

POST-COLONIAL POLICY ON GIRLS' EDUCATION,
1964-1994: THE CONTEXT FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION

MASTER OF ARTS (AFRICAN SOCIAL HISTORY) THESIS

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**POST-COLONIAL POLICY ON GIRLS' EDUCATION, 1964 – 1994: THE
CONTEXT FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION**

By

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**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Social Science, Chancellor College, University
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Arts (African Social History)**



June, 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original work, written under the close guidance of my supervisors. Where other people's work has been used, this has been duly acknowledged in appropriate footnotes and citations.

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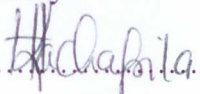
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We certify that this thesis represents the candidate's own work and effort, and has been submitted with our approval.

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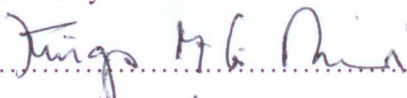
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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my son, Divine-Vincent Chiponda, a destined future historian.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Management of Chancellor College for providing funds for my study. I would also like to express my appreciation to the History Department for its support and encouragement.

Special thanks go to my two supervisors, Dr. Hendrina Kachapila-Mazizwa and Professor Wiseman Chijere Chirwa for their untiring support and encouragement from the beginning to the end of this study. They spared their time to rigorously and critically supervise the writing of the thesis and provide constructive feedback.

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May the Almighty God abundantly bless you all.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the context or historical processes in which post colonial educational policies in Malawi were formulated between 1964 and 1994. It argues that the political, economic and social contexts play an important role in policy formulation. The analysis is based on the examination of the background to the formulation of the policies such as the legacy of colonial education and the political, economic and social contexts of Malawi as well as the review of the first and second Education Development Plans (EDPs). Studies of this nature are important because earlier scholars on gender and education in Malawi have taken the gender insensitive nature of the post colonial educational development plans as given. Such analyses portray the post colonial educational system as a phenomenon that deliberately marginalized girls and women. Yet the findings of this study reveal that taking for granted the gender insensitivity of the plans is problematic.

Drawing useful insights from theoretical ideas of post-structuralism, the study demonstrates that the gender insensitive nature of the plans was a phenomenon that was constructed through historical processes. It shows that despite stakeholders' awareness of the importance of paying special attention to girls' education prior to the first EDP period, the context was not ripe for that type of an educational system because government priorities lay elsewhere. The study observes a similar trend in the

formulation and implementation of the second EDP. Among other developments, the recommendations of the world conferences on women held during the United Nations (UN) Decade for Women were influential in changing people's attitudes towards women in general and women's education in particular. The study has important implications for history theory and practice. They suggest a need to seriously interrogate or investigate historical concepts and phenomena that we take as unquestioned or the origin of explanation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
Declaration.....	i
Certificate of Approval.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vii
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	xiii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: The Making of the First Education Development Plan.....	21
Chapter Three: The First Education Development Plan.....	66
Chapter Four: The Second Education Development Plan.....	83
Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	116
Bibliography.....	123

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CERT	–	Centre for Educational Research and Training
CDC	-	Colonial Development Corporation
ECA	–	Economic Commission for Africa
ECA/MULPOC	–	Economic Commission for Africa Multinational Programming and Operational Centre
EDP	–	Education Development Plan
FAWEMA	–	Forum for African Women Educationists in Malawi
FPE	-	Free Primary Education
GABLE	–	Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
LEA	–	Local Education Authority
LOP	–	Life-of-Project
MCP	–	Malawi Congress Party
MIE	-	Malawi Institute of Education
MNA	–	Malawi National Archives
MOE	–	Ministry of Education
PIF	-	Policy and Investment Framework
UN	–	United Nations
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF	-	United Nations International Children’s Education Fund
USAID	–	United States Agency for International Development
UTS	–	United Teaching Service

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This study is an investigation of the context or historical processes in which the post-colonial educational policies in Malawi were formulated between 1964 and 1994. It argues that the political, economic and social contexts play an important role in policy formulation. Scholars that have examined the post-colonial education policies in Malawi have tended to criticize them for lacking a gender perspective, especially the first education plans of 1973-1980. An analysis of the situation prior to the formulation of the First Education Plan indicates however that important stakeholders in education were aware of the need to pay particular and special attention to girls'/women's education in the country. For instance, reports of commissions of inquiry into girls' education in the late colonial period such as the 1947 Gwilliam-Read Commission and the Phillips Commission of 1960 bemoaned the low progress of girls' education and recommended revolutionary changes in the field of education as a whole. Similarly, the MCP manifesto of 1961 promised to pay special attention to women's education. This background laid a foundation on which a new policy on girls' education could have been developed. However, the 1973-1980 Education Plan was silent on a specific policy to guide girls' education. This demonstrates either failure to take into

account the continuity of policy formulation processes or a shift in government priorities.

Taking for granted the gender insensitivity of the education plans, however, forgoes an opportunity to appreciate factors that influence education policy formulation. It also suppresses the history of significant efforts that articulated an alternative vision of education which paid special attention to girls/women. Gender theory has taught us to search for concrete or specific historical moments and circumstances in which seemingly obvious or natural historical phenomena become hegemonic usually after the repression of alternative possibilities or visions¹ This study seeks to demonstrate therefore, that the educational policies under study were a reflection of the economic, political and social realities Malawi faced in the period 1964 – 1994.

The study argues that the political, social and economic contexts of Malawi in the 1960s and early 1970s influenced the content of the First Education Plan of 1973 – 1980. Of all the factors coming out of this era, the modernization theory, which guided Malawi's development in the 1960s and early 1970s, was crucial. Almost all the development plans, policies and programmes Malawi implemented in the 1960s and 1970s were

¹ K. Shear, "Not Welfare or Uplift Work: White Women, Masculinity and Policing in South Africa," in N.R. Hunt, T.P. Liu & J. Quataert (eds.), Gendered Colonialisms in African History (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), p. 71.

influenced by modernization thought.² While modernization theory stipulated that education was a tool for economic development, it did not appreciate the fact that boys and girls entered the education system with differences that affected the realization of an individual's educational potential. As a result no effort was made to formulate a policy that reflected this reality. It also argues that unlike the First Education Plan, which completely lacked a gender perspective the Second Education Plan of 1985 – 1995 paid some attention to differences between boys and girls in education. This shift in focus was due to important international and local events of the mid 1970s to early 1980s including the proclamation of UN International Year of Women in 1975 and the Decade for Women (1975 – 1985) as well as the international women conference that marked the Decade. These events played a major role in influencing the content of the Second Education Plan.

The present study has drawn useful insights from theoretical ideas of feminist post-structuralism which of late have had an impact on the discipline of history.³ Among others, post-structuralists argue for a focus on specific contexts to explain issues as opposed to generalizations. This is the opposite of enlightenment thinking which

²See for example, The 1962 – 65 Development Plan; The 1968 – 70 Development Programme; The 1965 – 1969 Development Plan and Statement of Development Policies 1971 – 80 (DEVPOL 1).

³ However some historians are uncomfortable with post-structuralism. See for example: F. Lentricchia, After the New Criticism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. xiii; T. Eagleton, Literacy Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 150; and The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-Structuralism (London: Verso, 1984), p. 96; P. Anderson, In the Tracks of Historical Materialism (London: Verso, 1983), p. 140.

emphasized grand theories/generalizations in explaining historical phenomena. History has largely been considered a foundationalist discipline in the sense that it takes for granted some primary premises, categories or presumptions. These are considered unquestioned and unquestionable, permanent and transcendent. A good example of this is how historians have used “experience.”⁴ However, Scott, a major advocate of the marriage between history and post-structuralism criticizes history’s foundationalist approach to phenomena. She maintains that historical concepts and categories should not be taken as “givens” but as products of specific historical processes or moments. In other words, she calls for a historical analysis of any concept, identity and category such as black and woman in order to understand the historical processes that shaped its construction.

As noted above, this study starts from the premise that the first and second Education Development Plans were products of several factors in the historical context of Malawi. Consequently, the theoretical underpinnings of post-structuralism were appropriate in guiding the direction of this study. Through this approach, the gender insensitive nature of the education plans was not taken as “given” but as a historical phenomenon in need of explanation. In other words, the gender insensitivity of the plans became an object of

⁴ J.W. Scott, “Experience,” in J. Butler & J.W. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorise the Political* (Routledge: Chapman & Hall, Inc., 1992), p.26. Scott argues that experience should not just be accepted as narrated because what counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straight-forward. Rather she proposes that experience should be questioned and interrogated to explain the historical processes that led to its creation. This refigures history and the role of a historian.

historical inquiry. This is contrary to most studies on post colonial education plans that have taken the gender insensitive nature of the plans as a “brute fact” or “simple reality.” It is only after interrogating the historical construction of the plans that we can determine whether or not the policies were meant to reveal gender considerations.

Literature Review

Researchers ranging from educationists to social scientists and historians have studied various issues relating to girls’ education. Of particular interest to this study is literature that has looked at the construction of education policies and accounted for the failure of girls’ education in pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial Malawi and other countries. Scholars such as Isaac Lamba, Clive Whitehead and Walter Rodney examined the issue of girls’ education in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. They interrogated the background to the formulation of the policies on girls’ education and established factors that influenced the content of the policies. Others like Esme Kadzamira and Mike Chibwana reviewed the post-colonial education policies to assess gender disparities. This section reviews literature from both approaches.

Isaac Lamba and Kelvin Banda have accounted for the failure of girls’ education in Malawi during the pre-colonial period. In their writings they point out that girls’ education lagged behind because of two major reasons. First, missionaries who were in charge of education then regarded education as a men’s domain since their aim was to

produce personnel to preach the Word of God. Most mission churches then forbade the elevation of women to positions of leadership.⁵ Lamba further argues that the failure of girls' education was not only due to attitudes of missionaries. According to Lamba, the African culture itself posed intricate educational problems. Initiation rites which served as a prelude to marriage hampered girls' education because girls opted for marriage rather than school after initiation.⁶

This context laid a background for the missionary educational policy on girls during the period. The missionary policy was to provide basic education to girls in the areas of religious knowledge and domestic science.⁷ Lamba argues that besides the religious barrier and the African cultural hurdles, the missionaries' Victorian background and theories of genetic inheritance and manifest destiny influenced the missionaries' policy on girls' education.⁸ Lamba asserts that missionaries due to their Victorian background did not see the importance of higher education for women. According to that mentality, proper education prepared girls/women to become good Christian wives. Consequently, all girls needed was an education that emphasized housecraft, laundry, sewing and

⁵ K. N. Banda, A Brief History of Education in Malawi (Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Co., 1982), p.49 & I. C. Lamba, "African Women's Education in Malawi 1875 – 1952," Journal of Educational Administration, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1982), pp. 46 – 53.

⁶ Lamba, "African Women's Education in Malawi 1875 – 1952," p. 47.

⁷ Ibid. p. 48.

⁸ Lamba, "The History of Post-War Western Education, 1945 – 61: A Study of the Formulation and Application of Policy," (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1984), p. 150.

religious instruction. In addition, missionaries were influenced by theories of genetic inheritance and manifest destiny in assessing the African girls' academic potential. Europeans then regarded Africans in general as slow and unintelligent, but comparatively in their view, females were worse than males. Such prejudiced approach to racial endowments guided educational policies, which paid little attention to women's education than men's⁹

According to Lamba, girls' education policies followed by colonialists were not very different from the Christian missionary ones. Lamba and Rodney argue that education of girls in Malawi and the whole continent of Africa failed because colonial governments did not have any serious interest in female education. In fact the recommendation that African girls had to go to school was just a mere policy.¹⁰ To cite few examples, Lamba argues that in Malawi between 1907 when government began to donate grants in aid to African education and 1923, government adopted no position on female education and women never featured as a crucial factor in the country's educational priorities.¹¹ What is more, the education policy that was developed in 1925 did not give any serious treatment or consideration to the issue of girls' education. In

⁹ Lamba, *African Women's Education in Malawi, 1875 – 1952*,” p. 47.

¹⁰ W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972), p. 276.

¹¹ Lamba, “*African Women's Education in Malawi 1875 – 1952*,” p. 48.

fact, it contained only one clause or section on girls' education. Mass education received preference where strictly speaking, the masses did not include women.¹² Further, the enrolment of girls was very low both before and after 1945 and by the time the Central African Federation was imposed on Malawi in 1953, the situation regarding female education was appalling.¹³

As in Malawi, female education in Mozambique and Tanzania also failed or lagged behind during the colonial period because of government's lack of interest.¹⁴ For instance, Cross points out that in 1909, almost half a century later since colonisation, Mozambique had 48 primary schools for boys and only eight for girls.¹⁵ This clearly shows that government's involvement in uplifting girls' education was minimal. In a similar manner, Cameron and Dodd state that during the period of German rule, the government did not educate even one African girl in Tanzania.¹⁶ Similarly, during the period of British mandatory rule, government's education emphasis was also more on

¹² Ibid. p. 50.

¹³ Ibid. p. 53.

¹⁴ J. Cameron & W.A. Dodd, Society, Schools and Progress in Tanzania (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1970), pp. 57 – 64; M. Cross, "The Political Economy of Colonial Education: Mozambique, 1930 – 1975," in Comparative Education Review, Vol. 31, no. 4 (1987), pp. 550 – 569; H. Kitchen, "Tanganyika," in H. Kitchen (ed.), The Educated African (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 152; & E.A. Lisboa, "Education in Angola and Mozambique," in B. Rose (ed.), Education in Southern Africa (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1970), pp. 276 – 333.

¹⁵ Cross, "The Political Economy of Colonial Education: Mozambique, 1930 – 1975," in Comparative Education Review, Vol. 31, no. 4 (1987), p. 557.

¹⁶ Cameron & Dodd, Society, Schools and Progress in Tanzania (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1970), p. 57.

boys than girls. For instance, the two scholars state that four years after River-Smith's appointment as Director of Education, he opened Tabora School in 1924 solely for chiefs and sons of chiefs.¹⁷ The chiefs in question here were probably male chiefs. The aim was to produce administrators, clerks and artisans for local and central government. Government changed its attitude towards girls' education between 1945 and 1961. Progress however, was still very slow compared to that of boys' education¹⁸

Other scholars have critiqued the above authors' tendency to blame the failure or low progress of girls' education on Christian missionaries' and colonialists' attitudes and policies without consideration of the social and economic circumstances prevalent in Africa that had an impact on female education. For instance, writing on Malawi, Whitehead blames the prevailing social and economic circumstances, including African culture.¹⁹ In his argument, Whitehead maintains that Lamba's critique of colonial educational policies was not new in colonial educational circles but did not accurately reflect British motives and the social and economic realities of the period. He states that much of the post-war criticism of British colonialism has been advanced without careful

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 64.

¹⁸ Kitchen, "Tanganyika," in H. Kitchen (ed.), The Educated African (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 152.

¹⁹ C. Whitehead, "The Education of Women and Girls: An Aspect of British Colonial Policy," in Journal of Educational Administration and History Vol. 16, (1984), p.32.

study of evidence and urges scholars to make an objective analysis of the available documented evidence.²⁰

More specifically, Whitehead argues that the low enrolment of girls in schools before and after 1945 should not be considered as evidence of official lack of interest in female education by the Colonial Office or the territorial governments. He points out that various documents were produced on the subject during the inter-war years but subsequent recommendations were not realized because of financial constraints and the philosophy of indirect rule that provided the basis for colonial policy during the inter-war years. For instance in the 1930s, the Great Depression hit the economy of most countries in the world.²¹ This resulted in shortage of government funds throughout the 1930s to cater for education and social welfare in general. Education came to a standstill in most territories. Thus he argues there is no evidence of deliberate neglect by colonial government of proposals to stimulate the education of women and girls.²²

Responding to the criticism of colonial education policy being sexist in nature, Whitehead argues that colonial governments were not predisposed against female education but the popular demand then was for more and better education for males.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 24.

²¹ Whitehead, "The Education of Women and Girls: An aspect of British Colonial policy," p. 25.

²² Ibid.

The need for well-educated and professionally trained women was not as urgent as that for educated and trained men in the immediate post-war years.²³

Whitehead further argues that it was in fact the attitude of the Africans rather than those of colonial officials, which ultimately proved decisive in shaping colonial education policies.²⁴ He points out that when Africans began to support the idea of girls receiving more education, European teachers and educational administrators welcomed the development alike. Whitehead further argues that, ironically, it was the African women themselves who strongly opposed the education of their daughters for fear of breaking down traditional family life and producing an unbridgeable generation gap. He concludes by arguing that if at all there was any bias against girls going to school or continuing their studies beyond an elementary level, then it originated more with the Africans than in any colonial policy.

Like Whitehead, Lisboa and Cameron and Dodd writing on Mozambique and Tanzania respectively argue that cultural factors hampered girls' education more than government during the colonial period.²⁵ For instance, Lisboa points out that frequent premature

²³ Whitehead, "The education of women and girls: An aspect of British Colonial Policy," p. 31.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Lisboa, "Education in Angola and Mozambique..." in B. Rose (ed.), p. 290, and Cameron & Dodd, Society, Schools and Progress in Tanzania P. 112.

marriages of girls as well as their involvement in domestic chores and work on the land played a major role. Cameron and Dodd argue that though the government in Tanzania tried hard to cater for girls' education in the Ten Year Development Plan of 1947 – 56 and encouraged parents to send their daughters to school and allow them to stay long in school, there was still a continued reluctance on the part of many parents to break away from the tradition of regarding their daughters solely as workers in the home and on the land as earners of a future bride price.²⁶ In a similar manner, Batey and Scanlon argue that problems that were prevalent in African societies also played a role in the construction of the policy on girls' education during the colonial period. The policy provided for a basic education for girls because policy makers felt that higher education would have had a disintegrating effect on the African way of life.²⁷ As such, care was taken to offer an education that would help maintain the African rural way of life. Second, it was necessary to provide an education that would help solve the problems of high infant mortality rate and unhygienic conditions in Africa. Thus, instruction in hygiene and public health, in the care of the sick, treatment of simple diseases, child welfare, domestic economy and care of the home were recommended for girls' education. This means that to a large extent the education policy was shaped by these social and economic conditions prevalent in African society then.

