are you?

Code	Age Brackets	Response
1	20 – 29 years	
2	30 – 39 years	
3	40 – 49 years	
4	50 & above	

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Code	Qualification	Response
1	Degree or higher	
2	Diploma	
3	MSCE	
4	JCE	

4. What is your present professional grade?

Grade	Response
PT4	
PT3	
PT2	
PT1	
P8	
P7	
P6	
P5	

5. For how long have you been head teacher at a Secondary school?

No. of years as H/t	Place a tick here
< 1	
1 – 5	
6 – 10	
11 – 20	
21 – 30	
Above 30	

6. For how long have you been Head teacher of this school?

No. of years	Response
< 1	
1 – 5	
6 – 10	
11 – 20	
21 – 30	
31 – 40	

7a. Have you attended any headship training?

Yes	No
-----	----

7b. if yes, how many times?

Once	Twice	Three times	More than three times
------	-------	-------------	-----------------------

B) TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS

1. How would you describe teacher preparedness for teaching in terms of the following areas at your school?

Area	Response from participant			
Frequency of head teacher checking teachers' lesson plans.	Daily	weekly	Monthly	Term
Frequency of head teacher checking teachers' schemes and records of work	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Term
Whether head teacher encounters problems with teachers' lesson plans?	Yes		No	
e) If the head teacher has problems with a teacher's preparation, what does he/she do?				

2a.Do teachers administer tests to students in this school?

Yes	No
-----	----

2b.If yes, how often do teachers administer tests to students?

Weekly	Monthly	Term	Rarely
--------	---------	------	--------

3. Do you think the tests set by teachers in the school meet the national standards set by MANEB? Explain why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

NATIONAL EXAMINATION RESULTS

1. How would you describe your national examination results over the past 6 years?

	JCE					MSCE				
	Excellent	V. good	Good	Average	Poor	Excellent	V. good	Good	Average	Poor
	Pass rate = 80% & above	Pass rate = 70 – 79%	Pass rate = 60- 69%	Pass rate = 50- 59%	Pass rate = 40- 49%	Pass rate = 80% & above	Pass rate = 70 – 79%	Pass rate = 60- 69%	Pass rate = 50- 59%	Pass rate = 40- 49%
2001										
2002										
2003										
2004										
2005										
2006										

Responses to be cross-checked with records in the school.

2.What do you think are the reasons why your school has been

Performing the way it does?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.What do you think can help your school perform far much better than it does?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4.What do you think would help your teachers enhance students' performance during national examination?

.....

.....

.....

.....
.....
.....

How would you describe the relationship between teachers and students in the school?

.....
.....
.....

What do you think are the problems that your students face that affect their academic performance?

.....
.....
.....

How much money does your school receive from the government for procurement of teaching and learning materials?

.....

.....

Is the amount of money you receive from the government enough for the procurement of teaching and learning materials?

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL CHECK LIST

1. No of classroom blocks available.....

2. No of toilets available.....

3. Availability of Head teacher's office:

Yes	No
-----	----

4. Availability of staff room for teachers' preparations:

Yes	No
-----	----

5. Availability of play ground for students:

Yes	No
-----	----

6. Number of teachers:

Qualified:	Unqualified:	Total:
------------	--------------	--------

7. Condition of school buildings

Good	Average	Poor
------	---------	------

8. No of teachers' houses

--

9a. Availability of teaching and learning materials at the school

More than enough	Just enough	Most materials are lacking
------------------	-------------	----------------------------

9b. Teaching and learning materials available at the school.

Teaching/Learning material available	Quantities
Teachers' Guides	
Pupils text books	
Writing materials	
Library books	
Chalk	
Science kit	
Other (please specify)	

10.Number of available text books in each form for each of the following subjects

Text book	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	Total
Mathematics					
English Language					
Chichewa					
Geography					
Physical Science					
Biology					
English Literature					
History					
French					
Bible Knowledge					
Agriculture					

11 a. Availability of a library.