²⁶ Cameron & Dodd, Society, Schools and Progress in Tanzania...p. 112.

²⁷ C. Batey, African Education: A study of Educational Policy and Practice in British Tropical Africa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 4 and D.G. Scanlon, Traditions of African Education (New York: Bureau of Publications, 1964), p. 101.

The studies by Lamba, Whitehead, Rodney, Batey and Scanlon are important to this study because they have shaped its direction. As noted above, these scholars have not only reviewed the pre-colonial and colonial policies of girls' education in Malawi, but have critiqued the policies as well. In addition, they have not only judged the policies as biased against girls' and women's education but also interrogated the context in order to find out factors that lay behind the construction of the policies and how they were implemented by the teachers and the various education administrators.

Studies of this nature have not been done for the post-colonial period in Malawi. In other words, current researchers like Kadzamira and Chibwana, have reviewed the post-colonial education policies and criticized them for lacking a gender perspective.²⁸ Their major finding is that there was no attempt in the first two education plans to address serious gender inequalities existing in the system then and that the programmes and projects were gender blind. In another study on educational policy, Kadzamira and Rose reviewed the first and second education plans and the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF).²⁹ They concluded that the first education plan prioritised secondary and tertiary education while the second plan emphasized primary education with the

²⁸ E. Kadzamira, Knowledge and Policy Formulation: Reducing Gender Inequalities in Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Malawi Case Study – Final Report (Zomba: CERT, 1996), p. ix and Kadzamira and M.P. Chibwana, Partnership for Strategic Resource Planning for Girls Education in Africa: Gender and Primary Schooling in Malawi (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 1999), p. 8.

²⁹ E. Kadzamira & P. Rose, Educational Policy Choice and Policy Practice in Malawi: Dilemmas and Disjunctures (University of Sussex: Institute of Development Studies, 2001), p. 6.

aim of increasing access, equity and relevance.³⁰ However an explanation of why girls are not prioritised in these policy documents is not given in this study. As for the PIF, Kadzamira and Rose noted the problems of the first draft of the policy document but none of the weaknesses referred to girls' education. For example, the policy did not cover the whole education sector since tertiary education was completely ignored and it did not consider the ways in which direct and indirect costs of schooling prohibit poorest groups from attaining education.³¹ The analysis of the initial draft does not mention girls. However in their review of the current PIF, the two researchers found out that the policy document addresses the needs of disadvantaged groups including girls. Like Kadzamira and Rose, Fred Msiska reviewed the initial PIF and identified a number of weaknesses in the areas of accessibility of education, affordability of education, quality of education and appropriateness of education³². His solutions to the problems included enshrining Free Primary Education (FPE) into the constitution and letting the police and judiciary enforce it. However, the weaknesses and solutions do not mention girls' needs. Swainson, Bendera, Gordon and Kadzamira conducted a study on the intellectual, political and organizational processes that have shaped government and donor policies and projects concerned with the promotion of education of women and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, p. 8.

³² F. G. Msiska, "A policy and Investment Framework for Education in Malawi, 1995 – 2005: A Critical Review," (Unpublished paper presentation), P. 5.

girls in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The study sought in particular to assess the extent to which gender interventions in education have been donor driven.³³ It was found out that in the decade prior to the study, there was a concerted effort by a number of donor agencies in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to introduce a variety of measures to reduce gender disparities in education. However, progress had been very slow for a number of reasons including bureaucratic intransigence, lack of an effective dialogue between donors and government, and the piecemeal and uncoordinated nature of the interventions themselves.³⁴ It was also found out that donors and interventions to promote gender equality in education have invariably been couched in terms of support for girls' education. For example, although the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) has mainstreamed gender, the girl child has been the focus of its efforts.³⁵ As pointed out above, these studies have not established the historical context of the formulation of the policies. This is a serious oversight because the studies have not investigated why the policies were constructed in such a manner. In other words, no attempt was made to explore the factors that lay behind the formulation of such policies. This study seeks to historicize the context in which the post-colonial education policies were formulated or constructed. Put differently, the study interrogates the historical

³³ N. Swainson, S. Bendera, R. Gordon & E. Kadzamira, Promoting Girls' Education in Africa: The Design and Implementation of Policy Interventions (London: Department of International Development, 1998), p.1.

³⁴ Ibid, p.115.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 117.

processes that influenced the construction of the post-colonial educational policies between 1964 and 1994.

Methodology

This study covers the period from 1964 to 1994. The year 1964 marks a justifiable starting point of the study because that was the beginning of a new historical phase in Malawi when the country became independent under Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda. 1994 marks a convenient stopping point for the study because that was the year when Dr Banda's regime came to an end after 30 years of his leadership. The study is therefore restricted to the developments of the Banda regime era.

The study is based on oral as well as written primary and secondary sources. As regards oral sources, interviews were conducted in three districts in the country: Zomba in the South, Lilongwe in the centre and Mzimba (Mzuzu in particular) in the north. These three districts were sampled purposively amongst the other districts in the regions. They were selected for two reasons. First, it was relatively easy for the researcher to travel from Zomba to Lilongwe and then to proceed to Mzuzu to conduct interviews. Second, it was easy to get hold of key informants from the Ministry of Education (MOE) offices. In Zomba the MOE has a branch, the South Eastern Division and in Mzuzu the Northern Division. Lilongwe houses the headquarters of the Ministry of Education. It was possible therefore, to interview officials with minimum difficulty.

Lilongwe had an added advantage in the sense that the headquarters of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and Forum for African Women Educationists in Malawi (FAWEMA) are also located there. Once in Lilongwe it was possible to interview officials from both Ministries and FAWEMA.

Informants, both men and women, were individually interviewed. These interviews produced information on different policies on girls' education such as when and why the policies were formulated and implemented. Note, however, that most village heads and ordinary men and women displayed lack of knowledge about the issues being dealt with. For instance, one village headman from Tchoyo village in Lilongwe when asked if he knew any policy on girls' education that was followed between 1964 and 1994 and what influenced the formulation, answered as follows:

No, I don't know, I do not want to tell lies, I and even other people in the village did not take part in issues of policies on education we just saw children going to school.³⁶

Another problem with oral sources was the difficulty to arrange meetings with some key informants because of their busy schedules. This mainly applied to informants from the Ministries of Education and Women and Children's Affairs.

³⁶ Interview with Maliyoni Jeseman, Village Headman, Tchoyo Village, Lilongwe on 28/8/06

As for the archival sources, these were mostly obtained from the Malawi National Archives (MNA). Archival documents consulted were in form of minutes of meetings, correspondence, and reports of seminars, conferences and workshops as well as circulars from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. These archival sources proved crucial as a source of information for the study. They produced information on the Education Development plans, policies on girls' education, world conferences on women, regional and national conferences and workshops and seminars on women. The recommendations of these conferences, workshops and seminars provided useful insight on the background context of the policies on education as they related to girls. However, it was not possible to access all important files identified for the study because some of them were reported stolen from the Archives.

Secondary written sources from the Chancellor College Library and the Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT) documentation unit also provided vital information for the study. The CERT documentation unit has valuable sources such as the First Education Development Plan and an abridged version of the Second Education Development Plan. Reports of research on gender and education done in Malawi are also housed in this unit. The Chancellor College Library provided a variety of books and articles on the socio-economic and political situation in Malawi in the 1960s. Copies of documents on Development Plans Malawi followed after independence were

also accessed from the Malawiana Collection of the Library. The Malawiana Collection also contains Malawian Newspapers from 1968 onwards. These provided useful information on the issues the study dealt with; especially information on gender awareness in Malawi during the study period. These historical sources provided the basis for rethinking and critically engaging with literature on the construction of education policies in post-colonial Malawi.

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one states the theoretical basis of the study, reviews related literature and outlines the methodology. It emphasizes the need to seriously interrogate or investigate historical concepts and phenomena that we take as unquestioned. Chapter two gives an overview of the historical situation in Malawi during the colonial period and then through the 1960s to the early 1970s. It analyses the political and socio-economic contexts of Malawi during the 1960s. The chapter also discusses the colonial education policies and their legacy in order to understand the type of educational system Malawi inherited at the time of independence. Overall the chapter argues that some factors emerging out of this context would have created awareness among policy makers of the need to pay special attention to girls' education. Chapter three reviews the first EDP 1973 – 1980 and highlights the crucial factors that influenced its formulation. It argues that the first EDP was largely silent on girls' education due to a number of factors including the influence of modernization theory on government's development plans, societal attitudes and financial constraints. Chapter

four discusses the second Education Development Plan (1985-1995). The chapter argues that unlike the First Education Development Plan, the second one contained specific plans to guide the education of girls and this was due to international and local trends and developments of the 1970s and early 1980s which brought about a change of attitude towards girls' education. In other words, the second EDP was a response to the social, political, economic and cultural pressures and developments of the period particularly the recommendations of the three World Conferences on Women which agitated for the provision of equal opportunities to education for both boys and girls. And chapter five, is a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the study.

The major conclusion emerging from this study is that policies, in this case education policies, are usually a reflection of the political, economic and social context in which they are formulated. As a result, taking as unquestioned the gender insensitivity of the post-colonial education plans in Malawi is failure to historicize developments of the period in question.

Chapter Two

THE MAKING OF THE FIRST EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The first Education Plan of 1973 – 80 did not pay special attention to girls' education. In attempting to explain this, the chapter gives an overview of the historical context that influenced the construction of the plan in question. In particular, the chapter critically analyses the political and socio-economic situation of Malawi in the 1960s and early 1970s. More specifically, it examines the modernization theory of development that the country was following, colonial education policies and their impact on post colonial education in Malawi, events surrounding the struggle for independence, societal attitudes towards women and relations between women and the state. This background is essential because policies are rarely created in a vacuum. In other words, policies are usually a reflection of economic, political and social realities in a given environment.

Malawi in the 1960s: Political and Social-Economic Context

This section looks at the political and economic environment of the 1960s and early 1970s. Emphasis is on events surrounding the struggle for independence, the Cabinet Crisis and its aftermath, agricultural and industrial production and government's expenditure on social amenities, especially education. Perhaps important to note is that

the 1960s to early 1970s were an independence decade in Malawi's history. During this period Malawi experienced a transition from colonialism to national independence. Among other things, transitions of that nature present a period of fluidity in state and policy formulation.¹ Ideally such periods create opportunities to raise new issues and influence popular expectations because "there is a general willingness to rethink the bases of social consensus and revise the rules of the game."² It is the argument of this study that the period in question would have been conducive to formulating novel policies, including gender sensitive education plans. This was because it was a period of fluidity in Malawian state and policy formation, which created an opportunity for promoting competing conceptions on education.

Two incidents feature highly in the political history of Malawi during the 1960s. These were a series of events surrounding the struggle for independence and the Cabinet Crisis of 1964. The independence struggles were intensified in the first four years of the 1960s, beginning with Dr Banda's release from Gweru prison on 1st April 1960. Immediately on 5th April, Dr Banda assumed leadership of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), a new party that was formed by Orton Chirwa in October 1959 while Banda

¹ K. Shear, "Not Welfare or Uplift Work: White Women, Masculinity and policing in South Africa," in N.R. Hunt, T.P. Liu & J. Quartaert (eds.), Gendered Colonialisms in African History (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), p. 71.

² J. Jaquette, The Women's Movement in Latin America (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 79. See also Shear, "Not Welfare or Uplift Work: White Women, Masculinity and policing in South Africa," in N. R. Hunt, T.P. Liu & J. Quartaert (eds.), Gendered Colonialisms in African History (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997), p. 71.

was in prison. This replaced the banned Nyasaland African National Congress. Dr Banda travelled tirelessly throughout the country campaigning for the party. Consequently, the party soon became very influential and popular in the country that it won the first general elections held on 15th August 1961 with majority votes. “In February 1963, Nyasaland became self governing and Hastings Kamuzu Banda became the first Prime Minister.”³ A year later, on 6th July 1964, Malawi became an independent state.

The second incident referred to as the ‘Cabinet Crisis’ of 1964 – 65 occurred barely two months after Malawi got its independence. The country faced a severe crisis because “the Prime Minister and some Cabinet members disagreed very strongly on several policy issues.”⁴ This resulted in the dismissal and resignation of some core cabinet ministers namely Orton Chirwa, Minister of Justice and Attorney General; Augustine Bwanausi, Minister of Works; Kanyama Chiume, Minister of External Affairs; Rose Chibambo, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Yatuta Chisiza, Minister of Home Affairs; Henry Masauko Chipembere, Minister of Education and Willie Chokani, Minister of Labour. The impact of the crisis on the country was enormous.

³ B. Muluzi, Y.M. Juwayeyi, M. Makhambera & D.D. Phiri, Democracy with a Price: The History of Malawi since 1900 (Blantyre: Jhango Heinemann, 1999), p. 77.

⁴ Ibid. p. 81.

The effects of the Cabinet Crisis were quite unfortunate for the people of Malawi. Among other things, the bumpy event led to the adoption in 1966 of a Republican Constitution that did away with liberal provisions of the 1964 Constitution under which the country was granted independence from Britain.⁵

Certain provisions stipulated in the independence constitution were deliberately removed in the Republican constitution. For instance, the latter omitted the Bill of Rights that guaranteed certain basic freedoms to all citizens of Malawi as was provided for in the independence constitution. The new constitution also gave Dr Banda absolute power over Malawians and emphasized the need for the maintenance of law and order and national unity by observing the infamous four cornerstones namely Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline.

Furthermore, following the Cabinet Crisis, Dr Banda concentrated his efforts in ensuring his own security and that of the nation. To achieve maximum security, he armed the Malawi Young Pioneers to supplement the army and the police, deposed chiefs considered disloyal and detained hundreds of civil servants and professionals deemed to be a threat or uncooperative. In addition, for three years between 1965 and 1968,

The country became extremely unstable as the Banda regime tracked and tried to annihilate those who sympathized with the rebel ministers and as those who were persecuted in this way fled to neighboring countries

⁵ National Compensation Tribunal, "History and Hope in Malawi: Repression, Suffering and Human Rights under Dr. Kamuzu Banda, 1964 – 1994," (Unpublished Manuscript, p. 2).

where they regrouped into camps that sought to fight the regime from the exile. Even those rebels who did not flee the country remained a source of internal threat to the regime's security.⁶

For instance, two incidents occurred during this period. In February 1965, Masauko Chipembere and his followers caused disturbances at Mangochi Boma by attacking the police station and the prison, destroying communication equipment at the Post Office and stealing ten vehicles at the Public Works Department. After this successful attack, Chipembere and his group attempted to attack the capital, then Zomba, but they were not successful as government security forces disrupted them at Liwonde Ferry. Another attack was led by Yatuta Chisiza, an ex-Minister in exile in Tanzania. Chisiza and his followers invaded Malawi through Mwanza district.

However, they did not get very far into the country because they were engaged and overpowered by government forces near Mpatamanga gorge along the Shire River. Chisiza and several of his followers died in action while the rest were captured and later brought to trial in the High Court in Blantyre.⁷

Furthermore, apart from armed attacks on the government some disgruntled ex-Ministers from 1968 to 1969 employed urban terrorism in Blantyre City. For nearly two years several cases of murders were reported in townships such as Chilobwe, Ndirande, Chilomoni, Chimwankhunda and Zingwangwa. Gomile Kuntumanji and Wala Laini Kawisa organized the murders. Kuntumanji was one of Dr Banda's Ministers who

⁶ National Compensation Tribunal, "History and Hope in Malawi: Repression, Suffering and Human Rights under Dr. Kamuzu Banda, 1964 – 1994," (Unpublished Manuscript, p. 3).

⁷ Ibid. p. 4.

resigned in mid 1968 while Kawisa was a mere bakery worker. The political situation presented above had a number of implications as far as education is concerned during the independence era. As pointed out above, colonialists did not prioritise education among the colonized. Once independence had been attained, however, Malawians expected a lot of changes in the field of education primarily because fellow Malawians were running government affairs. Among other things, they hoped for increased access to education facilities in order to improve their standard of living. The removal of the Bill of Rights in the Republican constitution had its own implications. It created an environment in which human rights were not respected.⁸ This would have made it difficult for Malawians to demand or agitate for their rights, including women's/girls' right to education. In addition emphasis on security meant that government's attention and resources were diverted from the provision of important social services such as education to ordinary Malawians. This is especially true in light of the evidence that government operated with a shoestring budget throughout much of the 1960s.⁹

On the eve of independence, Malawi also faced economic difficulties. Trade declined and imports stagnated because there was a lack of confidence within the commercial

⁸ National Compensation Tribunal, "History and Hope in Malawi: Repression, Suffering and Human Rights under Dr. Kamuzu Banda, 1964 – 1994," (Unpublished Manuscript, p. 3).

⁹ B. Rose, "Education in Malawi," in B. Rose (ed.), Education in Southern Africa (London: Collier-MacMillan Publishers, 1970), p. 136.

sector due to political changes of this time.¹⁰ To make the situation worse, “agricultural production was stagnant, industry virtually non-existent and communications in a pathetic state. What is more, the country heavily depended on labour exports to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.”¹¹ However, the situation showed some improvement when Dr Banda took over control of government. Public expenditure for example increased from 3 million pounds in 1964 to over 5 million pounds in 1965 and the economy generally improved in all sectors.¹² The economy grew at a remarkably rapid rate from the late 1960s and this development continued during the 1970s. “The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by over 6 percent annually at a constant rate between 1964 and 1972.”¹³ Dr Banda tried to develop the economy by improving agriculture, especially the export-oriented estate sector. Estate production accounted for 70 percent of the increase in agricultural exports.¹⁴ Furthermore, government initiated large-scale rural development schemes and encouraged Malawian farmers to venture into estate production of tobacco, Malawi’s chief economic crop. In 1967 government established rural development projects in Lilongwe district that were later extended to other districts. By 1968, there was “an increase in the value and volume of agricultural

¹⁰ National Compensation Tribunal, “History and Hope in Malawi: Repression, Suffering and Human Rights under Dr. Kamuzu Banda, 1964 – 1994,” (Unpublished Manuscript, p.3).

¹¹ Ibid, p. 6.

¹² J.G. Pike, Malawi: A Political and Economic History (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), p.182.

¹³ W.C. Chirwa, “We want change: Transition or Transformation?” in Bwalo Issue 2 (Zomba: Chancellor College Publications, 1998), p. 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

production, resulting from better climatic conditions than had prevailed in 1963 and 1964 and assisted by improved agricultural practices.”¹⁵

In a study of this nature, it would be important to have an overview of how much income the independent government spent on education. This is essential because as Pike argues the most valuable of all capital is that invested in education and this was nowhere more important than in a country like Malawi where the education of its people formed an important part of the economic infrastructure.¹⁶ Furthermore, “the growth of the educational system of a country and its efficiency are in great part dependent upon the economy of the country and upon the will of its government to spend a sizable part of its revenue on education.”¹⁷ Since the colonial period, government though poor showed some interest in African education by giving humble annual grant-in-aid to missionaries to assist in educational development. In the early 1960s when the revenue of Nyasaland increased, grants for education also increased. For instance, between 1960 and 1961 revenue increased and reached £10,576,000. From this figure, £1,075,000 was allocated to education. This amount showed an increase by

¹⁵Pike, Malawi: A Political and Economic History p. 182.

¹⁶ Pike, Malawi: A Political and Economic History, p. 214

¹⁷J.Y. Ferland, “Policies and Progress in Malawi Education: A work underlying the trend of missionary and secular endeavours towards the educational goals of an Independent Nation in Africa 1875 – 1967” (Med Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1969), p.9.

more than five times over the expenditure in 1950.¹⁸ Similarly, in 1966 government expenditure on education increased remarkably. For instance, government spent £2,396,900 on education from its total revenue of £9,346,100. Compared with other government expenditures of 1966, education got the lion's share.¹⁹

Apart from increased government spending on education, radical changes took place in the field of education between 1961 and 1963. This was the period between the end of colonial rule and the advent of self-government. In September 1961 after Malawi won the first general elections the first African Minister of Education was appointed and in April 1962 the Ministry of Education changed its name to the Ministry of Education and Social Development. "With the change of government, the 1961 educational policy assumed a much higher priority in the order of things and was accorded prominence and funds in the Development Plan"²⁰ For instance, the Plan allocated £7,500,000 to the education sector in its three-year period. As education was considered a tool for development, the independent government strove to improve this sector despite its stringent budget or financial constraints. The government planned to bring education to the greatest number within a short period of time. To achieve this goal, government

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 11.

¹⁹ Ferland, "Policies and Progress," p. 11.

²⁰ Pike, Malawi: A Political and Economic History, p. 216.

adopted two strategies. First, the central government passed the policy of decentralisation under the new education law that was instituted in 1962.

The decentralization of education, which may in itself have desirable features in that it helps to develop a robust sense of local authority, is in many ways the only way in which a financially embarrassed central administration can hope to cope.²¹

Under this policy, the local community was involved in the development of education at primary level. Local Education Authorities (L.E.A.s) were created and operated through education committees empowered to control the receipt and the expenditure of money. Government allocated little funds in the form of grants-in-aid to L.E.A.s. For example, of the £7.5 million spent on education under the Development Plan of 1962 – 1965, only £333,000 was meant for primary education.²² Similarly, in the five year Development Plan of 1965 – 1969, of the £5,500,000 allocated to education, only 6% was set aside for primary schools.²³ Apart from meager government funds, L.E.A.s got funds from local rates and tuition fees. For this reason, the policy of ‘no fee, no enrolment’ was put in place and followed rigorously in the mid 1960s. Consequently, “between 1964 -1966 enrolment in primary schools declined due to failure of parents to pay schools fees and also because councils adopted the policy of ‘no tuition, no

²¹ Rose, “Education in Malawi,” in B. Rose (ed.), Education in Southern Africa, p. 137.

²² Pike, Malawi: A Political and Economic History, p. 216.

²³ Rose, “Education in Malawi,” in B. Rose (ed.), Education in Southern Africa, p. 130.

enrolment.”²⁴ The L.E.A.s were responsible for payment of all teachers, distribution of school supplies to assisted schools, control of book orders and supervision of buildings and equipment. Pike states that this was a broad policy to bring all schools under L.E.A control.²⁵

The second strategy that the independent government employed to develop education was to maintain control of secondary and post-secondary education. Secondary and tertiary education was crucial because it provided trained personnel to serve in the civil service and industries. In both the three year Development Plan of 1962 – 1965 and the Five Year Development Plan of 1965 – 1969, secondary and post-secondary education featured highly and three quarters of the funds planned for education were allocated to this sector. The government provided at least one government secondary school in each district in the 1960s. “On that basis, one school was opened in 1963, six in 1964, ten in 1965 and seven in 1967.”²⁶ The independent government was able to open more secondary schools because of the policy of L.E.A.s, which helped to save money for secondary and post-secondary education. In addition, government helped missions with funds to open grant-aided secondary schools. For example, St Mary’s and St Patrick’s were opened in 1960 and Likuni Boys and Girls secondary schools were opened in

²⁴ Ferland, “Policies and Progress in Malawi Education...” p. 51.

²⁵ Rose, “Education in Malawi,” in B. Rose (ed.), Education in Southern Africa, p. 137.

²⁶ Ibid. p.138.

1961. Furthermore, under tertiary education, government opened the University of Malawi in 1965.

Modernisation Theory

A closer look at the development plans, policies and programmes of the 1960s and early 1970s reveals that the government of Malawi was guided by modernisation theory in its development endeavours. In fact, the theory was popular in the newly emergent nation states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The theory had a powerful influence on the economies of the third world countries from the mid 1940s through the 1950s to the 1960s. The theory argued that about 500 years ago, most people in the world were poor or living in traditional (often subsistence) social arrangements. For a variety of reasons though scientific innovations existed in many parts of the world, science and entrepreneurship only grew in Western Europe. This led to economic growth there. On the other hand, Third World countries did not undergo the economic transformations; they were left behind at the traditional stage. It followed therefore that the Third World could transform itself from traditional state to modernity by following the footsteps of the West. At the same time the West had a duty to modernise the Third World.

In modernisation, education was considered an important tool for economic development. That is, there was need for skilled personnel to work in the industries and civil service to effect development. This explains why almost all the development plans,

programmes and policies of the 1960s and 1970s in Malawi stressed the improvement of secondary and post-secondary education. The products of these two levels of education would ably serve in the industries and civil service in a specialised way to facilitate development.

When the general elections took place in 1961, Nyasaland was guided by the 1957 – 62 Development Plan. However, when the MCP government assumed power in September 1961, it drew up a new development plan. This covered the period 1962 – 1965. According to the plan, there were five basic objectives to be achieved in the field of education:

- to ensure that all children who go to primary schools finish their primary education. This will necessitate the conversion of the present junior primary schools into full primary schools.
- to accord priority to the expansion of facilities for secondary education. This is where one of the real bottlenecks lies and the aim is to devote the greater part of the resources to the building of more secondary schools.
- to expand the facilities for commercial and technical training as well as adult and mass education. Among other things, this makes necessary a polytechnic of some kind, an artisan training institute, an adult education scheme and a mass literacy campaign.
- to provide more scholarships for higher and professional education abroad and to establish a university college at Livingstonia.
- to expand facilities for the training of teachers. A teacher training college is implied here.²⁷

²⁷ Nyasaland Government, Development Plan 1962 – 1965 (1962, p. 5).

At the end of this Development Plan, a long term Development Plan covering the period 1965 – 69 was put in place. “One of the main objectives of the Plan, as far as education was concerned, was to expand and improve secondary and post secondary education to meet manpower needs.”²⁸

This Plan was followed by the Development Programme covering the period 1968 - 70. Among projects laid down in the field of education under the programme was the expansion of facilities for primary education in urban areas, the number of secondary school places by approximately 35 percent from 7,790 in 1967 to 11,960 in 1970, provision of additional technical streams to twelve secondary schools and the construction of a new national primary teacher training college in Lilongwe.

At the end of the Development Programme period, government unveiled another development policy document, the Statement of Development Policies for the period 1971 – 80 (DEVPOL 1). As far as education was concerned,

...the plan argued that the greatest emphasis in education should be placed on secondary, technical and university education as a means of widening the bottleneck created

²⁸ C. M. Moyo, “Formal Education Policy and Strategy in Malawi, 1964 – 1990,” in Guy C. Z. Mhone (ed.), Malawi at the Crossroads: The Post-Colonial Political Economy (Harare: SAPES Books, 1992), P. 271.

by the lack of skills, at the expense of greater attention to primary education.²⁹

An important point to note is that all these development policy documents stressed the importance of post-primary school education to meet trained personnel needs. Put differently, education was not offered to meet the social needs of Malawians. This was in line with modernisation theory thinking.

Societal Attitudes towards Women and Girls

As noted above, the 1960s were a fluid period. Independence, to a large extent, changed the way things operated in many aspects/spheres of life. One area vested interests grappled with was the changing position of women and girls in society. Debate over what constituted the 'proper' place/position for women and girls dominated the independence decade and thereafter. A critical analysis of sources shows that societal attitudes towards women and girls remained ambivalent in the period under study. Some segments of society appreciated the need to improve the status of women and girls. Sentiments expressed in the quotations below were common.

The general thinking was that women also had a role to play in the socio-economic and political sphere of life. The thinking was that women are pivotal to the well-being of the family and for the survival of society because

²⁹L. Pryor, 1990 in C. M. Moyo, "Formal Education Policy and Strategy in Malawi, 1964 – 1990," in Guy C. Z. Mhone (ed.), Malawi at the Crossroads: The Post-Colonial Political Economy (Harare: SAPES Books, 1992), P. 271.

they look after children. If you educate a woman, you educate the whole society.³⁰

Some people believed that you cannot develop a nation without the participation of women. Their percentage is larger than that of men. If we develop the education level of women, the nation will develop faster.³¹

Others strongly believed that the proper place for women and girls was in the home and that uncontrollable women were a source of evil. In support of this view one of the oral sources stated,

girls' education was neglected because of our culture which stipulates that men are heads of families so they are the ones who are expected to acquire an education. Women are meant to stay at home and look after children while men go to work and fend for their families. It was also believed that girls would marry educated men with good jobs and lead comfortable lives.³²

One of the most reliable evidence that government and society at large were aware of the impact of gender difference on the life chances of men and women was the MCP manifesto of 1961. The manifesto targeted five areas for improvement in the field of education. Of these, two explicitly focused on improving girls and women's education. These were secondary and women's education sections. For secondary education, the manifesto noted that many boys and girls had nowhere to go after completing primary

³⁰ Interview with Fritz Kadyoma, Malawi Institute of Education, on 4/7/06.

³¹ Interview with Evelyn Chinguwo, Malawi Institute of Education, on 7/8/06.

³² Interview with Miriam Mbwana, Ngwale Village, T/A Malemia, Zomba, on 21/10/08

education.³³ To address this problem, the Manifesto proposed three solutions as follows:

(a) provide increased opportunities for secondary education (including standard xi and xii) and (b) provide bursaries and/or loans to all needy but deserving boys and girls to finish their secondary education and will encourage the local government authorities to do the same and (c) *as in all other aspects of education, the party will pay particular attention to women's secondary school and towards this end will take immediate steps to expand facilities at the Lilongwe government secondary school for girls.*³⁴ (Emphasis added).

On women's education, the Manifesto stated that "the party conscious of the special role of women as mothers will take immediate steps to provide domestic and allied education to women in all walks of life."³⁵

From this, it is clear that the framers of the Manifesto were aware that girls' education needed special attention and developed specific plans for improving it. These included the expansion of facilities at Lilongwe Girls' Secondary School to cater for increased numbers of female students. It could be argued that in their campaign MCP officials must have used the proposed improvements in girls' education to gain support among women. Consequently, people who attended the mass rallies were sensitized on the importance of education for girls.

³³ Malawi Congress Party, Malawi Congress Party Manifesto 1961 (Limbe: 1961), p.7.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. P.8.

Apart from the MCP Manifesto, there were a number of international conferences and workshops in the 1960s that affirmed the importance of women in development and encouraged government and other stakeholders to provide women with an education that would enable them to function in a changing society.

We affirm that ignorance is not part of the African Woman's heritage; that she has the right to an education which will develop all sides of her personality, and fit her for life in present day society. Until universal education for girls becomes a reality, we ask that out of school courses be provided to give the indispensable minimum education to women and girls.³⁶

Furthermore, there is abundant evidence that government and other employers were willing to train and employ women and girls. Training and job vacancies advertised in the *Times Newspapers* of the 1960s are a testimony to this. The vacancy advertisements provide enough evidence that women were to some extent regarded as equal partners to men in training, employment and development endeavours. Vacancies show that some employers, both government and private, specified the need for both males and females, others females only and yet others remained neutral. For vacancies that required both males and females, candidates were subjected to similar requirements.

³⁶ Resolutions of the Central African Seminar on, "The African Woman Considers her Mission," Organised by the World Union of Catholic Women Organisations, the World Union of Catholic Young Women and Girls and UNESCO, December 1961.

Different government ministries advertised training vacancies for both males and females. For instance, the Ministry of Health through the Malawi Public Service Commission invited applications for a training course for male and female medical assistants. Eligible candidates had to be unmarried, aged between 17½ and 27 years old with at least Full Primary School Education.³⁷ Similarly, the Ministry of Education advertised a Teacher Training Course for men and women at T2 and T3 levels³⁸. In the same manner, the Ministry of Economic Affairs advertised a Field Assistant training course for both men and women tenable at Colby School of Agriculture.³⁹ Parastatal organizations also sent both men and women for training programmes and short courses. For instance, on 25 January, 1966 the *Times* featured a report of four Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) personnel namely Messers Person Chawinga Banda, Charles Ndau, Benson Hara and Mrs Annie Sungani who were studying at Indiana University in the USA. These people were sponsored by the US Agency for International Development. In March, two programme assistants for MBC, Miss J. B. Chirwa and Mr J Buleya, were among fifty members of Overseas Broadcasting Services attending a course in London.⁴⁰

³⁷ *The Times*, "Malawi Public Service Commission," 25 January, 1966, p.2.

³⁸ *The Times*, "Ministry of Education: Teacher Training Vacancies (T2 and T3)," 21 March, 1968, p. 12.

³⁹ *The Times*, "Ministry of Economic Affairs: Recruitment for Departmental Training Schools," 29 February, 1968, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *The Times*, "MBC Workers with BBC," 1 March, 1966, p. 5.

As pointed out above, some training vacancies specifically required women only. The *Times* of 28 March 1968 featured a training vacancy in Physiotherapy in the Federal Republic of Germany. The advert read as follows:

applications are invited from ladies of Malawian origin to train in the Republic of Germany to become physiotherapists. The training will last 3 1/2 - 4 years. Applicants must be holders of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate in Division 1 or II and should have credits in Mathematics, Physics with Chemistry and in Biology⁴¹.

Furthermore, home craft courses for women at local, national and international levels featured in the *Times* News paper of the 1960s. At the local level homecraft courses were conducted in many parts of the country. For instance, a one-week homecraft course for women was conducted by the homecraft worker for Rumphi west, Miss L. Mkandawire at Polere in Rumphi District. The course was attended by 20 women from the Nkhamanga area. A similar course was held at Katowo. These courses were popular in the 1960s to the extent that some women attended conferences, meetings and higher education in Home Economics outside the country. In 1968 a number of women attended home economics courses internationally. For example, the *Times* of Monday, 15 January 1968 featured a report of three Malawian women who attended a three months course in community development and adult education at Mount Carmel International Training Centre for Community Services, Haifa in Israel. These were a second group of Malawians to attend such a course. The United Nations Educational

⁴¹ *The Times*, "Training in Physiotherapy in the Federal Republic of Germany," 28 March 1968, p. 12.

Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) financed the training course. In the same year in July, three women were among 1,200 delegates attending the 11th International Congress on Home Economics in Bristol, England. These were Miss Diefonkin Gondwe, Mrs Donata Chimenya and Mrs Thelma Gondwe of the Community Development Department. Miss D. Gondwe, a Home Economics Officer in the Community Development Department, was doing a post-graduate course in Home Economics and Community Development at London University while Mrs D. Chimenya a Home Economics teacher at Magomero Community Development Centre, was studying Home Economics at the City Bath College of Education in England.⁴² Furthermore, the Times of 12 September 1968 reported that Mrs. C. E. Sinoya and Miss L. C. Mnthambala left for Britain to study Home Economics at Bath College of Education. In addition the Times of 23 September, 1968 featured another group of women who went to London for a course designed to help African women increase their contribution to the social and economic progress of their countries. The course was useful as an introduction to work in the social welfare services. The syllabus of the course included a study of the roles of men and women in African societies, changes in family life and characteristics of rural and urban communities and the position of women in customary and statutory law.

⁴² The Times, "Malawian Women at Home Economics Congress," 29 July, 1968, p. 3.

Like training, job vacancies specified looking for women only while others considered both men and women. For instance, the Malawi Public Service Commission advertised positions for Dental Attendant and Clerical Assistant/Clerical officers in the Ministries of Health and Works on 14 January, 1966 and 18 January, 1966 respectively. The positions were open to both male and female applicants. Some vacancies specified women only. For instance, the Mudi River Water Board on 4 March, 1966 advertised the post of a Stenographer. Applicants were invited from women with good shorthand and typing speeds. Similarly, the United Transport (Mw) Ltd advertised a post for experienced lady bookkeepers⁴³ and a local bank in Blantyre advertised the positions of female clerks of Malawi origin with a minimum qualification of three passes GCE.⁴⁴

The important roles of women in development were also recognized through their involvement in different activities and programs. The most common programs were home craft courses conducted throughout the country to enable women develop their families and the nation as a whole. The importance of such programmes was alluded to in many forums in the 1960s. For instance, in his address to graduating homecraft instructors at Ludzi Domestic Science School, the then Minister of Education, Mr. A. M. Nyasulu, stressed

⁴³ The Times, "Situations vacant," 11 January, 1966, p. 7.