Yes	No
-----	----

11b. If available

Number of books available						
Variety of books available	Wide		average		Poor	
Number of times the library opens in a week and number of hours	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	Five times	Daily
Whether the school has a special officer to manage the library	Yes			No		
Whether students take books from the library for use	Yes			No		

Availability of a laboratory

Yes	No
-----	----

I If available

Condition	Response	
A very good building	Yes	No
Science equipment of all sorts available	Yes	No
The building requires some repairing	Yes	No
The building is dilapidated	Yes	No
Qualified teachers for Science make good use of the laboratory	Yes	No

APPENDIX 3

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

INSTRUCTIONS

My name is Billy Chikhwana Banda. I am currently conducting a research study in Community Day Secondary Schools in Dedza and Nkhata Bay districts to look at how the CDSS policy reform was implemented and its impact on the quality of Secondary education in Malawi. Your school is one of the 10 CDSSs selected to participate in the study. The findings of this study will help policy makers to identify key areas which are leading to poor quality of education in CDSSs in spite of the policy reform which was introduced in 1998.

I would very much value your contribution to this process. I would be very grateful if you could spare some time to answer some questions which I am going to ask you.

Your answers will be fully confidential and I would encourage you to express your opinions freely.

Would you please ensure that you answer every question? If you find some difficulties, please feel free to say so.

Thank you for your corporation.

1. SEX

Male	Female
------	--------

2. How old are you?

Age Brackets	Response
20 – 29 years	
30 – 39 years	
40 – 49 years	
50 & above	

3. What is your academic qualification?

Qualification	Response
Degree or higher	
Diploma	
MSCE	
JCE	

4. What is your professional grade?

Grade	Response
PT4	
PT3	
PT2	
PT1	
P8	
P7	
P6	
P5	

For how long have you been a teacher at a secondary school?

No. of years as teacher	Response
< 1	
1 – 5	
6 – 10	
11 – 20	
21 – 30	
Above 30	

2. For how long have you been a teacher at this school?

No. of years teaching at this school	Response
< 1	
1 – 5	
6 – 10	
11 – 20	
21 – 30	
31 – 40	

3a. Have you attended any in-service training aimed at improving your professional capabilities as a teacher?

Yes	No
-----	----

3b. if yes, how many times?

Once	Twice	Three times	More than three times
------	-------	-------------	-----------------------

4. Do students absent themselves from school in this institution?

Yes	Yes
-----	-----

5.If yes, what is the level of students' absenteeism in the school?

6. What are the reasons why students absent themselves from school in this institution?

TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS

1.How would you describe your preparedness for lessons in terms of lesson plans and schemes and records of work?

.....

Teacher Preparedness	Place a tick here	
Do you prepare for lessons?	Yes	No
What do you do to ensure adequate preparation for lessons?		
What does the Head teacher do with those teachers who do not prepare for lessons at this school?		
Do you think inadequate preparation for lessons by teachers has any impact on the performance of students during examinations?	Yes	No

If yes, what do you think is the impact?	
--	--

B).Teacher absenteeism in the school

Do you absent yourself from school?	yes	No
What are the reasons why you sometimes absent yourself from school?		
What happens at this school to a teacher who absents himself/herself?		
Do you think teacher absenteeism has any impact on students' performance during examinations?	Yes	No
If yes, what do you think is the impact?		
What can the school do to ensure that teachers are always present for their lessons?		
Do you have any other comment?(please specify)		

C) STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT

1. Do you administer tests to students in this school?

Yes	No
-----	----

2. If yes, how often do you administer tests to students?

Weekly	Monthly	Term	Rarely
--------	---------	------	--------

3. Do you think the tests set by teachers in the school meet the national standards set by MANEB? Explain why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX 4

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS SCHEDULE

The purpose of classroom observations in the study will be to identify classroom processes undertaken by the teachers before and during actual teaching to ensure that effective teaching takes place.

The focus will be on the following areas:

- Whether schemes and records of work are made and used during the lesson.
- Whether lesson plans are made and used.
- Knowledge mastery of the subject by the teacher.
- Whether varied methods are used in the teaching and learning process.
- Whether participatory methodologies are used in the teaching and learning process.
- Whether teaching and learning materials are available and used during the lesson.
- The level of command of the language of instruction used by the teacher.
- Whether students are given assignments and whether marking is done by the teacher.

- Whether questions are used in the teaching process to enhance creativity by the students.
- Whether time is fully utilised and lessons well paced.

THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

This is an adaptation of the classroom observation form used by inspectors in schools. This is used to collect evidence intended to examine and evaluate teaching and learning together with other matters that affect students' performance

School: **Form**.....

Subject: **Date:**

Topic: **Time:**

1. Lesson preparation

AREA OF FOCUS	REMARKS
Clear definition of success criteria	
Logical sequence of teaching and learning	
Suitability of content	
Suitability of introduction and conclusion	
Teaching, learning and assessment resource	

2. Lesson presentation.

AREA OF FOCUS	REMARKS
Appropriateness of introduction	
Logical presentation of content	
Use of chalk board	
Use of teaching and learning resources	
Students' participation	
Use of questioning techniques	
Clarity of instructions and explanations	
Mastery of subject matter	
Achievement of success criteria	
Appropriateness of conclusion	
Time management	
Use of varied participatory approaches	

3. Classroom management

AREA OF FOCUS	REMARKS
Students' participation	
Organisation of students' activities	
Teacher-student relationship	
Management of teaching resources	

4. Upkeep of records.

AREA OF FOCUS	REMARKS
Maintenance of schemes and records	
Previous lesson plans	
Progress report	
Attendance register	
Teachers' timetable	

5. Teacher presentability.

AREA OF FOCUS	REMARKS
Appropriateness of dress	

APPENDIX 5a

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

These are discussions done by a specific group of people in order to share ideas on issues affecting them and agree on possible solutions. Usually the group consists of 5 to 12 participants plus at least one facilitator and one recorder. The facilitator has a list of issues to be discussed and a number of guidelines. In this study, Focused Group Discussions will be used to gather data on the following:

- ❖ Their views on students' performance during national examinations.
- ❖ Their perceptions of the teaching and learning materials available in schools in relation to students' performance during national examinations.
- ❖ Their perceptions of their roles to improve teaching and learning so as to improve students' performance during examinations.
- ❖ Their views on teacher and students' absenteeism and its consequences on performance of students during examinations.

Procedure

- The participants will be met as a group.
- They will be greeted with traditional greetings and the aim of the discussion will be stated.
- It will also be stated that the group(we) is there to learn.
- The issue will be introduced in general terms first followed by probing questions to lead the discussions to specific issues.

- Participants will be allowed to discuss the issues before drawing conclusions.
- The facilitators will carefully lead to sensitive questions.
- Non-verbal signals will be checked as these will compliment the data.
- Leading questions and value judgements will be avoided.
- Discussants who like to dominate will be checked and those unwilling to speak will be encouraged to do so.

APPENDIX 5b

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH PTA/SMC MEMBERS

Specific areas of focus will include the following:

- How were the members selected into the committee?
- What roles the SMC members have played in the management of the school?
- Which of the roles they have played will help in improving students performance in the school?
- What consequences on students' performance during examinations do you think teachers and students' absenteeism have?
- What is their view on the quality of teachers in the school?
- What impact does the quality of teachers in the school have on students' performance during examinations?
- What has to be done to ensure good performance of students in CDSSs?

APPENDIX 5c

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS

1. What subjects are offered at the school?

.....

.....

.....

2.Of the subjects which are offered at the school, which ones the students like best and why?

.....

.....

.....

3. Do all teachers at this school administer tests?

.....