⁴⁴ The Times, "Female clerks of Malawian origin required by local banks," 8 January, 1968, p. 8.

that the future aim of girls who trained there was not only to teach in schools after they had qualified but also to teach women in their homes as well. He said they should remember that they were also being trained to look after their own families properly, which was important to the nation.⁴⁵

Furthermore, Mr. H. B. P. Kanchowa, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government reiterated the same point to women in Thyolo district. He argued that “by attending homecraft lessons and gaining new knowledge they (women) were contributing their part in the fight against underdevelopment.”⁴⁶ Women’s role in development was also acknowledged by Mrs. E. Mvula, District Chairperson of the Women’s League in Mzimba. She extensively toured the district urging women to participate in helping the Ngwazi to develop the country. In her speech she stated,

before the president returned to Malawi, women were not regarded as important in the development of the country. That is why the Ngwazi formed the Women’s League...Now the women are no longer inferior to men. They should help their nkhoswe in the fight for economic independence.⁴⁷

Similarly, in her address to homecraft workers at the Lilongwe Community Development Training Centre, Mrs. J. F. Mbilizi advised the women to teach people what they had learnt at the seminar upon returning to their respective areas.

⁴⁵ The Times, “Girls must be home teachers,” 15 April, 1966, p. 7.

⁴⁶ The Times, “Women can improve the standard of living,” 9 May, 1968, p. 3.

⁴⁷ The Times, “Women are no longer inferior,” 24 June, 1968, p. 6.

She particularly reminded them that previously men monopolized the fields of education and development – but, since the country became independent, the services of both men and women were needed in these fields.⁴⁸

Furthermore, women were regarded as respectable people in society in the 1960s. In his mass rallies Dr. Banda always appealed to men and the youth to respect women. He discouraged men from ill-treating his mbumba and encouraged women to report to him whenever they were abused. Other political leaders echoed similar appeals. For example, the MP for Kasupe East, Mr. A. M. Matanje, at the opening of a new MCP area office at Mtholowa village, “reiterated the Prime Minister’s appeal to youth leaguers to respect Malawi’s women.”⁴⁹ Similarly, Mrs. Margaret Mlanga, MP for Blantyre City, “appealed to local women to show more respect to each other,”⁵⁰ when she visited Women’s Red Cross class at Makata Government school.

In the 1960s efforts were made to encourage women past school going age to attain some education. Professor Blodwen Binns of the University of Malawi alluded to this when she addressed the Business and Professional Women’s Club of Blantyre-Limbe at its international candle lighting ceremony. She spoke on “the challenge of a changing world in education and training” and stressed that,

⁴⁸ The Times, “Nutrition Course,” 12 December, 1968, p. 8.

⁴⁹ The Times, “New Party Office,” 11 January, 1966, p. 7

⁵⁰ The Times, “Women – Respect each other,” 21 March, 1968, p. 9.

women could make changes to match changing circumstances but that they must be flexible in their minds and alter certain of their concepts to do this. For example, we must not assume that education is only for the young, she said. Women in particular play a special part, for to train a mother is to train a family and to train many families is to train a nation.⁵¹

This mentality made government to make literacy courses accessible to women throughout the country. For instance, 14 women in Dedza district passed adult literacy tests and four women were the first students of a literacy class at Fort Johnston (Mangochi).⁵²

Despite the positive image society generally held towards women, negative attitudes also prevailed. Signs of women being regarded as inferior were visible in society. For instance, most women could not make decisions either in families or workplaces. This was exemplified in Hirschman's research report where one male informant stated:

our custom is that women should be subordinate to men and support men. This is how it always has been and it won't change easily. We always have been a male-dominated society. Men were hunters but made most of the important decisions. Then they became migrant workers and brought home money. Ask any woman about decisions: they will talk but in the end they will say: you must ask the man. So this is a cultural thing.⁵³

⁵¹ The Times, "Prof. Binns talks to BPW on education," 25 February, 1966, p. 7.

⁵² The Times, "1903 are now literate," 11 January, 1966, p. 5 & "Times, 25 February, 1966, p. 11

⁵³ D. Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi (Addis Ababa: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 1984), p. 6.

In addition, a woman informant commented, “in the family fathers have the final words. Women just listen even if they know he is wrong and fathers teach sons that this is a man’s rightful role.”⁵⁴ Another oral source added that “the general thinking was that women were not supposed to talk. Women were not supposed to be heard but seen.”⁵⁵ The sources of these attitudes were located in culture, history, tradition and nature.⁵⁶

Furthermore, in the 1960s there was a debate on the merits and demerits of marrying an educated woman. Contributing to that debate, the *Times* featured an article written by Marjorie Proops titled “what sort of wife does a man want?” In response to the question raised in the article “Do men yearn for an educated wife?” Proops looked at both the advantages and disadvantages of the issue. On one hand she explained that

education for a girl is all-important in everything, not only in marriage. One’s first reaction is that if a girl is educated she will be more efficient as a wife in the purely practical aspects of marriage – like running the home and keeping the budget on an even keel – and also her husband will come home to a wife who can discuss all the things in which men are said to be interested.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Proops pondered thus:

when a man had been occupied all day with a demanding job did he really want to come home a little woman

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Interview with Kadyoma on 4/7/06.

⁵⁶ Hirshman, *Women, Planning and Policy...*

⁵⁷ *The Times*, “What sort of wife does a man want?” 5 April 1966, p. 7.

eagerly waiting to discuss the latest world crisis?
Wouldn't he prefer to come to a delicious meal and
cuddlesome dolly?⁵⁸

However, Proops did not infer that an educated girl could not be a good cook and cuddlesome, "but from her observation of some educated women, they often seemed to feel bound to demonstrate their education."⁵⁹ According to Proops therefore, more men secretly preferred to come home to a wife who did not compete with them in the brain stakes.⁶⁰ However in her conclusion, she stated that "intelligence plus the kind of sensitivity which makes a woman tolerant and kind is to my mind far more important in marriage than a degree in Economics or Law."⁶¹ This conclusion implied higher education was not really necessary for women. In support of this, an oral source commented

When this institution (referring to Malawi Institute of Education – MIE) started in 1927, women received different type of education from that of men. Women were taught skills that were meant to enhance what they were already doing in homes like cooking and hygiene. I am not so sure about that but I can guess, women were not supposed to go very high with education, as long as they learnt how to wash and cook.⁶²

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The Times, "What sort of wife does a man want?"

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ The Times, "What sort of wife does a man want?"

⁶² Interview with Kadyoma on 4/7/06

According to the debates of the period, most of the times women were blamed for short-lived marriages and immorality in families and in some cases they were called hooligans. However, not all men in society sided with this view. According to Machilika writing in the *Times* under the heading “women not to blame,”

Sir- No one can seriously suggest that girls or women should be classed as hooligans. I write to challenge the claims of Mr. W. Chilunga, Mr. Munthali and Mr. J. C. Mchanga, who have written to you on the subject. Lack of husbands makes girls scatter but this does not mean that they are hooligans.”⁶³

From the above discussion, it is clear that societal attitudes towards women remained ambivalent. On one hand evidence shows that women were considered capable of training and employment and as partners in the development of the nation. On the other, they were regarded as inferior and a class which could not make a meaningful contribution.

Women and the State

This section gives an overview of how the state, its bureaucracy and Dr. Banda related with women. Specifically, it analyses the manner and extent to which the state institutions and Dr. Banda incorporated the interests of women in politics, the civil service and in the provision of social services. In Malawi as well as other African countries, the state and its bureaucracy are vital in the daily lives of both women and

⁶³ The Times, “Women not to blame,” 24 June, 1966, p. 4.

men.⁶⁴ This is because they remain the major providers of education, health and other social services even in diminished circumstances. As such, the state and its various arms interacted with women and this was reflected in the activities of different government ministries.

During the period under study, different government ministries tried to incorporate the interests and experiences of women in their activities. The Ministry of Agriculture trained both women and men in agricultural extension. Note however that women's training included a large dose of home economics. According to Hirschman, the Ministry had four types of female extension staff:

farm home assistants (formerly instructresses) who receive a year's training at Thuchila Farm Institute, consisting of roughly one-third agriculture and two-thirds home economics courses; technical assistants who do a two-year course at Colby College, consisting of roughly two-thirds agriculture and one-third home economics training; technical officers who undergo a three-year diploma programme at the University's Bunda College, primarily in agriculture, and professional officers who complete a four-year degree course, primarily in agriculture, at Bunda College.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ H. Kachapila, "Women's Organisations and the state in Malawi 1932 – 1992," (MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1995), p. 5.

⁶⁵ Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi (Addis Ababa: UN Economic Commission for Africa, 1984), p. 30.

Acknowledging the serious gap in the education levels between men and women, government through the Ministry of Education made an attempt to increase the number of girls at primary and secondary school levels. Hirschman noted:

Sixty-four per cent of females over the age of five have never been to school. Thirty-four and nine-tenths per cent have attended some primary school (25.7 per cent having gone no further than four years). One per cent have attended secondary school and 0.3 per cent got to their final year of secondary school. Six-hundredths of one per cent have gone to university.⁶⁶

Other agencies such as the Malawi Congress Party did encourage parents to send daughters to school and this had some positive effects.⁶⁷ For example, in 1964 129,735 girls were enrolled in primary schools. In 1974, the number had risen to 208,458.⁶⁸

However, the picture presented above should not mislead us into making gross conclusions that the state and its bureaucracy significantly raised the status of women. In the field of agriculture, both men and women received training in agriculture and extension work. However, women were sidelined in terms of content coverage and job opportunity. The policy of the Ministry of Agriculture was that agricultural training and extension should be directed at men while women's training consisted primarily of

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

⁶⁷ Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi, p. 5.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A summary (Domasi: MIE, 1985), p. 2.

home economics.⁶⁹ Furthermore, more hours were allocated to general agriculture (for men) than home economics (for women). "This was done because the man, as family head, is the main decision maker, supervisor, overseer and farm manager. It is therefore natural to address attention to him..."⁷⁰ What is more, not many women farmers accessed credit facilities to develop their agriculture. According to the research done by the Lilongwe Land Development Programme, "of the 56,355 people receiving credit, 4,199 (or 7.45 per cent) were women."⁷¹ As women made up 25 – 30 per cent of household heads then, this clearly shows that they received less than their fair share.⁷² In addition, female officers attached to training centers mainly taught home economics. Consequently,

some of these women, particularly at the more senior levels, complained about wasting their agricultural training, their restriction to home economics and the consequent disadvantage to them in terms of promotion; since promotion examinations are based mainly on agriculture.⁷³

The Ministry of Education was not free from these discriminatory practices. The Ministry did not have a broad, clearly defined policy concerning girls and women. As a

⁶⁹ Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi, p. 29.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi, p. 29.

⁷³ Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi, p. 30.

result there was a serious gap in the education levels of men and women. Worse still, the Ministry adopted from the missionaries and continued to use the discriminatory measure of expelling girls indefinitely from school once they became pregnant. Many girls lost the opportunity to acquire education through this disciplinary measure. Unfortunately this rule applied more to girls than to boys as the latter easily managed to get away with the punishment.

The Ministry of Health too did not have a specific policy to address specific needs of women. Though the Ministry placed considerable stress on the health needs of women by developing maternity wings and sections in hospitals and clinics and also mother and child clinics, this development was not considered a women's programme.

These programmes were aimed at the most vulnerable groups and these happen to be mothers who are pregnant and who have just given birth and children under five years of age. Women are biologically and physically vulnerable at this stage and therefore they get greater care.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the influence of women in state actions in Malawi was limited. For instance, "the civil service bureaucracy which provides the most accessible entry point to state power for women was male dominated in terms of both seniority and numbers."⁷⁵ Consequently, women were underrepresented in decision making

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

⁷⁵ Kachapila, Women's Organizations and the State in Malawi 1932 – 1992, p. 74

apparatuses. This means that women's voices were rarely heard in forums where policies and government plans were formulated. Worse still, the possibility of men, who dominated decision making bodies, coming up with 'women friendly' policies, was slim. "These men then formulate ideologies, laws and policies which not coincidentally favor men."⁷⁶

Dr Banda proclaimed himself *Nkhoswe* No.1 of all the women in the country and publicly pronounced his intentions to raise the status of women. Indeed during his reign Banda did a lot to raise the status of women. He used to send women on external tours to expose them to new experiences. For instance, on 9 April 1968 Dr Banda sent four women, all of them senior officials of the Women's League of the Malawi Congress Party on a tour to Britain as guests of the British government. These women were:

Mrs. J.M. Mlangi (MP), Parliamentary Secretary in the President's Office and also representative of the Women's League in the National Executive of the MCP, Miss D. Makwinja from Zomba, Mrs. J. Maloya from Lilongwe and Mrs. V. Mvula from Mzimba.⁷⁷

Banda strongly believed that learning was not only limited to classroom experience. Travel was another learning opportunity.

⁷⁶ Kachapila, *Women's Organizations and the State in Malawi 1932 – 1992*, p. 8.

⁷⁷ *The Times*, "Four for Britain," 4 April, 1968, p. 7.

Furthermore, Dr Banda used to award more scholarships to secondary school girls than boys. He set up Kamuzu Bursary Scheme in 1967 to pay school fees for needy boys and girls. However, girls benefited more than boys in the scheme and this was done deliberately to encourage girls to be in school. Of the fifteen students who were the first to benefit from the scheme, eight were girls.⁷⁸ The number of scholarships was increased to twenty in 1968 and still more awards went to girls.

The president said he had deliberately given more scholarships to girls than to boys because as a general rule when parents have got money they tend to prefer educating boys than girls. 'Your Kamuzu will then think about the girls, he declared.'⁷⁹

Despite these attempts, some scholars have argued that Banda's pronouncements about raising the status of women were mere rhetoric. It has been noted that among other things both Banda's party and the civil service bureaucracy were content to keep women in their stereotypical roles as mothers and secondary wage earners.⁸⁰

Colonial Education: Its Legacy

Missionaries introduced formal education in Malawi in the mid 1870s as a tool for spreading Christianity. They continued to run and control education independently until

⁷⁸ The Times, "Eight girls are among the first group to hold Kamuzu Bursaries," 21 November, 1968, p. 12.

⁷⁹ The Times, "For the girls," 23 September, 1968, p. 1.

⁸⁰ See for example, Kachapila, "Women's organisations..." and Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy...

the mid 1920s. The policies of the missionaries for one reason or another paid very little attention to girls' education with the result that the latter's education lagged behind that of boys. In fact, until the late 1920s very small numbers of girls attended school. Education for girls was not encouraged because missionaries then regarded education as a men's domain. Missionary education was aimed at producing preachers and teachers who were primarily men. The strict rules of most of the churches then forbade the elevation of women to positions of leadership. Consequently, girls received lower education than boys and their education was confined to domestic chores like housecraft, needlework and religious knowledge. "The early Victorian attitudes which permeated female education in Malawi sought as their objective the creation of a perfect Christian wife and a useful low class vernacular teacher, nurse or nanny."⁸¹ The missionaries failed to see any role for women outside the domestic environment.

The colonial government took over control of education in Malawi in 1925 with the establishment of the Department of Education. In the same year the colonial office in Britain through the Advisory Committee began to develop its own educational policy for all territories in British Africa, which was finalized in 1948. Though the policy applied to all British territories in tropical Africa, its implementation varied from country to country depending on the context. Despite government interest in African education exemplified in these two major developments, the colonial education policy

⁸¹ Lamba, "The History of Postwar Western Education in Colonial Malawi 1945- 1961..." p. 146.

not unlike the missionary one tended to favour the education of boys more than girls. In fact, only one clause dealt with girls' education, it noted that high rates of infant mortality and unhygienic conditions prevailed in much of Africa. It was important therefore to instruct women in hygiene and public health, the care of the sick, children and the home as well the treatment of simple diseases. The clause also emphasized the importance of educating older women to avoid widening the gap between generations. It recommended that well qualified women teachers were needed to teach the above mentioned subjects. Note however that the policy expressed some fear on the destabilising and unsettling effect such an education might have on African society. Not surprisingly, colonial education like its missionary counterpart relegated women to the private domain.

The bias towards boys' education is also noticed in the beginnings of secondary education in Malawi. Secondary education started in the early 1940s with the opening of Blantyre Secondary School in 1941 and Zomba Catholic Secondary School in 1942. Blantyre Secondary School was meant to be co-educational. However, there was no accommodation for girls. As a result, girls did not join the school until 1947. Note that even then there was no girls' hostel at the school and the two girls that joined the school were accommodated at the neighboring Blantyre Girls' Primary School run by the Church of Scotland. "The absence of girls' hostels five years after the inauguration of this co-educational institution stands out as testimony to the poor attitude of all

concerned towards female secondary and higher education in Malawi.”⁸² Boys dominated the school in terms of numbers and by 1950, of the 68 pupils at the school only 10 were girls. Unlike Blantyre Secondary School, which at least catered for limited numbers of girls, Zomba Catholic Secondary School was opened purely as a boys’ school. Thus it is apparent that secondary education in its initial years was meant mainly to serve the interests of men rather than women. Similarly, secondary schools that were opened after the first two catered for boys’ education more than girls’. For instance, “in the 1960s the government policy was to build a secondary school in every district.”⁸³ In line with this policy, day secondary schools were built in many districts such as Zomba, Mangochi, Nsanje, Kasungu and Chiradzulu. In addition, “Boards of Governors’ schools were established at St Patricks’s (Mzedi) and Henry Henderson Institute (Blantyre).”⁸⁴ These secondary schools with the exception of St Patrick’s were co-educational. Despite this, the ratio of boys and girls in these schools was 5:1. This means that more boys received secondary education than girls. From the 1940s up to early 1960s, government established only one girls’ secondary school in Lilongwe in 1962.

⁸² Lamba, “The History of Post-War Western Education in Colonial Malawi, 1945 - 1961,” p. 146.

⁸³ T.B. Pingeni, “The Nyasaland Government and Girls’ Education 1926 – 1964: A study in the evolution of policy,” (History Seminar Paper 1998/99, Chancellor College), p. 25.

⁸⁴ H.D. Chimzimu, “Development of Education in Malawi, 1875 – 1967,” (History Seminar Paper 1968/69, Chancellor College), p. 9.

The result is that the trend of poor enrolment of girls in school continued during the colonial period. For instance, in 1927, only 40.5 percent girls attended school according to the Education Department Report. In 1939 only 167 out of 776 students in mission schools were female.⁸⁵ Furthermore, in 1943 the total number of pupils in school was 183,307 of which 110,216 were males and 73,091 were females; in 1944 the total number of pupils was 216,322 of which 133,393 were males and 82,929 were females. It is also worthy noting that girls generally produced poor results. For instance, “in the 1946 primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations conducted at 16 centers, where 199 out of 286 passed, only three of the successful candidates were girls, the first ever!”⁸⁶

Furthermore, most intelligent girls failed to proceed with their education beyond the vernacular grades because there were not many schools beyond this level and those that were available were sparsely distributed. Education therefore meant walking long distances, which girls could not cope with as kidnapping and murder of school children, were common. This risky situation made parents reluctant to send their daughters to schools far away from home. “As a result then, the village schools, with their appalling

⁸⁵ Lamba, *African Women's Education in Malawi 1875 – 1952*, p. 52.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

poor and low education, provided the needed security for the daughters who unfortunately ended up with inferior education.”⁸⁷

Related to this, the colonial government did not provide enough qualified female teachers for girls' education. As a result, most girls were not encouraged to remain in school. For example, the number of teachers on training in 1943 was 607. Of these 419 were men and 188 were women. In 1944 the number increased to 672. Similarly, 456 were men and 216 were women.⁸⁸ Worse still, despite the critical shortage of female teachers, government set up a policy which allowed only 60 places a year for trainee women teachers in both Catholic and non-Catholic Teacher Training Colleges. Thus most of the teacher trainees were men. This “simply perpetuated the vicious circle in which only very few women gained access to good educational and teacher training facilities.”⁸⁹ Also, conditions under which female teachers worked were not conducive. This is because prior to the formation of the United Teaching Service(UTS) in 1958, “married women teachers received ‘dismissal’ to go for maternity leave which made the teaching profession extremely precarious for women since their re-engagement could not be guaranteed.”⁹⁰ This contributed greatly to the critical shortage of female teachers

⁸⁷ Lamba, “The History of Postwar Western Education,” p. 147.

⁸⁸ Nyasaland Protectorate, Report of the Education Department for the year 1944, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Lamba, “The History of Post-War Western Education p. 149.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 167.

in schools. The situation improved in the late colonial period when UTS recommended half pay for teachers on maternity leave. No wonder, in the period 1958 – 61, the Nyasaland Council of Women, an association formed to promote interests of European women, protested against the policy and pressed government to increase and improve female educational facilities.

In addition, the introduction of the Age Limit Policy in 1949 had a negative impact on girls' education. Under this policy children beyond 9 years of age were no longer admitted into village schools and those who were already overage were expelled. This was unlike in the past when children of between the ages 5 and 14 were admitted to village schools and those aged 12 and 18 were in central schools and those between 12 and 20 were in station schools.⁹¹ The policy was "designed to reduce wastage and government expenditure"⁹² as most of these overage "pupils come to school late and ultimately failed to complete"⁹³ their education. Consequently, the Age Limit Policy led to the expulsion of many aspiring boys and girls from school and also barred some to enter primary school. Though the policy applied to boys and girls, its impact on girls' education was more than on boys. As already pointed out, it was mostly girls who went to school late because of their vulnerability.

⁹¹ Chimzimu, Development of Education in Malawi, p. 9.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Pingeni, "The Nyasaland Government and Girls' Education," p. 9.

Only those girls who received support and encouragement for instance, daughters of migrant laborers went to school while young. The result was that by 1950 only a handful of girls reached senior primary, resulting in very few girls proceeding to secondary school.⁹⁴

Despite the problems that girls experienced in education, close to the outbreak of the Second World War, the colonial government began to improve girls' education. Government carried out some measures and set up commissions of inquiry with the aim of improving girls' education. For instance:

just before the outbreak of the war (World War II) measures taken to improve female education included the formation by the Director of Education A.T Lacey, of the Mponda Committee to look into this kind of education in the hope that a program will be incepted based upon the recognition of the importance of the girl.⁹⁵

Though not much was achieved, following the recommendations of this committee, government agreed to give priority to girls' boarding schools and teacher training institutions in its budget allocation.

Furthermore, in 1947 the colonial office commissioned the Gwilliam/Read Commission on Girls' and Women's Education. The Commission arrived in Malawi on 30th August 1947 and completed its work on 21st September. The Commissioners traveled extensively interviewing people in the field of education. Among others, the report of

⁹⁴ Ibid. P.19.

⁹⁵ Lamba, "The History of Postwar Western Education," p. 151.

this commission called for an urgent change of attitude towards girls' education from both the educators and Malawian parents. It also recommended that a Woman Education Officer be appointed in Nyasaland to take charge of the overall development of female education. The first recruit was Barbara Moore. "All in all, the commission and its report had demonstrated ... colonial office concern over colonial education for women and girls."⁹⁶ Following this, the Binns (Nuffield) Commission was set up in 1951. Like its predecessor, this commission also emphasized the revolutionary change of attitude towards the education of women and girls.

In addition to this, between the 1950s and the early 1960s, the colonial office worked very hard to speed up female education in Malawi. For instance, in 1953 the colonial office in Britain organised a conference on the Education of Women and Girls for staff on leave in Britain. This conference emphasized the need to improve girls' education to match with British educational development in general.

Although the conference was not elaborate that it was conceived and organized specifically to discuss female educational matters in the colonies is of significance. It provided a forum for appeals from colonial educators for sympathy towards African girls' education.⁹⁷

Furthermore, three years after this conference in 1956, the colonial office commissioned for the second time, Freda Gwilliam of the Gwilliam/Read Commission (1947) to return

⁹⁶Lamba, "The History of Postwar Western Education," p.165.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

to Malawi and advise the office on further steps to improve the education of women and girls.

The last of the commissions was the Phillips Commission of 1960. This commission emphasized strongly the expansion of secondary education for girls. However, it supported co-education in order to deal with the problems of shortage of teachers and facilities. Following this recommendation, a number of junior co-education secondary schools were opened up in various parts of the country. What is more, in 1962 government opened Lilongwe Girls' Secondary School.

On the eve of independence, girls' education still lagged behind that of boys. Perhaps what is interesting to note however, is that in the late colonial period, especially after 1945, there was dialogue among vested interests in women's education. On the one hand, the Colonial Office was impatient to speed up female education in Malawi, especially in the 1950s. Young Malawians in the Nyasaland Legislative Council also called for improvements in the deplorable state of female education. The state of female education also provoked a strong statement from the Africa Secretary of the Church of Scotland in 1949, "more girls' schools... is a priority even if some of the boys'

education has to suffer.”⁹⁸ On the other, most Christian missionaries on the spot and indeed some parents condemned female education

as a source of loosening moral sanctions, marital infidelity, unwholesome and indiscriminate sexual behaviour generated by female independence of choice and economic means, which did not necessarily tie the girls to married life; the general self-discovery of the educated woman threatened the age-old male dominance.⁹⁹

As noted above, the impetus to improve girls' education grew more after 1945. This was because 1945 marked the beginning of the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) and the Welfare State in Britain, with emphasis on social policy formulation and implementation. Policies in health, labour, urban development and education often received priority. The CDC marked a turning point in the new development thinking. Development began to be considered as a government investment unlike before. Part of the CDC was government investment in social services which included education. As far as provision of education was concerned, emphasis was put on special groups of people such as chiefs, their sons and wives as well as girls. In addition, by its nature, the Welfare State addressed vulnerable groups like the poor, workers, girls and old people. These two developments explain why girls' education began to receive more attention after 1945 than before.

⁹⁸ Lamba, "The History of Postwar Western Education, p. 164.

⁹⁹ Ibid. P.166.

This chapter has outlined the political, social and economic context of the educational experiences of the 1960s and early 1970s in Malawi. Some factors emerging out of this context would have created awareness among policy makers of the need to pay special attention to girls' education. The opposite is true of other factors. The next chapter critically engages the first EDP of 1973 to 1980. Interest will be on demonstrating how the historical background discussed in this chapter influenced its making.

Chapter Three

THE FIRST EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN (1973 – 1980)

Chapter two examined the social, political and economic context of the developments of the 1960s and early 1970s in Malawi. It especially focussed focused on factors that had an impact on the education system. This was done to emphasise the idea that policies reflect the context in which they are constructed. With this background, this chapter critically reviews the first Education Development Plan. It provides evidence that the plan in question was largely silent on girls' education because the political, social and economic realities of the period dictated that education was a tool for economic development. This in a way meant that the education system was required to produce skilled personnel to work in industries and civil service to effect development. Unfortunately, this type of education was gender blind.

The Malawi Congress Party laid down changes it was going to make in the field of education in its Manifesto of 1961. However, "it was not until the early 1970's that the first attempt was made to outline government education and training policies for the

1970s to accelerate economic development".¹ Indeed, government formulated the first formal Education Development Plan in 1973 to provide guidelines for the development of education between 1973 and 1980. This marked the first real attempt at planning for the evolution of the education system since the introduction of formal education in Malawi. The plan essentially focussed on primary, secondary and primary teacher education. We noted in the preceding chapter that the MCP manifesto explicitly stated its plans for girls' education. One would therefore have expected the first Education Development Plan to reflect issues of girls' education more than the preparatory document of 1961. Surprisingly, both the basic objectives of the plan and its specific targets did not make any reference to girls' education. In fact, no objectives were laid down to guide the education of girls in the EDP. The plan's objectives were:

- (a) to base education development particularly beyond the primary level to the manpower requirements of the economy for social and economic development,
- (b) to introduce a greater degree of relevance in the system to the social-economic environmental needs;
- (c) to ensure maximum and efficient utilization of existing facilities and resource inputs;
- (d) to secure a more equitable distribution of educational facilities and resources so as to realize the greatest cost effectiveness of expenditure in the sector and to aim at further development at the sixth form level.²

The specific targets were as follows:

¹ C. Moyo, "Education Policy and Development Strategy in Malawi," in Guy C. Z. Mhone (ed), Malawi at the Crossroads: The Post-colonial Political economy (Harare: SAPES book, 1992), p. 273.

² Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A summary, P.15.

- (i) to raise the gross enrolment ratio at the primary level from 33.5% to 50% and the secondary enrolment ratio from 3% to about 15% of the appropriate age group
- (ii) to phase out the training of T4 and T3 teachers in favour of T2 training.³

Reading from these objectives, it is clear that education was intended to satisfy the economic development needs of the country. This is because the education system was geared at producing personnel to work in the industries and civil service for economic development. In other words, education was offered not as a right and a good in itself but for functional purposes. This, in the final analysis means that the education system was not primarily interested in addressing needs of vulnerable groups, such as girls/women in education attainment.

The absence of a specific guideline for girls' education in the first EDP was a great departure from the MCP manifesto, which as early as 1961 laid out plans for girls' education. Perhaps what is interesting to note is that the first EDP was an even greater departure from the plan for Educational Development of 1957/61, which included in its goals the provision of "equality of educational opportunity for boys and girls"⁴ The 1973 education plan developed 12 years after the MCP Manifesto by the same party lacked specific objectives targeting girls' education. It needs to be noted however that

³ Ibid. p.2

⁴ I.C. Lamba, "The History of Postwar Western Education, 1945 – 61: A Study of the Formulation and Application of Policy," (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1984), p. 145.

there was a minor reference to girls' education in the document under the section on secondary education where a guideline and rationale for the selection of girls into secondary school were given as follows:

in general, there is an impartial procedure of selection of candidates by the Ministry of Education from performance in the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination. However, it has been necessary in some cases to make some minor adjustments in the day school selection in favour of girls so that their numbers are kept to about one third of the total enrolment. This is for the simple reason that sex balance in the stock of educated personnel is imperative in the system, not to mention the necessity for female staff in both primary and secondary schools.⁵

A number of issues emerge from the above quotation. It would seem that even though the Ministry was aware that girls lagged behind boys in education attainment, the plan insisted on an impartial procedure of selection for secondary school. The only allowance made was in Day Secondary Schools where minor adjustments were made to ensure that girls made up a third of all selected candidates. This means that in national secondary schools boys and girls competed on equal footing despite the obstacles that girls faced. One can also take issue with the reasons put forward for increasing the number of girls in day secondary schools. According to the above quotation, two reasons have been advanced. These are, to achieve a sex balance in the stock of educated people and the production of female staff for both primary and secondary schools. One wonders the kind of balance the Ministry had in mind bearing in mind that

⁵ Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A summary, pp. 2 - 3.

girls/women were going to make up only a third of the educated personnel. It is also interesting to note that the major career path which the Ministry envisioned for girls was teaching in secondary and primary schools. This means that the Ministry still cast women in the stereotypical nurturing profession of teaching.

Based on the overview given in the preceding chapter on the social, economic and political background in Malawi in the 1960s, one would have expected specific provisions on girls' education clearly laid down in the EDP. It is clear from the historical background that the MCP led government and Dr. Banda himself were aware of the importance of education for girls. To begin with, as already indicated, the MCP produced a Manifesto in 1961. This document clearly specified plans for improving the education of women and girls once the country got independent. It is the argument of this study that this important document was still relevant in the early 1970s and available to the officials who framed the first EDP.

Furthermore, Dr. Banda's token gesture in the 1960s of encouraging girls to stay in school through the provision of bursaries is another point worthy considering. As pointed out in chapter two, Dr. Banda set aside the Kamuzu Bursary Scheme for secondary school pupils. However in this scheme, Dr. Banda deliberately gave more bursaries to girls than boys because he was aware that due to the financial problems that most families faced as well as cultural barriers, many parents preferred to pay school

fees for their sons than for daughters. One would therefore have expected a policy in the EDP for example, exempting girls from paying school fees. This would have given more girls access to education than the bursaries that Kamuzu gave to few girls.

In addition, reports and recommendations of commissions of inquiry on girls' education conducted in the colonial period such as the Gwilliam-Read (1947), Binns (1951), Gwilliam (1956) and Phillips (1960) also informed the independent government of the special needs of girls' education. Among other recommendations, these reports emphasised the revolutionary change of attitude towards the education of girls. As already noted, recommendations of these commissions influenced the content of the colonial government's 1957 to 1961 plan for education. The plan in question clearly stated that government would provide equality of education opportunity for boys and girls. With this background therefore, one would have expected a fuller treatment of girls' education in the first EDP. This begs the question why the EDP was silent on the issue of girls' education. The rest of this chapter is devoted to addressing this question.

In chapter two we looked at the political, social and economic context in Malawi in the 1960s and early 1970s. For example, we discussed the independence struggles and the aftermath of the Cabinet Crisis, modernisation theory, societal attitudes towards women and the relationship between the state and women. It is the argument of this chapter that this context influenced the construction of the EDP of 1973 – 1980. This chapter argues

that one of the major reasons the first EDP was silent on girls' education was the influence of the modernisation theory of development that Malawi followed in the first decades of independence. We noted in chapter two that in modernisation theory education is considered a tool for economic development. As a developing nation Malawi needed skilled personnel to facilitate development endeavours. This explains why in the 1960s and early 1970s government constructed more schools in various parts of the country. It needs to be pointed out however, that critics of modernisation have faulted the theory for not analysing society using a class based approach.⁶ In other words, the theory simply distinguishes society as either traditional or modern and treats people uniformly in each society. This is problematic because in both modern and traditional society, people belong to different categories, which the theory ignores. It simply homogenises people. While modernisation glosses over many factors that differentiate people, it is of particular interest to this study that gender differences are lost in the dualistic approach inherent in the theory. We noted in the preceding chapters that from the colonial period girls lagged behind boys in the attainment of education. Yet objectives and priorities of government stipulated in the Development Plans, Policies and Programmes of the 1960s and early 1970s provided for an education system that did not cater for gender-based differences. Put differently, the objectives

⁶ See: J. McKay, "Reassessing Development Theory: Modernization and Beyond," in D. Kingsbury, J. Remenyi, J. McKay & J. Hunt (eds.), Key Issues in Development (Palgrave: New York, 2004), pp. 45 – 66; B. Bull, "Development Theory Revisited," in D. Banik (ed.), Poverty, Politics and Development: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (Fagbokforlaget: Bergen, 2006), pp. 28 – 552; U. Kothari & M. Minogue, "Critical Perspectives on Development: An Introduction," in U. Kothari & M. Minogue, (eds.), Development Theory and Practice (Palgrave: Hampshire, 2002), pp. 1 – 15.

and priorities simply stressed general education without addressing differences between boys and girls in the attainment of education. This is in line with modernisation thought. Architects of the theory were interested in an education system that produced educated people regardless of their sex.

Other scholars have gone further to argue that in most cases, modernisation did not benefit women. These scholars maintain that not only did modernisation make women's contribution to the economy invisible, but it also often worsened women's status and position in society. This is because they were not given access to education or technology and were often prevented from enjoying the rights they had acquired earlier as a result of the modernisation process.⁷ As Remenyi rightly concludes, "no matter how hard one might search, it is almost impossible to find development literature before 1970 that accorded any special importance to the role of women or gender issues in development."⁸ No wonder the first Education Development Plan that was influenced by modernisation theory did not offer specific guidelines for girls' education and indeed for any special group because according to modernisation theory such groups are homogenised in both traditional and modern societies.