.....

...

4.How often teachers administer tests to students at the school?

.....

.....

.....

5.Are there some teachers in the school who do not administer tests?

6.What has been the performance of the school over the past years and why was it like that?

.....

.....

.....

5. Do students think the performance of their school is good as compared to other surrounding Secondary schools? Why?

.....

.....

.....

7. Why do the students think their school performs the way it does during national examinations?

.....

.....

.....

8. What do the students recommend for their school so that they perform so well during national examinations?

.....

.....

.....

9.Are there any teachers who absent themselves from duty without any valid reasons?

.....
.....
.....

What are the students' views on how well their teachers prepare for their lessons in this school?

.....
.....

What are the students' views about their teachers in terms of their contribution to students' performance during national examinations?

.....
.....
.....

12. Do the students have books at home? How many?

.....
.....

13. Do the students have a chance to read newspapers at home?

.....

.....

14. Who do the students live with and what is the relationship?

.....

.....

15. What are the things available at the school which they think would help them improve their performance in examinations?

.....

.....

16. What are the things available at home which they think would help them improve their performance in examinations?

.....

.....

17. What factors at their school they think hinder their academic performance?

.....

.....

18. What are factors at their home they think hinder their academic performance?

.....

.....

19. Is it a problem to parents to find money for fees for their children?

.....

.....

APPENDIX 6a

Teachers' academic qualifications in the urban CDSSs

	MSCE		DIPLOMA		DEGREE		
School	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
CDSS 1 NB	1	1	5	3	2	1	13
CDSS 2 DZ	5	2	1	1	4	3	16
CDSS 3 LLC	4	0	3	3	1	3	14
CDSS 4 LLC	5	13	0	3	0	0	21
CDSS 5 LLC	4	4	0	3	3	2	16
Totals	19	20	9	13	10	9	80

APPENDIX 6b

Teachers' academic qualifications in the rural CDSSs

CDSS	MSCE		DIPLOMA		DEGREE		
CDSS 6 NB	2	2	5	0	0	0	9
CDSS 7 DZ	5	0	3	0	1	0	9
CDSS 8 DZ	8	0	1	0	0	0	9
CDSS 9 LLE	11	1	1	0	0	0	13
CDSS 10 LLE	9	1	1	0	0	0	11
Total	35	4	11	0	1	0	51

Female teachers with diploma and degree certificates are practically nil in the rural CDSSs

APPENDIX 7a

Tacheros' profesional grades in urbana CDSSs.

	PT4		PT3		PT2		PT1		POE		POC		POB		P8		P7		P6	
School	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
CDSS 1 NB	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CDSS 2 DZ	3	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
CDSS 3 LLC	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
CDSS4 LLC	1	3	4	6	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CDSS5 LLC	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	6	5	10	10	4	4	3	2	8	11	4	4	4	0	2	1	2	0	0	0

APPENDIX 7b

Teachers' profesional grades in rural CDSSs.

	PT4		PT3		PT2		PT1		POE		POC		POB		P8		P7		P6	
School	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
CDSS 6NB	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
CDSS 7 DZ	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
CDSS 8 DZ	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CDSS9 LLE	6	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
cdss10 LLE	6	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	20	2	14	1	3	1	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

APPENDIX 8a

Availability of infrastructure in the urban CDSSs.