⁷ See E. Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970).

⁸ J. Remenyi, "What is Development?" in D. Kingsbury, J. Remenyi, J. McKay & J. Hunt (eds.), Key Issues in Development (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 38.

That the first EDP was influenced by modernisation theory is clearly reflected in the first objective of the plan. The objective reads, "to base education development particularly beyond primary level to the manpower requirements of the economy for social and economic development."⁹ In line with modernisation theory, this means that the plan was geared towards the production of potential workers. In other words, the plan did not recognise and address the problems that vulnerable groups such as girls faced in acquiring education.

Furthermore, with one exception where mention is made of increasing the number of girls selected to day secondary school by a ratio of 3: 1, reading through the document, it is clear that the plan was not targeted at any specific group of people in society. Boys benefited from this education more than girls not necessarily because the first EDP favoured them. Other factors such as societal attitudes and the legacy of mission education worked to their advantage. The first EDP was unlike mission education that explicitly stated that education was for boys who would assume leadership in the church and provide skilled labour in the civil service and other sectors of colonial society.

We noted that the 1960s and early 1970s were an independence decade. During this period, the newly independent nation of Malawi had priorities. Of these, the need to modernise or to achieve economic development based on the European model, featured

⁹ Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 - 1995, p. 10.

highly. This is not surprising, especially in light of the fact that independent nations like Malawi were in a sense a reaction to the colonisation Africa and indeed other parts of the Third World witnessed. Among other things, Africans wanted to show their colonial masters that they too could evolve from traditional to modern societies. A look at Malawi government development plans for this period indicates that its efforts were geared towards achieving economic development.¹⁰ The field of education was no exception. Government was interested in an education system that facilitated the realisation of its goal of achieving economic development. It was a system that aimed at producing skilled workers to propel economic development regardless of their sex.

Societal attitudes also played a part in shaping the first Education Development Plan. From the time education was introduced in the mid 1870s through the 1960s to the 1970s, not many girls went to school. A number of scholars have examined factors that accounted for this.¹¹ Prominent among such factors is the negative attitude that most societies had towards girls' education. Three informants testify to this fact.

during the time when we went to school, I remember
my uncle quarrelled with my father for sending me to

¹⁰ See for example: The 1962 – 65 Development Plan; The 1968 – 70 Development Programme; The 1965 – 1969 Development Plan & Statement of Development Policies 1971 – 80 (DEVPOL 1).

¹¹ See I.C. Lamba "African Women's Education in Malawi 1875 – 1952 in Journal of Educational Administration Vol. 14, No. 1 (1982), pp. 46 – 53 and D. Whitehead, "The education of women and girls: An aspect of British Colonial Policy," in Journal of Education Administration and History Vol. 16, (1984), pp. 24 – 32.

school. For people then, educating girls was a waste of time. My uncle wanted bride price.¹²

in the old days, people thought education was not for girls. They thought the woman's place was in the home, they did not see education as important for girls. They would get married and be somebody's responsibility.¹³

It was not necessary to educate a woman because a woman's job is clearly defined by nature, that is, to look after children and husband. The role of a woman was to cook for a man. The place of a woman was in the kitchen.¹⁴

We have argued above that modernisation theory to a larger extent influenced the content of the first EDP. We must appreciate also that the framers of the plan came from a society which did not believe in educating girls. This means that modernisation theory and societal attitudes reinforced each other to influence the production of an education plan that ignored gender-based differences. It is also interesting to note that the foreword to the first EDP emphasised the functional nature of the education system. The foreword reads:

Given that the formal education system is a major instrument for satisfying the manpower needs of the economy, the present plan is a reflection of government's concern to ensure that education is developed along lines

¹² Interview with Alexina Chimzimu on 29/08/06. She was a student at Chancellor College in 1966.

¹³ Interview with Dora Mwalwenje on 29/8/06.

¹⁴ Interview with Fritz Kadyoma on 4/7/06.

which are not wasteful of resources and are in national interest.¹⁵

It is obvious from this quotation that the education system was meant to satisfy the manpower needs of the economy. This already sidelined girls' education because even though we noted in chapter two that employers were willing to train and employ girls and women, due to a number of factors this was not always possible. Such factors include mission education, gendering of production and urban areas as male and reproduction and rural areas as female. Therefore societal attitudes towards women implied that most wage workers were male. If women were the major providers of manpower needs, that would have been reflected in the EDP.

Furthermore, this study maintains that the first EDP was a reflection of the reality on the ground. Both oral and written sources indicate that due to numerous factors not many girls went to school. As such framers of the EDP were not under pressure to formulate a policy to guide girls' education. The following quotations emphasise this point:

as I said already, we had a scenario where there were few girls in primary school and only a few did well in school. This resulted in a situation where government at secondary school level decided to construct more hostels for boys than for girls. When this situation changed government built more schools for girls.¹⁶

¹⁵ Malawi Government, Education Development Plan, 1985 – 1995, p. iii.

¹⁶ Interview with Charles M. Gunsaru, Director, Malawi Institute of Education, Domasi, Zomba, on 7/8/06.

in the past when government said 1:3 ratio of selection of boys and girls into secondary school, it was being accepted that because we do not have enough girls, let us have less space. This was just in response to the times when these things were in place (sic).¹⁷

in the old days because people thought education was not necessary for girls, facilities were not provided. And later when people discovered education was important for girls, they formulated better policies.¹⁸

In addition, the economic situation of Malawi in the 1960s and early 1970s also influenced the content of the first EDP. As noted in chapter two, government operated within limited resources. Consequently, developing a plan that offered a seemingly gender neutral education system was cost effective. It is the argument of this study that constructing a plan that catered for the needs of girls would have gone contrary to "government's concern to ensure that education is developed along lines which are not wasteful of resources..."¹⁹ We are maintaining this because one of the problems coming out clearly from our discussion on the political and socio-economic context of Malawi is the low levels of enrolment among girls. This was partly because parents could not afford to send all their children (boys and girls) to school due to financial problems. Influenced by societal attitudes such parents preferred to educate boys to girls. We also noted that Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda aware of the problem girls faced introduced bursaries

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview with Dora Mwalwenje, Assistant Peace corps Director of Education, Lilongwe, on 29/8/06.

¹⁹ Malawi Government, Education Development Plan, 1985 – 1995, p. iii.

for some secondary school girls. Had this trend translated into policy, girls would have enjoyed free education. This is what in fact happened towards the end of Dr. Banda's reign with the introduction of Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) Project in 1991. This project aimed at increasing girls' attainment (defined as access, persistence and completion) in primary education. Through the influence of GABLE, the government implemented policies to increase access and persistence of girls in primary education. Such policies included fee waivers for non-repeating girls and the launching of a social mobilisation campaign to change attitudes and elicit parental and community support for girls' education.²⁰ Furthermore, the government increased its budget allocation to the educational sector particularly primary education. However, these policies would not have been launched and implemented in the 1960s and early 1970s considering the stringent budget government operated on. Needless to state, this would have been an expense government was not prepared to incur, especially bearing in mind that it was committed to control expenditure on education.

While it is true that the first EDP was silent on girls' education we need to note that in practice girls' education received some special attention in the period under review than the formal document indicates. For example, in 1974 a positive move to improve and expand girls' education was carried out. A policy was introduced to transfer upper form

²⁰ H. Herbert, W. Millsap & N. El-sanabary, Summative Evaluation of USAID's Malawi – Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) Project No. 612 – 0240 (The Mitchell Group, Inc, Lilongwe, Malawi, May 30, 2002), p. 5.

girls from mixed secondary schools to single sex schools. This necessitated the expansion of all girls secondary schools to 4 4 2 2 or preferably 3 3 3 3. As an official of the Ministry of Education noted,

presently there are eight girls' secondary schools: Providence, Stella Maris, St. Mary's, Lilongwe Girls', Likuni Girls', Ludzi Girls, Nkhamenya Girls' and Marymount. Lilongwe Girls' is fully developed to 3 3 3 3 and increased enrolment can only be possible by increasing class sizes. The rest are underdeveloped varying in size between 11 and 2 2 1 1.²¹

Even though the document consulted did not provide reasons for this move, it would seem that the Ministry of Education realised that girls performed better in single sex secondary schools than in mixed schools. As Hanna Kawalewale a seasoned educationist remembered,

the idea was that if you had girls in their own separate schools, they did well. In those days there were only four national government secondary schools – Mzuzu Government, Lilongwe Girls, Dedza and Blantyre secondary schools. Girls in Lilongwe Girls' Secondary did better than those in Blantyre Secondary School.²²

Furthermore, most mixed schools were day secondary schools. Most girls in these schools travelled long distances to attend school. To solve this problem, communities built hostels on self-help basis. However as Kawalewale noted, this presented another problem.

²¹ MNA DP4/12/ZA A.L.S. Shawa, Implementation of Education Plan 1973/80, p.1.

²² Interview with Hanna Kawalewale, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Lilongwe, on 28/8/06.

The hostels were sub-standard. Consequently girls resorted to renting accommodation near secondary schools. This was not good because girls were not protected in these places. Later on girls were removed from most day secondary schools.²³

This necessitated government to expand existing girls' secondary schools to accommodate girls who were transferred from mixed day secondary schools.

It was not only the Ministry of Education that implemented measures to improve girls' education in the period under review. Appreciating the gap that existed between boys and girls in the attainment of education, other stakeholders introduced interventions that addressed girls' special needs in education. For example, we noted in chapter two that the MCP successfully encouraged parents to send their daughters to school.²⁴

In light of this, we need to go beyond the official document, the first EDP, in order to understand the history of girls' education during the plan period, 1973 – 1980. As shown above, the EDP paints a picture of negligence of girls' education. In practice however, some interventions were done by government agencies and local communities to develop and improve girls' education. It is important to be broadminded in the analysis of the situation of girls' education to avoid misrepresentation.

²³ Interview with Kawalewale on 28/8/06.

²⁴ See section on Women and the State, p. 21.

In this chapter we noted that the first EDP was largely silent on girls' education as it did not lay down any guidelines to direct the education of girls. The chapter has argued that this was due to a number of factors mainly modernisation theory of development, societal attitudes and financial constraints. Specifically the chapter has demonstrated that though modernisation regarded education as a tool for economic development, the architects of the theory were interested in an education system that produced educated people regardless of their sex. Societal attitudes also played a part in shaping the first EDP. From the time education was introduced to the 1960s, not many girls went to school. Education for this class of people was not valued much by society because of the mentality that the place of women was the kitchen. It has also been argued that based on the limited finances the government of Malawi operated with in the 1960s and early 1970s it was cost effective for government to plan for an education system that was seemingly gender neutral. This explains why the EDP was silent on issues of girls' education. However, in the 1970s and early 1980s, the social, political and economic situation in Malawi as well as the world changed. It will be interesting to find out how this changed situation influenced the content of the second EDP (1985 – 1995). We turn to this in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

THE SECOND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 1985 -1995

The Malawi government formulated the second EDP to guide education development for the period 1985 to 1995. Unlike the first EDP which we discussed in the previous chapter, the second EDP contained some specific guidelines for girls' education. Perhaps what is also important to note is that during the plan period (1985 – 1995), a number of important programmes and interventions were introduced that greatly changed the system of education in general and girls' education in particular. It is the argument of this chapter that the change in mentality and approach reflects development in the historical context of the 1970s and early 1980s Malawi. The chapter seeks therefore to examine the political, social, economic and cultural circumstances under which the second EDP and its follow up interventions and programmes were formulated. To this effect, the chapter looks at the influence of the United Nations (UN) World Women's Conferences on women's and girls' education. It then examines the paradigm shift in development thinking from modernization to the alternative development approach and the impact this had on education. The chapter also explores societal attitudes towards women in the 1970s to early 1980s. As the account below demonstrates, all these factors translated into an education plan and interventions that responded to the needs of girls' education.

The overall objective of the second EDP was "the consolidation of policy so that a proper balance is maintained in the levels of physical and human resources allocated to all levels of the education system."¹

Specifically, the policy aimed at achieving the following:

- (i) the equalization of educational opportunity;
the promotion of efficiency in the system;
- (ii) the improvement of physical and human
resources;
- (iii) the judicious use of limited resources.²

It is important to note that the second EDP like the first EDP recognized education as a catalyst for economic development. This, according to the architects of the plan, reflected the reality that Malawi was still a developing nation. For the plan period therefore, education would mainly serve economic development rather than social demand. Below was government's plan for secondary education:

opportunities will remain geared to serving economic development rather than social demand. This means that there will continue to be limited access to full time secondary education for primary school leavers.³

¹ Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A Summary, (Domasi: MIE, 1985), p. 2.

² Ibid.

³ Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A Summary, p. 5.

Another important point to note is that by the end of the first EDP period, the social demand for education had exceeded supply. This partly resulted from the positive response of parents to appeals by political leaders and educators to enroll children in school.⁴ The framers of the plan also noted that the problem of failure on the part of the education system to meet the social demand for education was “likely to persist well into the next century.”⁵ This was because of limited resources allocated to the field of education. Below is a table showing trends in pupil enrolment at primary and secondary school levels from 1964 to 1984.

TABLE 1: Pupil Enrolment at Primary and Secondary School Levels, 1964 – 1984

LEVEL	1964	1974	1984
<u>Primary</u>			
(i) Total enrolment	359,841	537,301	868,849
(ii) Girls	129,735	208,458	367,262
(iii) Girls as % total	36	39	42
<u>Secondary</u>			
(i) Total enrolment	5,951	13,779	19,832
(ii) Girls	1,602	3,824	5,720
(iii) Girls as % total	27	28	29

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A Summary..., p.3.

⁴ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵ Ibid.

From the above table, it is clear that the numbers of enrolment steadily increased from 1964 to 1984. This included numbers of girls even though overall girls still lagged behind boys in attaining education.

Bearing in mind that the government was failing to supply education to meet the demand, especially post-primary education, the second EDP was driven by two major considerations. First, maintaining a proper balance in the amounts of resources allocated to each level in the system that is, primary, secondary and tertiary and achieving equity of access to educational services for all communities in the nation.⁶ It can be deduced from this that the second EDP was interested in ensuring that none of the three levels of education got the lion's share of the limited resources allocated to education. It also aimed at equally distributing educational opportunities to all communities in the country. This means that "the equalization of educational opportunity" captured in specific objective number one above was not intended to redress disparities in education attainment between boys and girls.

However, it is interesting to note that unlike the first EDP, the second EDP did make explicit references to girls' education under its intentions for secondary education. Here the plan proposed the following:

⁶ Ministry of Education and Culture, Education Development Plan 1985 – 1995: A Summary, p.1.

Continue to select students for full time secondary education on the following basis; (i) district by district order of merit performance in a public examination (separately for boys and for girls.⁷

In addition, under technical-vocational education, the Ministry was committed to “provide for the enrolment of women in a wider range of appropriate technical-vocational subjects.”⁸

A comparison between the first and second EDP reveals that the latter planned to give expanded educational opportunities to girls. As indicated above, girls competed amongst themselves in each district for selection into secondary schools. This means that girls who did better than others in the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination in each district were selected into secondary school without comparing their performance to that of boys. This was unlike the restrictive 1:3 ratio of selection into day secondary schools implied in the first EDP. Furthermore, the second EDP provided for the enrolment of women in a wider range of technical-vocational subjects. This was a great departure from the first EDP which emphasized the production of female primary and secondary school teachers, thereby casting women and girls in their stereotypical roles as nurturers and caregivers. As noted above, the chapter submits that the difference in the treatment of girls’ education between the first and second EDPs

⁷ Ibid, p. 6.

⁸ Ibid, p. 9.

reflected the different contexts in which they were constructed. Consequently, we now turn to a comprehensive examination of the historical context in which the second EDP was formulated.

The Making of the Second EDP: The Historical Context

United Nations World Conferences on Women and other International Conferences

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1975 held the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City between 19 June and 2 July. This conference coincided with the International Women's Year that was observed in the same year to remind the world of the persistent problem of discrimination against women. The conference adopted a World Plan of Action with the theme: Equality, Development and Peace. Three specific objectives were identified to achieve this theme. Of particular interest to this study is the objective which aimed at achieving full gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination. Inherent in the Plan of Action were recommendations to improve women's health, education and employment status. Thus according to the objective cited above, there had to be full gender equality and elimination of gender discrimination in the provision of health, education and employment facilities and opportunities. The World Plan of Action urged the UN General Assembly to declare the period 1976-1985 as the Decade for Women during which it would achieve its theme and recommendations. After the Mexico conference,

Governments, UN agencies, non-governmental agencies and individuals responded actively to the goals of the Decade: Equity, Development and Peace and to raise funds for projects to benefit disadvantaged women in developing countries,⁹

Following this, a number of international conferences seminars and meetings were held to discuss ways and strategies of achieving the goals of the World Plan of Action. Malawi attended such forums.

The second World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women was held in Copenhagen, Denmark from 14th to 30th July in 1980. The aim of this meeting was to review and evaluate progress made and obstacles encountered in attaining the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women in the first half of the decade. The other aim was to draw a programme of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for women. "The conference was attended by representatives of 145 member states, including 44 states of the African region."¹⁰ Malawi was one of the African countries that attended the conference. The discussions were based on fifty reports prepared by the UN covering all aspects of the status of women. The reports were based on information provided by 93 governments on the condition of women in their countries, supplemented by information from UN organizations and academic and research

⁹ MNA 3/56/Vol.II: Leticia R. Shanani, United Nations (6 Dec 1982):United Nations Decade for Women 1976 – 1985 – Official Commemorative Coin Programme, p. 1

¹⁰ MNA 3/56: Economic Commission for Africa, The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, Copenhagen, Denmark, 14 – 30 July, 1980: Its implications for the African Region, p.1.

sources. Summarizing the reports in her keynote address Ms Lucille Mair, Secretary General of the World Conference,

pointed out that the achievements of the last five years permitted no complacency. Although more women were employed, they were still confined to poorly paid, low-status and insecure jobs. Because there had been no redefinition of economic activity, the contribution of women was still ignored in official statistics. In education and training, women lagged behind and parity with men had not been achieved, although there was an increase in female enrolment. The content of education continued to reinforce attitudes that prevented women from improving their situation. In many countries, the illiteracy rates of women remained much higher than those of men. Progress made in the field of health was not satisfactory¹¹

In general from the reports discussed, the conference recognized that although considerable effort had been made, progress had been insufficient to bring about the desired changes in the status of women. To address the situation, the conference adopted a Programme of Action for the second half of the Decade with the theme Equality, Development and Peace and sub-themes as health, education and employment.

The conference adopted 48 resolutions which supplemented the Programme of Action and focused on issues that the conference felt needed special attention. Only two resolutions will be cited here as they directly apply to this study. Resolution 30 promoted equality in education and training and called on governments to intensify their

¹¹ Ibid. p. 5.

efforts to eradicate illiteracy and introduce programmes giving technical training to women. In resolution 28, "on the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, all states were called upon to sign and ratify the convention if they had not already done so."¹²

As regards resolution 30 on education, the conference emphasized equal training and educational opportunities at all levels for girls and women and set priorities along a number of areas. First, "the provision of innovative programmes for the eradication of illiteracy and to upgrade functional skills and basic information about employment education."¹³ Second, promoting the participation of women in science and technology through appropriate training. Third, where possible, free and compulsory education at primary level. Fourth, the expansion of educational resources, personnel and funds for the education and training of women.

The third UN World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi from 15th to 26th July at the close of the decade in 1985. The conference aimed at evaluating progress made during the Decade for Women and devising a new course of action for the advancement of women. It was noted at this conference that though "substantial progress had been

¹² MNA 3/56: Economic Commission for Africa, The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Copenhagen, Denmark, 14 to 30 July 1980, p17.

¹³ MNA 3/56: Report on the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality Development and Peace held in Copenhagen, Denmark from 14th July to 30th July 1980, in Integration of Women in Development, p. 6.

made in the last ten years, it was clear that there was still a great deal to be done”¹⁴ The conference therefore had the duty of finding new ways or strategies of overcoming the obstacles for achieving the objectives of the decade: equality, development and peace. Consequently, the conference adopted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women from 1986 to the year 2000. This was a blue print for action to guide governments in dealing with the obstacles encountered in the Decade for women. It emphasized promotion and maintenance of peace, eradication of violence against women, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and participation of women in efforts to promote peace and development. At the same time, it contained specific recommendations for gender empowerment in regard to health, education and employment.¹⁵ In the field of education, the document put forward a number of recommendations to improve the status of women as follows:

- The adoption of measures to revise and adapt women’s education to the realities of the developing world and to increase equal access to scientific, technical and vocational education particularly for young women.
- Provision of measures by government with support from the international community and organizations, especially UNESCO to eliminate high rates of illiteracy by the year 2000.

¹⁴ 1985 World Conference on Women, Nairobi, Kenya, July 15 – 26, “The Third World Conference on Women to Review and appraise the achievement of UN Decade for Women and NGO Forum,” http://www.5wwc.org/conference_background/1985_WCW.html (accessed February 10, 2008), p. 1.

¹⁵ Ibid

- Address causes of high absenteeism and dropout rates of girls in schools. Governments were also encouraged to finance adult education programmes.
- The equitable distribution of available scholarships, boarding and lodging facilities and other forms of support from governmental, non-governmental and private resources to boys and girls.
- The examination of curricula, textbooks and other educational materials in public and private schools and retraining of educational personnel to eliminate all discriminatory gender stereotyping in education. Educational institutions were also encouraged to expand their curricula to include studies on women's contribution to all aspects of development.
- Encouraging, counseling and giving girls incentives to study scientific, technical and managerial subjects at all levels in order to develop and enhance aptitudes of women for decision-making, management and leadership in these fields.
- Diversify women's vocational education and training in order to extend their opportunities for employment in occupations that were non-traditional but important to development. It was emphasized that the then educational system that was sharply divided by sex with girls doing home economics and boys studying technical subjects had to be altered.
- It is the argument of this study that these recommendations influenced policy formulation and interventions in education in many participating governments including Malawi.

In addition to the world conferences, Malawi attended other workshops and conferences during the Decade for Women that echoed the resolutions and recommendations of the world conferences. The most important ones that tackled the issue of education for girls were the workshop held from 29th June to 4th July in Kabwe, Zambia, a conference held in Harare, Zimbabwe between 16th and 19th November 1982 and a national conference held from 19th to 22nd July 1982 in Malawi. The Kabwe workshop was organised by the Pan African Institute for Development East and Southern Africa in collaboration with UNICEF and Economic Commission for Africa Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (ECA/MULPOC).¹⁶ This workshop was part of the World crusades for the integration of women in all forms of development. Among other issues, members discussed constraints that hinder the full participation of women in education such as illiteracy, shortage of training facilities (for example, number of schools for girls and number of dormitories.), drop-out rate in higher education and manpower planning and development.¹⁷ After considering these constraints, the workshop made a number of recommendations and requested governments to implement them systematically. It was recommended that community education should be intensified through mass media and films to change traditional attitudes of giving boys priority in education and early marriage for girls. Furthermore, workload of women in rural areas

¹⁶ MNA 3/36 Vol. III: Report on the Workshop on the Impact of Government Policies, Structures and Programmes on the Involvement of Women in Development held from 29th June to 4th July, 1981, at Kabwe, Zambia, P. 1.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

was to be minimized by introducing appropriate technology which would enable women to attend literacy classes. In addition, wherever possible, governments were encouraged to provide free education at all levels and to provide more schools for girls with adequate dormitory facilities. Governments were further urged to provide more vocational training facilities, for instance in farming, carpentry and handicrafts which were practical and relevant to the community way of living.¹⁸

The discussions of the Harare conference were not very different from those of the Kabwe workshop. This conference was entitled *Women in Southern Africa: Strategies for Change*. On the issue of education, the conference was concerned with three major weaknesses in most formal education systems which affect girls. First, the education offered tended to direct girls into the stereotyped roles of women. Second, the education did not relate theory to real life situations and needs. Third, adult women had little opportunity to obtain formal school qualifications. Resulting from a discussion of these problems, the conference came up with a number of solutions which were called 'strategies for change' rather than 'recommendations' because the applicability and details for implementation will vary according to the particular community and national context¹⁹ First, it was recommended that formal schooling should have a core

¹⁸ MNA 3/36 Vol. III: Report on the Workshop on the Impact of Government Policies, Structures and Programmes on the Involvement of Women in Development..., p.5.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.3.

curriculum geared to real life needs for both boys and girls and that Home Economics should be offered to both boys and girls. Second, there was need for provision of career guidance for girls in formal education to ensure that they should not enter the 'feminine' careers such as nursing, teaching and secretarial work merely because they were unaware of the range of options. Third, it was recommended that some correspondence courses for formal qualifications should include material relevant to the needs and interests of adult women. Forth, financial support should be made available to girls to assist them to acquire secondary education where finance is a barrier. Furthermore, it was recommended that provision be made available to enable school girls who dropped out of school because they became mothers to continue their education and institutions offering technical and tertiary education were urged to include a quota of girls or women in courses.²⁰

Similarly, Malawi hosted an international workshop, which among other things tabled the issue of girls' education. Emphasis was put on the problem of out-of-school girls and women's education. It was recommended to intensify efforts to give these two social groups vocational training to enable them to be gainfully employed. Literacy programmes were also recommended for the women.

²⁰ MNA 3/36 Vol. III: Report on the Workshop on the Impact of Government Policies, Structures and Programmes on the Involvement of Women in Development..., P.8.

Resulting from the recommendations of the UN Women's World Conferences, the Malawi government in 1981 approved a study to be carried out on behalf of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) funded by the UN on Women's Issues and National Development Plans in Malawi. The study titled *Women, Planning and Policy* carried out by Dr. David Hirschman was published in 1984. The study focused on three major areas on women's issues. First, it looked at the role of women in society in terms of occupation, their level of education in comparison with men and the attitudes of society towards women. Second, the research focused on the participation of women in planning and policy making. It analysed the civil service planning machinery, the parliament and District Development Committees to find out the level of participation of women in these areas. Last, the study focused on plans and policies in government that related to women. Ten planning documents of the government were analysed to find out if they made reference to women and took care of needs of women.

Of particular interest to this study are the findings and recommendations of the research on the education of girls. One of the findings of the research was that there was a high illiteracy rate of about 80 per cent among women and only 5 or 6 per cent were classified as semi-literate. Comparatively, the illiteracy rate among men was at 61 per cent with 7 to 8 per cent classified semi-literate.²¹ Another finding was that girls left school early for a number of reasons that included parental attitudes, early pregnancies

²¹ Hirschman, *Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi*, p. 5.

and marriages. Furthermore, the research found out that in terms of choice of careers, girls tended "to select from a very narrow range mainly teaching, nursing and secretarial jobs."²² There was a widespread feeling among girls that many careers were open to men only and that certain subjects essential to certain types of careers for example, mathematics and the sciences were masculine subjects.²³

The study made a number of recommendations based on these findings. The first recommendation was research into various issues pertaining to girls' education. Specifically, Hirschman's study urged the Ministry of Education to study the impact of the wider social environment on girls' education. Another area of research was the factors that forced girls to leave school prematurely and strategies to curb the problem. Yet another area of interest was the resistance of girls to science subjects including mathematics, which were prerequisites to many professional and technical oriented careers.

The second recommendation referred to the issue of selection of girls into secondary school. It was recommended to retain bias in favour of girls. "Given the problems girls face in successfully completing primary school, this bias makes sense. The one-third

²² Ibid, p. 33.

²³ Ibid.

ratio should be maintained in the meanwhile, neither raised nor lowered.”²⁴ The third recommendation concerned the provision of career guidance and counseling by the Ministry of Education to pupils from an early stage in their education to enable them select relevant subjects to their future careers. The forth recommendation dealt with the problem of stereotyping of sex roles prevalent in school textbooks. The Ministry of education was urged to guard against the impact of the hidden curriculum in books.

The values and attitudes which pupils absorb from these reinforce the sorts of problems girls face in taking more effective advantage of their schooling and later operating more competitively and equally with men in the economy.²⁵

Also, it was recommended that at village level, parents should be encouraged to send daughters to school. The MCP and other agencies as well as government departments were asked to devise strategies to encourage parents to leave their daughters in school for as long as possible. For example, imploring homecraft workers, community development assistants and agricultural trainers to devote a short talk every now and then to this topic.²⁶ In addition, the study recommended discussing at a National Workshop on Women and Education issues of urgent importance in the area of women and education. The workshop would involve not only the Ministry of Education but other ministries as well which had their own training institutions such as Community

²⁴ Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi, p. 45.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 46.

²⁶ Ibid.

Development, Health, Agriculture and Youth. "Such a workshop would look not only at schools but also other institutions, literacy campaigns and the broader social factors affecting women's education."²⁷

It is apparent from the discussion above that the two provisions on girls' education namely, separate selection of girls into secondary school and enrolment of women in technical vocational training contained in the second EDP and interventions on girls' education that were implemented during the plan period were directly influenced by the recommendations of the conferences and findings of the study on women's issues in Malawi by Hirschman. For example, the issue of vocational-technical training for women was emphasized in the second and third Women's World Conferences as well as the Kabwe workshop. Similarly, almost all the conferences stressed equal opportunities in the provision of secondary education for both boys and girls. The Harare conference even recommended the provision of financial support to girls to assist them acquire secondary education in cases where finances were a barrier. The role of the conferences and the study by Hirschman in influencing interventions on girls' education will become clear below when we discuss the various programmes that were implemented during the plan period.

²⁷ Hirschman, Women, Planning and Policy in Malawi, p. 46.

Alternative development

We argued in chapter three that principles of modernisation theory of development played an influential role in the construction of the first EDP. This theory guided development thinking in Malawi and most parts of the World from the mid 1940s to the 1960s. Following decades of development and its consequences on the people, it was discovered that modernisation brought negative outcomes such as rural-urban disparities, socio-economic disparities whereby rich people became richer while the poor became poorer, and the inequality between men and women became wider.²⁸ Thus modernisation failed to address poverty and inequality (failure of trickle down).²⁹ Due to these weaknesses, “in the early 1970s, international thinking about development shifted from a preoccupation with economic growth to a broader concern with poverty reduction and redistribution with growth.”³⁰ Consequently, a new paradigm in development thinking termed “Alternative Development” emerged.

Integral to this was the ‘basic needs strategy’ with its primary purpose of meeting the ‘basic needs’ of the majority which includes food, clothing, shelter and fuel, as well as social needs such as education, human rights

²⁸ P.N.W., Namphande, “Choice or Deprivation? Primary School Dropouts in Malawi: The case of Kasungu District,” (MA Thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU, Trondheim, 2007, pp. 31-32).

²⁹ N. Kanji, Mind the gap: Mainstreaming Gender and Participation in Development (International Institute for Environment and Development and Institute for Development Studies, 2003), p. 21.
<http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/9259 IIED.pdf> (accessed 20/3/2008).

³⁰ Ibid.

and participation in social life through employment and political involvement.³¹

Even though elements of modernization thinking still informed the second EDP as argued above, this study maintains that the principles of this new approach to development influenced the construction of the second EDP, especially its follow-up interventions and programmes. We noted that the achievement of "equality" was at the core of the alternative development. In other words, the approach aimed at achieving equality between the rich and poor, rural and urban and men and women in its development endeavors and in meeting both basic and social needs of the majority. Education is one of the social needs that has the potential to bring about equality among people. Consequently, most countries in the world including Malawi that were following this approach to development attempted to provide equal opportunities to education for their people. This partly explains why the first specific objective of the second EDP emphasized 'the equalization of educational opportunity'. It is not surprising therefore that special attention was given to girls' education in the EDP and many interventions in girls' education were implemented during the lifespan of the EDP. For instance, special attention was paid to the selection procedure of girls into secondary school as well as to the enrolment of women/girls in a wider range of appropriate technical-vocational subjects. The technical-vocational subjects were the

³¹ D. Ghai, 1978 in Kanji, N., Mind the Gap: Mainstreaming Gender and Participation in Development. (International Institute for Environment and Development and Institute for Development Studies, 2003), p. 21. <http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/9259 IIED.pdf> (accessed 20/3/2008).

domain of boys and men before the formulation of the second EDP. The second EDP therefore contained guidelines on girls' and women's education in response to the principles and requirements of alternative development approach that demanded equality in the provision of social services, including education.

Furthermore, as pointed out above, alternative development approach was concerned with poverty reduction as opposed to economic growth and accumulation. The provision of education to the majority was emphasized in the approach as education is basic to human development. "The relationship between education and poverty reduction is very clear: educated people have higher income earning potential, and are better able to improve the quality of their lives."³² What is more, people with at least basic education participate more actively in local and national governments through voting and community development. In addition, educated people are less likely to be marginalized because they are empowered to gain control of their lives.

The combination of increased earning ability, political and social empowerment, and enhanced capacity to participate in community governance is a powerful instrument for helping break the poverty cycle. In fact, education is a primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities.³³

³² Asian Development Bank, "Policy on Education," (August, 2002), p. 2
<http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/education/educ0300.asp?=&policies> (accessed 20/3/2008).

³³ Ibid.

Malawi, as one of the poorest countries in the world emphasised education for its people in order to reduce poverty and bring about development. However, in most African countries including Malawi, women are more vulnerable to poverty than men due to their lack of or little education and this has debilitating consequences for themselves, their families in general and their children in particular.³⁴ For instance, in Malawi, it was noted that

more women than men contribute to the incomes of the poorest households. Thirty per cent of Malawi's rural households are headed by women and belong to the poorest segments of the population. The poverty context thus suggests that the most pressing economic needs are experienced by poor rural and urban women.³⁵

Any long term strategy to reduce poverty therefore had to target women. Education was no exception. This necessitated the laying down of guidelines in the second EDP for girls'/women's education. The idea was that educated women were better equipped than the uneducated ones to break the poverty circle.

Societal attitudes towards women

We noted in chapter three that societal attitudes towards women during the 1960s and early 1970s influenced the content of the first EDP. Similarly, societal attitudes towards women from the mid 1970s to early 1980s provided some context for the formulation of

³⁴ United Nation in Malawi and Malawi Government, Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi (Lilongwe, 1993), p.xxii.

³⁵ Ibid. pp. iii & 45.

the second EDP. Sources consulted present an ambivalent picture of the way society viewed women.

On the one hand, the media presented women as care-takers of homes responsible for cooking, caring for children and agriculture. This is evident from the numerous home craft courses featured in the Daily Times Newspapers. For instance in 1977, home craft training courses were both advertised and made reference to in the Daily Times of 25 August and 29 October and in 1981 on 2 January and 29 January. The nature of subjects offered in such courses also clearly defined the reproductive role of women in society. The subjects offered were agriculture, house care, sewing, knitting, cooking, embroidery, child care improvement, and food and nutrition education. The aim of the courses was to enable women improve the living standards of their families. This aim would be achieved in two ways; through proper home management and small scale businesses.

On the other hand, a general picture of women presented in the newspapers shows positive signs that to some extent women were considered for high government and decision making positions. The leadership of the country and some people were in favour of this. For instance in 1981 the president raised the number of lady Members of Parliament from 8 to 32 by nominating 24 more, a gesture which made many people appreciate his decision. In his address to the *mbumba* at the State House Stadium after

closing the budget meeting of parliament in Zomba, the president "expressed pleasure because people throughout the country appreciated his decision to increase the number of lady Members of Parliament to 32."³⁶ The fact that people throughout the country appreciated his decision may show that they had confidence in the potential of women.