School	Infrastructure	No	Condition
CDSS 1 NB	Classrooms	6	Permanent
	P/Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	1	Permanent
	Teachers' houses	6	Permanent
CDSS 2 DZ	Classrooms	8	„
	P/Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	1	Permanent
	Teachers' houses	8	„
CDSS 3 LLC	Classrooms	6	„
	P/Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	1	Permanent
	Teachers' houses	2	„
CDSS 4 LLC	Classrooms	2	„
	P/Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	0	
	Teachers' houses	0	
CDSS 5 LLC	Classrooms	6	Permanent
	P/Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	0	

	Teachers' houses	0	
--	------------------	---	--

APPENDIX 8b

Availability of infrastructure in the CDSSs in rural CDSSs

CDSS 6 NB	Classrooms	6	Permanent
	P/ Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	1	Permanent(+1340)bks
	Teachers' houses	13	Permanent
CDSS 7 DZ	Classrooms	6	„
	P/ Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	1	„
	Teachers' houses	0	
CDSS 8 DZ	Classrooms	6	Permanent
	P/ Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	1	Permanent
	Library	1	„
	Teachers' houses	9	„
CDSS 9 LLE	Classrooms	4	„
	P/ Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	1	Permanent
	Teachers' houses	0	
CDSS 10 LLE	Classrooms	4	Permanent
	P/ Science Laboratory	0	
	Biology Laboratory	0	
	Library	0	

	Teachers' houses	5	Permanent
--	------------------	---	-----------

APPENDIX 9

Availability of textbooks per Form per subject in the ten CDSSs studied

School	Form	Chich.	Maths	En Lg.	En Lg.	P/S	Bio	Agr	Geo	His	B/K
CDSS 6 NB	1	15	14	8	23	5	10	7	4	17	6
	2	7	7	8	8	4	4	4	5	15	6
	3	7	5	7	10	1	10	15	30	12	7
	4	24	14	7	21	1	10	13	30	21	7
	Total	53	40	30	62	11	34	39	69	74	26
CDSS 7 DZ	1	15	2	0	8	1	5	0	5	0	0
	2	15	4	0	10	2	4	0	2	0	0
	3	15	3	0	8	3	8	0	3	0	0
	4	15	4	0	7	2	8	0	2	0	0
	Total	60	13	0	33	8	25	0	12	0	0
CDSS 8 DZ	1	30	35	0	30	10	12	8	10	15	15
	2	40	25	0	25	10	13	9	15	15	15
	3	55	15	0	35	25	0	15	8	10	12
	4	70	25	0	50	30	0	12	8	10	13
	Total	185	100	0	140	75	25	44	41	50	55
CDSS 9 LLE	1	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	24	1
	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	24	1
	3	4	0	0	19	0	0	0	10	40	0
	4	44	0	0	38	0	0	22	20	40	0
	Total	54	0	0	65	0	0	22	22	128	2
CDSS 10 LLE	1	27	5	0	18	2	0	4	3	5	3
	2	29	3	0	26	3	0	5	4	7	3
	3	12	10	0	17	14	0	10	15	17	0
	4	24	19	0	36	17	0	9	18	10	0

APPENDIX 10

EMIS 2009- TEACHERS BY LOCATION

DIVISION	RURAL		SEMI - URBAN		URBAN		UNKNOWN		TOTAL
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
									1999
Central Eastern	956	150	262	83	38	10			2, 863
Central Western	1, 444	276	134	60	562	378	10	14	2, 215
Northern	1, 480	215	113	29	241	113			1, 191\
Shire Highlands	992	156	29	6	8	264			1, 906
South Eastern	913	152	265	57	157	85		13	1, 642
South West	855	164	14	12	570	372			1, 987
TOTAL	6, 640	1113	817	247	1576	1194	10	27	11, 661

APPENDIX 11

LETTERS OF PERMISSION

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P. O. Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2007

The Director for Secondary Education
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
P/ Bag 328
Lilongwe

Dear Sir/ Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN DEDZA, LILONGWE CITY, LILONGWE RURAL EAST AND NKHATABAY DISTRICTS FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO QUALITY

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of secondary education offered to the masses.

I intend to have Head teachers, teachers, some students and members of the School Management Committee (SMC) in the selected CDSSs participate in the study. I wish to mention that names of all those who will take part in the study including the schools will be kept private and confidential in the final report.