The Life President said that each lady MP was nominated not just because she passed the English Proficiency Test, but over that, and most important, she was an active member of the party. It was not fair, the Ngwazi said, to have only eight lady MPs, as was originally the case, when the League of Malawi Women was the basis of the party.³⁷

Media portrayal of women shows that women were equally employable like men as long as they were qualified for the positions. The Daily Times featured vacancies for both men and women and others specifically for women. For instance on Wednesday, 24 August 1977, the Daily Times advertised a vacancy for female/male persons for the post of shorthand typist. This is an indication of the realization of the capability of women. Some women were also featured as highly educated with very good jobs. For instance the Daily Times of Wednesday, 2 November 1977, highlighted the heading 'Malawian lady to study Masters Degree in US.' The article read as follows:

Miss Anne Kauye, Assistant lecturer at Bunda College of Agriculture leaves the country for a two year study for Masters Degree in home economics at Iowa State University in the USA. Miss Kauye was the first

³⁶ The Daily Times, "Lady M.P.s: Reward for mbumba," 30 March, 1981, p.4.

³⁷ Ibid.

Malawian lady to be sent to the US to study a Masters Degree in home economics.³⁸

This shows that government realized that women too could attain high education and get good jobs just like men if they were given the opportunity. The article acted as a motivation to other women about the potential of girls to complete their education and get good jobs.

Around the same period, some jobs that were originally considered as men's domain due to their risky nature began to be opened to women. For example adverts appeared in the Daily Times requiring the services of lady security guards. To cite only two examples, on Monday 31 October 1977 and Monday, 7 November 1977, adverts for lady security guards appeared in the Daily Times and read:

A leading company in Malawi requires the services of a lady security guard to take up a vacant post immediately. Applicants must be ex-Malawi Police or MYP, between 18 – 25 years of age, single and be medically fit.³⁹

This implies that some people were confident that women could do such risky jobs as long as they had the requisite qualifications. There was some acceptance, in other words, that both men and women could render security service despite its risky nature.

³⁸ The Daily Times, "Malawi's lady to study Masters Degree in U.S.," 2 November, 1977, p. 3.

³⁹ The Daily Times, "Lady security guard," 31 October and 7 November 1977, pp.11 and 8 respectively.

This study argues that the way people and government perceived women and portrayed them in the media had some influence on the policy on girls' education in the second EDP. The fact that the few women who were qualified and educated performed just like men in employment and education circles might have been an eye-opener to government and society that women too if educated, could assist in the development of the nation. This might have acted as an encouragement to government to provide for equal opportunity to education as stipulated in the second EDP.

Oral sources also provide evidence of how society viewed women in the mid 1970s and early 1980s. Based on the data collected, the view of educated people towards women was mostly different from that of the uneducated. The latter tended to be conservative and perceived women as inferiors and second class citizens. According to one female interviewee,

in those days, a woman in the village was regarded as inferior, one who could not do any notable/tangible thing in the eyes of people. Women were not viewed as people who could work in the office or in the company. Women were regarded as people who were only capable of working in the kitchen at home and taking care of children.⁴⁰

This view influenced the way girl-children were raised in most families where parents were not educated. Not many girls were sent to school and for those that went to school,

⁴⁰ Mary Kakhongwe, Mwaphera village, T/A Mwambo, Zomba. Interview conducted on 21/10/2008.

not many completed their education. They easily dropped out either because they were pregnant or simply got married too early after puberty. "In our village, people knew that when a baby girl was born, she just had to grow up and get married and start bearing children."⁴¹ "When you had a child you were greatly respected. A female person was supposed to have a husband and have her own home with children."⁴² This view was held by both men and women though comparatively women were more influential than men. According to Mary Maganga,

this was because of cultural influence which dictated the roles of a woman that she was there to bear children, take care of the family and not to go to school and be employed outside the home. So all this was under the influence of culture.⁴³

Consequently, this mentality automatically discouraged most parents to send their daughters to school or to encourage them to persist in school. One oral informant lamented as follows in support of this:

in my home area, people did not encourage girls to go to school. When I asked my brother for school fees, he responded, 'I can't pay school fees for a girl-child. It is better for me to educate a boy. This was in 1978 when I was in standard two and it marked the end of my education.'⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Mercy Yadidi, Bangala Village, T/A Kwataine, Ntcheu..Interview conducted on 21/10/2008.

⁴³ Mary Maganga, Makanjila Village, T/A Chikowi, Zomba. Interview conducted on 21/10/2008.

⁴⁴ Kakhongwe, Interview conducted on 21/10/2008.

However, as pointed out above, some people especially those who were educated viewed women positively as people who could assist in the development of families and the nation. Such people encouraged girls to go school. To concur with this, one of the informants stated: "there were a few individuals who encouraged us to continue with school so that we should be employed as police officers or nurses."⁴⁵ One of the oral informants Mary Maganga whose father and mother were educated and working as a soldier and primary school teacher respectively narrated how her parents, especially her mother encouraged her and her sisters to go to school. Maganga stated:

I remember my parents used to say we should go to school so that we should not become 'dogs' in future, meaning that we should have high status in the society. In our family I remember my mother was encouraging girl-children to go to school more than boys. She used to say, daughters are 'wealth' for the family because once you are educated, I will be '*mzungu*' (meaning rich person) as you will be assisting me in future.⁴⁶

This clearly shows that Maganga's parents were aware that women were also capable of developing their families, society and the nation. It is the argument of this section that the few girls who were encouraged to go to school and finished their education and got employed acted as an eye-opener to the society and government that if educated, women could assist in the development of the nation. This realisation therefore might have encouraged government to include guidelines on girls' education in the second EDP.

⁴⁵ Yadidi, interview conducted on 21/10/2008.

⁴⁶ Maganga, Interview conducted on 21/10/2008.

Interventions and programmes in girls' education during the period of the second

EDP

As pointed out above, the resolutions and recommendations of the world conferences on women and other subsequent international workshops were achieved through a number of strategies. One of the programmes was the Scholarship scheme sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The scheme was meant to reward well performing students, to relieve their families of financial obligation towards school and to encourage more girls to pursue their studies.⁴⁷

The scholarship targeted primary school pupils and covered both school fees and school uniform. This scheme started in the 1989/90 school year with standard 4 pupils and ended in 1993/94 school year when the beneficiaries completed their primary education. At the end of the programme, "the scheme benefited 4,804 pupils at the ratio of 3 girls to 1 boy."⁴⁸

A major intervention was the Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) programme. "GABLE had its origins in the late 1980s when the Africa Bureau of USAID was funded by the US Congress to step up its activities in basic

⁴⁷ MNA 3/56 Vol. II: E.Y. Ngaye, "Country paper on girl-child education for the sub-regional training workshop for planners of the girl-child education programmes," A paper presented at a workshop, Fairview Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia from 30th January to 2nd February, 1996, p.6.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

education in Africa.”⁴⁹ The programme was originally designed and authorized in 1991 with a 5 year Life-of Project (LOP) but was implemented between 1993 and 1998. Its overall objective was to increase girls’ attainment in primary education. Attainment was defined as access to, persistence in and completion of primary education.⁵⁰ The programme paid school fees for all girls in primary school who passed their examinations and entered another class, provided learning materials for every pupil and introduced the phasing out of school fees for every child in standards one to four. However, when Free Primary Education was introduced in 1994, the tuition fees for girls were shifted to secondary education.

The introduction of the Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) ... increased girls’ retention rate from 5% to 12% in primary school and 4% to 11% in secondary school ...”⁵¹ and “approximately half a million girls benefited from the programme.”⁵²

In addition, the programme supported the development of a new curriculum appropriate to both girls and boys. To achieve this, government in 1992 established a Gender Appropriate Curriculum Unit at the Malawi Institute of Education to integrate gender sensitivity in the primary school and teacher training curricula. Besides curriculum

⁴⁹ H. Herbert, W. Millsap & N. El-sanabary, Summative Evaluation of USAID’s Malawi – Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) Project No. 612 – 0240 (The Mitchell Group, Inc.: Lilongwe, Malawi, May 30, 2002, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The Republic of Malawi, Second Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (December 2003), p. 25.

⁵² Ibid, p. 43.

review, primary teacher textbooks and other materials were also revised to make them gender sensitive. Another important element of GABLE was the sensitization of parents through social mobilization campaign to encourage them to send their children to school.

Furthermore, another intervention dealt with the discipline policy on pregnant girls. Before the period of the second EDP, school girls who became pregnant were subjected to serious disciplinary measures which cost them their education. This was in accordance with the policy which stated:

The discipline of girls' education require that a girl who is pregnant or is involved in immoral behaviour be permanently excluded from school and that a school boy who is alleged to be responsible for pregnancy be indefinitely suspended until the issue is resolved in a court of law.⁵³

However, in the early 1990s, government reviewed this policy and finally replaced it with the Re-Admission Policy in 1993. The new policy stipulates that:

- a) a school girl who is pregnant be withdrawn from school for one academic year and be re-admitted upon application as long as there is assurance of safe custody of the child. Such opportunity shall be given once in a girl's education.

⁵³ H.D. Chimzimu, Secretary for Education, "Discipline Policy on Girls' Education," Circular No C1/31/ Vol. IV/ 104 (December 16, 1993).

- b) a school boy who is responsible for a school girl's pregnancy shall be withdrawn for one year and be re-admitted upon application.⁵⁴

The introduction of this policy has witnessed the return of many girl mothers to school.

"Those pupils that have applied for readmission have been accepted back or transferred to other schools as per their request."⁵⁵

Other interventions in the late 1980s and early 1990s involved encouraging girls in the University of Malawi to study science subjects and lifting of subject restriction policy in schools respectively. At university level, girls who did very well in science subjects were offered scholarships which covered their tuition fees. In both primary and secondary schools, girls were encouraged to opt for subjects of their choice. Science and other subjects associated with men and boys became open to girls while subjects traditionally regarded as feminine like Home Economics and Nursing began to be offered to boys.

In this chapter we noted that unlike the first EDP that was largely silent on girls' education, the second EDP contained specific plans to guide the education of girls. This change of attitude towards girls' education was due to international and local trends and

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ H. Manda, "Development of Procedures for the Re-Admission Policy of girls in schools," Paper presented at a workshop held on 7th August 2006 at MIM, organized by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, p. 2.

developments of the 1970s and early 1980s. In other words the EDP was a response to the social, political, economic and cultural outlook and developments of the period. The most influential development was the recommendations of the three World Conferences on Women and other follow up national and international workshops and conferences. The conferences agitated for the provision of equal opportunities to education for both boys and girls.

The chapter also highlighted the failure of modernization theory. This paved way for alternative development, an approach that emphasized education as a tool for poverty reduction. The chapter noted the feminization of poverty. This in turn led to the need to improve women's education as a possible solution. The overall context was one which favoured improvement of Girls' Education under the second EDP.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

In examining the first two education development plans in post colonial Malawi, researchers on gender and education have emphasized the gender insensitivity of the plans. Such analyses have tended to paint a picture of an educational system that deliberately sidelined girls and women. Whilst this may be acceptable, the findings of this study have demonstrated that taking the gender insensitivity of the plans as given or for granted is problematic. The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that the gender insensitivity of the plans was a phenomenon that was constructed through historical processes. As such gender insensitivity becomes not the origin of explanation, but rather that which “we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced.”¹

One of the major findings of this study is that the political, economic and social context plays an important role in policy formulation. In other words, policies reflect hegemonic political, economic and social realities on the ground. As a result, this study has argued that even though there was awareness of the importance of paying special attention to girls education prior to the first EDP, the context was not ripe for that type of educational system. The study has demonstrated for example that important

¹ Scott, “Experience,” in J. Butler & Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorise the Political...*, P. 26.

stakeholders in education such as education officials, the Malawi Congress Party and the first president of Malawi Dr H Kamuzu Banda appreciated the problems girls faced in attaining education. However, important realities in the Malawian context, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s made it impossible to develop an education system that addressed girls' problems in education attainment. This was primarily because government priorities lay elsewhere. The study has demonstrated that the need to modernize the newly independent nation of Malawi outweighed the need to educate women and girls effectively. Consequently, influenced by modernization theory, Malawi's educational system mainly aimed at providing an education that met the needs of the labour market. Put differently, educators were more interested in producing personnel to facilitate the economic development of the nation than in meeting the social demand for education. As we have seen, that type of education is gender blind. As long as workers are produced their gender is of no consequence.

The study observed a similar trend in the formation and implementation of the second EDP. Important considerations in the political, economic and social context of Malawi shifted. The study has demonstrated that the failure of modernization to achieve economic growth ushered in a new development paradigm, alternative development, that conceptualized education as a tool for poverty reduction. The realization that most women and girls were caught up in the poverty trap influenced educators to formulate policies conducive to girls' education. Perhaps what was most influential in changing

peoples' attitudes towards women in general and women's education in particular, however, were the recommendations of the World Conferences on Women held during the United Nations Decade for Women. This study has demonstrated that almost all the conferences emphasized equality in the provision of educational opportunities to boys and girls. For example, the idea of vocational – technical education for women was stressed in the second and third women conferences. The forgoing discussion has maintained that this compelled most countries, including Malawi to incorporate policies that would guide the education of girls. Thus the historical context was ripe for improving the education of girls.

Another major finding of the study is that taking for granted the gender insensitivity of the first EDP suppresses the history of significant efforts that articulated an alternative vision of education, which paid special attention to girls. The study has traced this history right from the colonial period. It has been demonstrated that certain elements of society continually voiced the need to pay special attention to girls' education. The implementation of an education system that paid special attention to girls was a distinct possibility in the post-Second World War period. At that time the colonial state was preoccupied with addressing the increasing welfare and educational needs of the African elite including African women.² We noted for example that in this period there was an intense debate on women's education among vested interests such as the

² See for example; Kachapila, "Remarkable Adaptations," (PhD Thesis, Dalhousie University, 2001), F. Cooper, "African Society in Colonial Discourse,"

colonial office, Christian Missionaries, African members in the Legislative Council and parents. Also, commissions of inquiry into girls' education were set up and upon their recommendations the colonial government specifically stated to provide equality of educational opportunities for boys and girls in its 1957 - 1961 development plans. The trend continued in the 1960s to the early 1970s. We noted that the MCP manifesto of 1961 articulated the party's intention to improve the education of girls. Furthermore, Dr Banda also made efforts to ease the problems girls faced in the education system through the Kamuzu Bursary that targeted secondary school girls. We also noted the various girls' friendly interventions implemented during the first EDP period.

All these efforts demonstrate that there was an alternative vision of education to the one that triumphed during the first EDP. The point to emphasize is that the gender insensitive education system that characterized education in the first EDP period though hegemonic did not totally suppress the gender sensitive alternative vision of education. The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that efforts to improve girls' education finally triumphed in the second EDP and in the interventions that were implemented during the plan period. In fact, the second objective of the education plan document that followed the second EDP, the Policy and Investment Framework 2000 - 2012 (PIF)

stresses the need of ensuring that Malawi's education system does not intensify existing inequalities across social groups and regions. The PIF identifies strategies,

including bursary schemes for improving the participation of girls and women.³

In other words, nowadays in education circles you cannot talk of developing the education sector without addressing the cross-cutting issue of gender. We are arguing that its history goes back at least to the colonial period.

These findings have wider implications for history theory and practice. They suggest a need to seriously interrogate or investigate historical concepts and phenomena that we take as unquestioned or the origin of explanation. Some scholars have questioned the foundationalist nature of history. For example, Keith Shear in his study "Not welfare or uplift work" argues that even though

the South African police was an institution that few would hesitate to label 'masculine' ... yet assuming the masculinity of the police institution forgoes an opportunity to appreciate an important dimension of the formation of a segregationist state in early twentieth century South Africa. It also suppresses the history of a significant white women's campaign to enlist in the South African police that drew on international theories of preventive policing to articulate an alternative vision of the state and its role in shaping the colonial social order.⁴

Shear shows that the development of a masculine police institutional identity was mediated by the white women's campaign to enlist in the South African police. He

³ Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Education Sector: Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) (June, 2000), p. vii.

⁴ Shear, "Not Welfare or Uplift Work," p. 71.

traces this development to 1920 when historical circumstances forced stakeholders to envisage segregation as a policy for controlling Africans over segregation conceived as a project for elevating lower class whites through state intervention.

Similarly, Joan Scott argues that for most historians the evidence of experience works as a foundation providing both a starting point and a conclusive kind of explanation beyond which few questions need to or can be asked. "What could be truer, after all, than a subject's own account of what she or he has lived through?"⁵ According to Scott what historians should do however is to historicise experience. That is, we need to attend to historical processes that through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. In this way experience becomes not

the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced.⁶

Like wise, Wiseman Chirwa contrary to popular belief attributed the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), especially syphilis and gonorrhea in colonial Malawi to the historical context rather than the morals of the people. He argued that STDs spread due to the economic and social conditions in which people lived under the capitalist economy:

⁵ Scott, "Experience," in J. Butler & Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorise the Political*, p. 24.

⁶ Ibid, p. 26.

Because of the mixing of recruited single workers with local women, elements of prostitution emerged quite early on the Nyasaland estates and plantations and in the villages neighbouring them. There is no doubt, therefore that the labour demands of the plantation economy contributed to the spread of STDs during the first three decades of the colonial period.⁷

This study of the investigation of the context or historical processes in which the post colonial educational policies in Malawi were constructed contributes to and supports these analyses. The study took the gender insensitive nature of post-colonial education policies not as a given but as a historical phenomenon that needed investigating and explaining. The study has demonstrated, for instance that the first EDP did not deliberately sideline girls and women. Rather the need to quickly modernize the new nation of Malawi demanded an education system that simply produced workers, irrespective of gender, to facilitate economic growth. Similarly, the failure of modernization theory to facilitate development and the influence of International Conferences on Women made it imperative to include guidelines for girls' education in the second EDP.

⁷ W.C. Chirwa, "Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Colonial Malawi," in P. W. Setel, M. Lewis & M. Lyons (eds.), Histories of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), pp. 143 - 166.

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