This letter therefore seeks to request if I can be allowed to carry out the study in the selected CDSSs in the two districts.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me on the following numbers: 01223192, 01223544, 08565716 and 09265063 or my Principal Supervisor Dr Dorothy Napata of Chancellor College, P. O Box 280, Zomba.

Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billie Chikhwana Banda

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P O Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2007

The Education Division Manager
Central West Education Division
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
P. O. Box 198
Lilongwe

Dear Sir/ Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN DEDZA, LILONGWE CITY AND LILONGWE RURAL EAST DISTRICTS FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO QUALITY

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of Secondary education offered to the masses.

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This letter therefore seeks to request if I can be allowed to carry out the study in the selected CDSSs in the district in your division.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me on the following numbers: 01223192, 01223544, 08565716 and 09265063 or my Principal Supervisor Dr Dorothy Napata of Chancellor College, P. O Box 280, Zomba.

Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billie Chikhwana Banda

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P O Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2007

The Education Division Manager
Northern Education Division
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
P. O. Box 133
Mzuzu

Dear Sir/ Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN NKHATABAY DISTRICT FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO QUALITY

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of secondary education offered to the masses.

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Should you have any questions, you may contact me on the following numbers: 01223192, 01223544, 08565716 and 09265063 or my Principal Supervisor Dr Dorothy Nampota of Chancellor College, P. O Box 280, Zomba.

.Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billie Chikhwana Banda

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P O Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2007

The District Education Manager
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
P. O. Box 13
NkhataBay

Dear Sir / Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN NKHATABAY DISTRICT FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO QUALITY

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of secondary education offered to the masses.

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This letter therefore seeks to request if I can be allowed to carry out the study in the selected CDSSs in the district in your division.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me on the following numbers: 01223192, 01223544, 08565716 and 09265063 or my Principal Supervisor Dr Dorothy Nampota of Chancellor College, P. O Box 280, Zomba.

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Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billie Chikhwana Banda

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P O Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2007

The District Education Manager
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
P. O. Box 131
Dedza
Att: Desk Officer

Dear Sir/Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN DEDZA DISTRICT FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO QUALITY

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of Secondary education offered to the masses.

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This letter therefore seeks to request if I can be allowed to carry out the study in the selected CDSSs in the district in your division.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me on the following numbers: 01223192, 01223544, 08565716 and 09265063 or my Principal Supervisor Dr Dorothy Nampota of Chancellor College, P. O Box 280, Zomba.

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Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billie Chikhwana Banda

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P. O. Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2008

The District Education Manager
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
Lilongwe City Education District Office
P. O. Box 98
Lilongwe

Dear Sir/ Madam,

PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN LILONGWE CITY DISTRICT FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO QUALITY

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of Secondary education offered to the masses.

I intend to have Head teachers, teachers, some students and members of the School Management Committee (SMC) members in the selected CDSSs participate in the study. I wish to mention that names of all those who will take part in the study including the schools will be kept private and confidential in the final report.

This letter therefore seeks to request if I can be allowed to carry out the study in the selected CDSSs in the district in your division.

Should you have any questions, you may contact me on the following numbers: 01223192, 01223544, 08565716 and 09265063 or my Principal Supervisor Dr Joseph Chimombo of Chancellor College, P. O Box 280, Zomba.

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Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billie Chikhwana Banda

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
P. O. Box 280
Zomba
15th May, 2008

The District Education Manager
Lilongwe Rural East Education Office
Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
P. O. Box 98
Lilongwe

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**PERMISSION TO USE SOME CDSSs IN LILONGWE RURAL EAST DISTRICT
FOR A STUDY ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN RELATION TO
QUALITY**

I am a student at Chancellor College pursuing a Masters' Degree Course in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership. I am currently carrying out a research study on the CDSS policy reform focusing on its impact on quality. The purpose of my study is to investigate the reasons why performance of candidates in CDSSs has continued to be poorer as compared to CSSs in spite of the CDSS policy reform which emphasized on quality improvement of Secondary education offered to the masses.

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Your urgent response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Billy Chikhwana Banda

